

Exploratory Analysis of Cultural Factors and the Impact They May Have on Terrorist  
Views about CBRN Weapons

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By

Megan Ward  
Master of Arts  
The College of William and Mary, 2004  
Bachelor of Science  
The College of William and Mary, 2000

Director: Richard E. Rubenstein, Professor  
School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution

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George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my family, whose patience, love, hard work, and support made it possible for me to complete this work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL FACTORS AND THE IMPACT THEY MAY HAVE ON TERRORIST VIEWS ABOUT CBRN WEAPONS**

Megan Ward, Ph.D.

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Richard E. Rubenstein

The findings of this study suggest that factors impacted by culture, such as ideas about honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, past warfare traditions, and visual imagery may influence terrorist views about chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. According to the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, al-Qa'ida (AQ) and its affiliates and adherents continue to present the preeminent security threat to the United States and some of these terrorist groups have demonstrated an interest in or have pursued efforts to develop a CBRN weapon capability. Therefore, the prevention of terrorist development, acquisition, and use of CBRN weapons remains an overarching counterterrorism goal. A number of studies have examined various factors that are likely to influence terrorist use of CBRN weapons including technical capability, access to CBRN materials, strategic objectives, ideology, and risk perception. This dissertation adds to this body of literature by examining the potential influence of cultural factors on AQ affiliate and adherent views about CBRN



weapons. Cultural beliefs and values have been shown to play an important role in violence and warfare, including weapon and tactic preferences and therefore, may also influence terrorist weapon preference. This study used historic warfare examples in conjunction with a review of approximately 250 terrorist statements to examine how ideas about the acceptability and visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. In addition to exploring how cultural factors may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons, this study also identified areas for future study to advance insight into terrorist interest in CBRN weapons. Additionally, suggestions are presented for strategic counterterrorism communications to dissuade terrorist CBRN interest and use and to limit terrorist constituent support for groups that pursue or use CBRN weapons.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Factors influenced by culture, including views about the acceptability or visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to certain weapons and tactics, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. The findings of this study suggest that cultural factors, such as ideas about honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, brutality, death, and visual imagery may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This study identified areas for future research to advance insight into the threat from CBRN terrorism, to inform counterterrorism efforts against CBRN terrorism, and to identify actions carried out by the United States (US) that could either dissuade or encourage CBRN use by terrorists. This study also suggests areas for strategic counterterrorism communications to dissuade terrorist CBRN interest and use and to limit terrorist constituent support for groups that pursue or use CBRN weapons.

Terrorist interest in CBRN weapons is well documented, however, questions remain regarding the likelihood that some groups will use these weapons. Although several studies identify a number of potential reasons for limited interest in or use of CBRN terrorist attacks, it remains difficult to predict or even understand the extent and nature of a group's interest and pursuit of a CBRN weapon. This difficulty is a result of limited direct evidence about terrorist CBRN interests, intentions, and efforts. Studies

that examine factors that may be important in terrorist weapon choices can provide insight into the nature of the CBRN terrorism threat that national security decision-makers must continue to address. This study addresses that need by identifying factors from historic warfare examples that were important in decision-making to explore how those factors may also influence terrorist views about CBRN weapon use. This information increases understanding of tactics that could be used to dissuade terrorist interest in CBRN weapons. Specifically, this study focused on al-Qa'ida (AQ) and AQ-linked groups or individuals. This study used historic warfare examples in conjunction with a review of approximately 250 terrorist statements to examine how the acceptability and visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. This study focused on acceptability and visual impact, in part, because they are influenced by cultural beliefs and values. Culture plays an important role in understanding one's enemy, including their perceptions, decision-making, and behaviors. Culture can influence violence, whether in warfare or terrorism, and examining culture can illustrate the way violence is legitimized and perceived. Despite the importance of culture, insufficient attention to this topic continues to limit US policy and counterterrorism efforts, especially in the CBRN domain. In warfare, numerous non-utilitarian and cultural factors played an important role in tactic and weapon choice, therefore, past warfare examples provide a basis for examining how cultural factors may influence terrorist weapon preferences. This study uses historic warfare examples and terrorist statements to identify cultural factors not commonly addressed in the CBRN literature that may influence terrorist interest in CBRN weapons.

Additionally, understanding the importance of the acceptability and visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence can provide insight into a variety of terrorist threats beyond AQ and even CBRN weapons. Consideration of these factors and how they impact terrorist decision-making can provide useful insight into the nature of a variety of terrorist threats and opportunities to counter those threats.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CBRN TERRORISM THREAT

### **Definitions: CBRN vs WMD**

CBRN and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are not interchangeable. CBRN refers to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material that can be used as a weapon. Depending on the material, size, and deployment method, CBRN may or may not be a WMD. WMD is a weapon of mass destruction or disruption that causes mass terror and mass casualties and/or destruction with the potential for unlimited or continuing destructive capability beyond that which is typically encountered with conventional attacks. CBR material can also be used in small-scale attacks that cause little damage and little to no casualties while an attack with a N weapon is not typically considered small-scale. This study defines WMD and CBRN as follows:

- *WMD*: an attack using CBRN materials that causes mass destruction and/or high casualties.
- *CBRN weapon*: chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material used for any large or small-scale act of violence.
- *CBRN Modality*: The specific type of CBRN weapon – chemical (C) or biological (B) or radiological (R) or nuclear (N). Identified here as “C, B, R, or N”.

## **CBRN Terrorism**

Terrorist<sup>1</sup> groups have demonstrated an interest in CBRN weapons and some have engaged in efforts to develop and acquire such weapons (White House, 2011). The evidence of AQ's interest in conducting a terrorist attack with CBRN weapons is well documented and there are several reported incidents of AQ terrorists attempting to acquire or carry out attacks using CBRN weapons beginning since the 1990s (Miller, 2002; Warrick, 2004; Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program, 2005; Quillen, 2007; RAND, n.d.). For example, in 1998, AQ founder Usama bin Laden declared that acquiring unconventional weapons was a religious duty and detained AQ operatives claimed both bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri were interested in acquiring BW (Bin Laden's Biological Threat, 2001; Miller, 2003; Kennedy, 2005; Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program, 2005). After the 9/11 attacks and US-led invasion of Afghanistan, US forces discovered a laboratory near Kandahar, Afghanistan believed to be where AQ planned to develop a wide variety of CB weapons (Gordon, 2002; Miller, 2002 & 2003). Even after the loss of AQ's supposed CBW laboratory, AQ operatives were suspected of continuing to try to obtain, test, and use crude CB agents (Gordon, 2002; Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program, 2005). For example, videotapes allegedly made by AQ showed dogs being killed by unidentified toxic chemicals believed to be either a crude nerve agent or hydrogen cyanide gas and Jose Padilla, a US-born AQ associate, was arrested for

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<sup>1</sup> Definition: Terrorism is defined here as a violent act carried out by any individual or subnational group to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy or conduct of a government by intimidation or coercion in furtherance of political religious, or ideological objectives.

devising a plot to detonate a radioactive "dirty bomb" in the US (Eggen & Schmidt, 2002; US Knew, 2002; Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program, 2005). AQ operatives were also believed to be trying to manufacture the biological toxin ricin in France and England (Gordon, 2002; Warrick, 2004). In 2003, AQ obtained a fatwa (Islamic ruling) in May 2003 giving religious justification for the use of WMD from Saudi cleric Shaykh Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd (Mowatt-Larssen, 2010).

Additionally, an Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) lab suspected to be for ricin and cyanide production was discovered in Iraq in 2004 and in 2007, truck bombs filled with chlorine gas were allegedly detonated in Iraq on multiple occasions (Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program, 2005; RAND, n.d.). AQI was suspected to be involved in at least some of these bombings (RAND, n.d.). In al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) 8<sup>th</sup> edition of their "Inspire" magazine, AQAP (now deceased) religious leader (imam) Anwar al-Awlaki condoned and encouraged the use of chemical and biological weapons and in 2011, AQAP was suspected of planning to produce ricin to place in explosives for attacks against the US (Schmitt & Shanker, 2011; Anti-Defamation League, 2012).

More recently, according to Foreign Policy magazine, a captured Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL; a group that now refers to itself as the Islamic State) laptop contained a 19-page document on how to develop biological weapons and weaponize the bubonic plague from infected animals as well as al-Fahd's the WMD fatwa (Doornbos & Moussa, 2014). US officials, in October 2014, were investigating reports that ISIL had

used chlorine gas against Iraqi forces while fighting for control of two Iraqi towns (Semple & Schmitt, 2014; US Probes, 2014).

Islamic terrorists are not the only terrorists that have shown interest in CBRN weapons. For example, the Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo attempted both biological and chemical attacks (Fletcher, 2008). Other groups, such as ecoterrorists and militia movements, or lone actors may also pose a CBRN terrorism threat in the future (Preventing Nuclear Terrorism, 2007).

In response to this CBRN terrorism threat, the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism identified the prevention of terrorist development, acquisition, and use of WMD as an overarching goal. Additionally, the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Strategic Plan for 2012-2016 identifies the prevention of unauthorized acquisition, importation, movement, or use of CBRN as one of its three goals for counterterrorism focus (US Department of Homeland Security, 2012). According to both the DHS Strategic Plan for 2012-2016 and the DHS 2014 Quadrennial Review, even though the likelihood of CBRN attacks is relatively low, the consequences are potentially high and such attacks pose great potential to cause catastrophic consequences. Consequently, the threat of CBRN attacks is an enduring area of concern (US Department of Homeland Security, 2012 & 2014).

Given the reported cases of CBRN pursuit or use by AQ, the assumption could be made that AQ terrorists are interested in CBRN weapons and if they are able to get a hold of these weapons, they will not hesitate to use them (Preventing Nuclear Terrorism, 2007; White house, 2011; Mazzone, 2013). This assumption raises the question of why there is



need for a study that examines factors that may indicate, predict, or influence AQ terrorist interest in using CBRN weapons. However, the reported cases of CBRN pursuit or use do not necessarily signify absolute commitment to and interest in carrying out a CBRN attack by terrorists. Just because a group demonstrated an interest in CBRN weapons in the past does not mean the group will continue to be interested in such weapons or that the group cannot be dissuaded from using CBRN weapons. Bale and Ackerman highlight the importance of considering not just the capability but also the strength of terrorists' motivation to use CBRN weapons and they contend that the tendency to infer CBRN terrorism intention from capability is not always accurate (Bale & Ackerman, 2004). The likelihood that a group will pursue or use a CBRN weapon is not guaranteed and questions remain regarding the likelihood that some groups will use these weapons (Beckett, 2004; Betts, 2005). For example, Nasra Hassan, United Nations Information Service and Spokesperson United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, conducted numerous interviews with terrorist leaders, suicide bombing planners and trainers. According to Hassan, in interviews with Islamic terrorists, she noted a clear aversion to the idea of biological suicide bombs (Hassan, 2006). Additionally, in 2003, AQ deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri reportedly called off an attack on the New York City subway system with an improvised chemical device. Although it is not clear why he called off the attack, some speculate that Zawahiri did not think it was an adequate follow-up to the 9/11 attacks (Suskind, 2007).

Several studies point out that there have been a relatively small number of CBRN terrorism incidents and these studies identify a number of potential reasons for limited

interest in or use of CBRN attacks (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Quillen, 2007; Tishler, 2013). For example, pressure from counterterrorism efforts and military campaigns may disrupt ongoing CBRN efforts or make it difficult to carry out the steps needed to develop a CBRN capability (Quillen, 2007; Mowatt-Larssen, 2010). Another possible explanation for limited interest in CBRN use is the threat of retaliation that could threaten safe havens that some terrorists depend on (Preventing Nuclear Terrorism, 2007, Quillen, 2007). Some terrorists may be patiently waiting for the right time to use a CBRN weapon and may not be willing to rush to carry out an attack. For example, a group may want to wait until their CBRN capability has matured enough to increase their chance for success (Quillen, 2007). Further, some terrorist groups may prefer to develop or use one CBRN modality over others. Some terrorist groups may only be interested in a mass casualty CBRN attack using sophisticated CBRN weapons and may be unwilling to settle for using any other CBRN material, even if in possession of it (Mowatt-Larssen, 2010). Another potential explanation is the technical difficulty and the increased complexity of CBRN weapons compared to conventional weapons. Some groups may abandon ongoing CBRN development efforts after realizing that it is too difficult, time consuming, or expensive to develop a CBRN attack capability (Shea & Gottron, 2004; Blum et al., 2005; Bunn & Wier, 2006; Preventing Nuclear Terrorism, 2007; Mowatt-Larssen & Allison, 2010; Robertson, 2011). Changing conditions can also modify terrorist views about CBRN weapons use. For example, leadership and member turnover in a terrorist group can result in changing ideas, priorities, and values, and views about CBRN weapons can change as the composition of a group changes. Additionally, the level of

autonomy within a group could explain cases of CBRN use or pursuit in certain groups. Stone points out that when considering terrorist CBRN use, the central leadership of a group should be distinguished from independent cells or individuals that are not under the direct command or supervision of group leaders (Stone, 2009). For example, the pursuit of crude CBR weapons may have been of little interest to AQ leadership and these low-level efforts may have been carried out by individual cells outside the direct supervision of AQ leaders (Mowatt-Larssen & Allison, 2010). Finally, it is certainly possible that claims of interest in or possession of CBRN weapons could be an exaggeration or propaganda to terrorize enemies, especially given the sensationalism of CBRN weapons in the West. Therefore, reported cases of CBRN pursuit may not necessarily indicate a guaranteed, wide-ranging interest in CBRN weapons for a group.

It is therefore possible that additional factors, including those addressed by this study, could also explain inhibitions to using CBRN weapons or identify opportunities to dissuade terrorist interest in or use of CBRN weapons in cases where groups or individuals are not completely committed to using such weapons. Additionally, in cases where a group is committed to CBRN use, factors can influence preference for certain CBRN modalities or dissemination methods.

A number of studies have examined factors that may be important in determining the possibility that a given terrorist group will use CBRN weapons, including the development of or access to technical expertise, technical capability, access to materials, ideology, past attack modalities, inter-group dynamics, risk perception, support from constituents, and organizational size and age (Tucker, 2001; Ackerman & Moran, 2004;

Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Jenkins, 2004; Blum et al., 2005; Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012; Tishler, 2013). For example, according to Bruce Hoffman, different terrorist groups can vary in their tactics, targets, and weapons based on the group's ideology, internal organizational dynamics, personalities of its key members, and a variety of internal and external stimuli (Hoffman, 2006). Jessica Stern points out the importance of the psychological impact of CBRN weapons, an important consideration for terrorists whose priorities are to terrorize targeted populations" (Stern, 1999).

Many studies have also focused on religion as an important factor in CBRN terrorism, specifically, terrorist groups inspired by religious doctrines (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Mowatt-Larsen & Allison, 2010; Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). Religious fanaticism can drive terrorists to commit especially lethal and indiscriminate attacks and religious sectarianism can lead to hatred and violence against "outsiders". For example, Islamic jurisprudence that prohibits the killing of innocent men, women, and children is easily ignored by Islamic terrorists who are able to justify indiscriminate killing of Christians or non-Sunni Muslims because they are religious "outsiders". Therefore, inhibitions to CBRN use may be more easily ignored in cases where indiscriminate use of these weapons is against "outsiders" (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). However, this certainly does not mean that every religiously driven terrorist group will be interested in CBRN weapons or will be more likely than secular groups to use CBRN weapons. Many other factors, such as theological, historical, and cultural elements, are also involved and the "most that can be said is that under certain circumstances, religious extremism can be a very important

contributory factor” in the decision to use CBRN weapons in a terrorist attack (Mowatt-Larssen & Allison, 2010).

The likelihood that a group will pursue or use a CBRN weapon remains a complex issue and the nature of the CBRN terrorism threat is ambiguous. For this reason, a number of studies examine factors that are important in terrorist views about CBRN weapon use. However, it remains difficult to explain why particular terrorist groups may be inclined or averse to using CBRN weapons for a number of reasons (Blum et al., 2005). Some reasons for this limited insight include the compartmented nature of CBRN terrorism programs that limit insight into terrorists interest and actions, the minimal infrastructure needed for and dual-use nature of some CBRN materials that make it hard to detect development efforts, and the countless, complex factors that influence preferences and make it difficult to predict human behavior (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Clapper, 2012; Mazzone, 2013; Tishler, 2013). Additionally, Bale and Ackerman point out that past terrorist methods, tactics, and weapons cannot be used to predict future behavior with any certainty and can only provide general guidelines into factors that may influence terrorist choices about tactics and weapons (Bale & Ackerman, 2004). In the case of CBRN terrorism, it is even harder to gain insight from past CBRN terrorism efforts, given the relatively small number of incidents to draw from and the limited information available about those incidents (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Tishler, 2013).

Given the difficulty in obtaining direct evidence about the CBRN interest, intentions, and efforts of terrorists, studies that examine factors that could be important in the target and weapon selection process of terrorists can provide insight into the nature of

the CBRN terrorism threat (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Ackerman & Moran, 2004).

Studies that examine what a terrorist group is “for and against” and why certain terrorists may be more inclined than others to carry out CBRN attacks play an important role in the counterterrorism domain (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Blum et al., 2005). According to Sinai, predicting the desirability of CBRN weapons to terrorists “are important unknowns in counterterrorism analysis” (Sinai, 2004). Understanding the types of CBRN weapons and devices that a terrorist group is likely or unlikely to use and the internal or external hurdles they need to overcome to pursue, develop, and use a CBRN weapon is crucial (Sinai, 2004). However, as noted above, given the limited information available about terrorist CBRN efforts, findings of such studies are often speculative (Blum et al., 2005).

Unlike many studies that have used cases of past CBRN terrorism to inform findings about factors important to terrorist CBRN use, the goal of this study is to address the CBRN terrorism threat from a different perspective. Instead of examining CBRN terrorism data to identify factors important in terrorist CBRN decisions, this study focused instead on warfare examples. Historic warfare examples were used to identify factors important to weapon preference in warfare to explore how those same factors may also influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This method was chosen in response to challenges highlighted by Bale, Ackerman, and Blum who point out the scarcity of information available on past CBRN terrorism cases for studies to draw from. Due to this limited information, it has become more difficult to uncover novel findings using the same, limited body of data about past CBRN terrorism cases (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Blum et al., 2005). According to Bale & Ackerman, despite significant

contributions to the understanding of various aspects CBRN terrorism, much of the current literature addressing the CBRN threat provides insights that are “recycled “ with very little that is “truly new or stunningly insightful” (Bale & Ackerman, 2004). By examining factors that may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons from a different perspective, this study can add to the body of work that identifies factors important in terrorist CBRN use. Additionally, this study also identifies opportunities to dissuade terrorist interest in CBRN weapons, including through messaging efforts. For example, the US Department of State’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications was established to “coordinate, orient, and inform government-wide foreign communications activities targeted against terrorism and violent extremism, particularly al-Qaida and its affiliates and adherents” (US Department of State, n.d. a). Although a large number of studies address CBRN deterrence or detection, there has been less focus identifying opportunities to dissuade interest in CBRN weapon use, especially through the use of strategic counterterrorism messaging. The goal of this study is to add to the body of work on CBRN terrorism by exploring factors, specifically those impacted by culture, that are not commonly addressed in the CBRN terrorism literature that may be important in terrorist views about CBRN use.

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE**

This study specifically examined factors that can be influenced by culture to explore how they may impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Culture is defined by this study as:

*A set of basic values and beliefs, shared symbols and meanings, social practices, attitudes, behaviors, and morals associated with a specific group and the context that explains human behavior, preferences, the meaning of actions, and conflict.*

This definition was derived from components of various definitions of culture. For example, culture has been defined as the set of basic values and beliefs, shared symbols and meanings, social practices, attitudes, behaviors, and morals that a people use to distinguish outsiders, to understand themselves and to communicate with each other and a way to explain where preferences come from (Geertz, 1993; Munger, 2005). In a 1996 study by Major B.C. Lindberg, culture was defined as “the norms, values, religion, language, race, ethnicity, and heritage associated with a specific group that survive, change, and remain meaningful to future generations (Lindberg, 1996). Culture can exist within several types of groups, to include ethnic, national, or religious groups or inside institutions or occupations (Avruch, 1998). Additionally, the study of culture has been described as an “interpretive one in search of meaning”, not in search of law” to



understand the rich and complex context that explains human behavior, the meaning of actions, and conflict (Geertz, 1993; Avruch, 1998; Mishler & Pollack, 2003).

This study focuses on factors that are influenced by culture because of the important role it plays in understanding one's enemy, including their perceptions, decision-making, and behaviors. In situations where understanding one's enemy is key, such as warfare and counterterrorism, cultural understanding is crucial. There have been several studies on factors that will influence terrorist use of CBRN and ways to predict who will use CBRN but much of the information available does not consider the influence of culture on terrorist proclivity or aversion to such weapons (Tucker, 2001; Carus, 2002; Ackerman & Moran, 2004; Sinai, 2005). Therefore, the role cultural factors may play in shaping tactic and weapon choices are an important topic to consider when examining terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

Despite the importance of culture, additional attention to this topic is needed to address knowledge gaps that limit US policy and counterterrorism efforts. According to Major Lindberg, culture is a significant but "widely unrecognized" factor of warfare and military strategists need to better recognize the differences in distinct cultural groups and apply this knowledge when developing military strategies" (Lindberg, 1996). Keegan also claims that culture has been neglected and requires greater attention to better understand one's enemies and allies (Keegan, 1994). Cultural differences can lead groups to mischaracterize the strategic situation they face and misunderstand the likely actions of opponents or allies (Ferguson, 2008). For example, in Africa there are beliefs and practices that many Westerners may not understand and teaching this information to

enable a better understanding of culture, tradition, and diverse African approaches to warfare has been critical to operational success on the ground (Boré, 2006). Culture also plays a role in the outcome of cooperation and negotiations with an opponent. Without this understanding, it would not be possible to bring about a successful conclusion to negotiations and misinformed actions could escalate a conflict (Munger, 2005). When aspects of culture have not been adequately understood “America has had needless difficulties in military conflicts against members of different cultures” (Lindberg, 1996). For example, according to Luft, working with Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War presented the US with a number of cultural challenges (Luft, 2010). Challenges included cultural differences in how orders were communicated along the chains of command as well as a Saudi aversion to the “direct, no-nonsense American approach to doing business” (Luft, 2010).

Knowledge about cultural differences is also important in understanding the factors behind strategies, tactics, and weapon choice of terrorists and therefore should be an important consideration in intelligence analysis, policy decisions, and efforts to counter terrorism. According to Jenkins the “worldview, mindset, and concept of fighting” play a role in terrorist conduct and decision-making and Ackerman and Moran note that any assessments of what a terrorist group is for or against requires analysis of the “norms that group members have absorbed through their national, cultural, and extremist associations” (Luft, 2010; Jenkins, 2004). Munger surveyed recent work that identified culture as a major conditioning force on terrorist behavior and an explanation

for apparently “irrational” terrorist acts and notes that “what is moral in one society might be appalling in another” (Munger, 2005).

Although studies, such as those surveyed by Munger, focus on examining culture in order to understand motivations for terrorism, there is less focus on how the same cultural factors may also influence proclivity or aversion to certain types of weapons or tactics for terrorism. Given the possibility that a terrorist group or lone actor will develop a CBRN attack capability, it is important to understand the various factors that can lead someone to want to use CBRN weapons over conventional methods, to prefer one CBRN modality or dissemination method over the other, or factors that can dissuade interest in CBRN weapons. Additionally, it is also important to consider the opinions of terrorist constituents<sup>2</sup> about CBRN weapons and factors may influence their views about such weapons. The development of a CBRN capability by terrorists typically requires a secure location for experimentation and development and terrorist safe havens provide locations where CBRN laboratories can be located. Maintaining positive relationships with local populations in safe havens is important and if these populations that terrorists rely on find activities of the group unacceptable or threatening, terrorists risk losing local support (Propst, 2002; Coleman, 2005; Sinai, 2005).

## **Culture and Warfare**

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<sup>2</sup> **Terrorist constituents** are defined as: active (to include providing finances, resources, intelligence, housing, safe haven, and food) and passive (to include populations that look favorably on the group and populations co-located with a terrorist group) supporters of terrorist groups and the general population the group or individual considers its audience.

To begin to explore cultural factors that may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons, this study relied on historic warfare examples to identify the types of factors that would be examined by this study. Culture influences violence, whether in warfare, terrorism, or personal conflicts and a review of historic warfare examples highlights the many ways culture influences use of violence and weapon choice in warfare. For this reason, past warfare examples provide a basis for examining how cultural factors could similarly influence terrorist weapon preferences.

Examining culture can illustrate the way violence is legitimized and made acceptable in society and how reality, perception, and intensity of violence can vary from culture to culture (Galtung, 1990; Keegan, 1994; Guilaine & Zammit, 2004). Many studies have examined how cultural beliefs and values have influenced the way war is waged (Galtung, 1990; Keegan, 1994; Guilaine & Zammit, 2004; Otterbein, 2009; Luft, 2010). Since antiquity, it has been recognized that conventions of war are culturally and historically determined and customs of war and use of weapons and tactics can differ across cultures (Mayor, 2008). Warfare is a "cultural phenomenon" where beliefs and values are learned and a nation's military behavior is a reflection of a society's cultural characteristics (Otterbein, 2009; Luft, 2010). However, the extent of culture's influence varies from one case to another. In some cases, culture has impacted tactical and operational levels and in other cases, it has generated strategic changes and influenced the outcome of entire wars (Luft, 2010).

According to Van Creveld, different civilizations vary in their ideas about weapons or tactics and beliefs about the nature of military rationality may be culturally-

determined (Van Creveld, 1991). Even identical weapons are capable of being understood and used in entirely different ways in different societies (Van Creveld, 1991). For example, the evolution and use of weapons in war is not “governed solely by rational considerations pertaining to their technical utility, capabilities, and effectiveness” and the design and use of weapons were intertwined with a host of anthropological, psychological, and cultural factors, some of which may have limited their functionality or seemed illogical (Van Creveld, 1991).

Keegan’s “A History of Warfare” examines how culture is a greater determinant of warfare than politics and economics (Keegan, 1994). Keegan spotlights culture’s influence on tactics and weapon choice by stating that strong cultural influences can prevail over temptations to “choose technical expedients as a means to victory”, particularly if doing so could mean “overturning ancient and cherished values” (Keegan, 1994). A willingness to change tactics and adopt new weapons occurs when doing so is culturally acceptable and these changes do not occur at the same rate or time in all societies (Keegan, 1994). For example, in the sixteenth century, the Japanese rejected the use of firearms to preserve the culture of the Samurai (Keegan, 1994). Additionally, Hanson also points out that the culture of a fighter impacts the method of fighting and the outcome of a battle. For example, the Aztecs used weapons that were designed to wound rather than kill so that enemies could be captured alive and sacrificed later (Hanson, 2002).

Otterbien distinguishes two types of warfare, internal and external. Internal war is internal to a culture while external war takes place between political communities that are

culturally different (Otterbein, 2009). If war occurs between two groups in the same culture, the weapons, tactics, and other elements involved will be the same. If war occurs between two groups that are culturally different, the weapons, tactics, and other elements are likely to be different. The goals of the war may be different, and what war means to each culture may be incomprehensible to the other side (Otterbein, 2009).

Ideas about the acceptability of weapons have also differed through time and across different cultures (Van Creveld, 1991). According to Van Creveld, different civilizations vary in their ideas of which weapons or tactics are considered “fair” (Van Creveld, 1991). For example, ambush attacks have been viewed by some cultures as dishonorable, weak, and cowardly, where attacking an enemy from behind was seen as an act carried out only by “barbarians” (Mayor, 2008). Additionally, some groups believed defeating someone by an ambush was dishonorable because honor “must be risked in order to be validated” while others found the ambush to be an acceptable or preferable tactic (Braudy, 2005). Even recently, the ambush has been viewed as dishonorable. For example, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, many believed the Japanese lacked courage and military honor (Maddox, 2004). Through history, weapons that undermined strength, bravery, and honor have been classified as unacceptable by various societies (Van Creveld, 1991). The bow and arrow provides one example. According to Mayor, archers were considered cowardly because they “shot from afar, avoiding direct confrontation” (Mayor, 2008). Technological advancements in weaponry have also been seen as eroding honor in the battlefield. Technology that allowed someone to kill from a distance or that did not require considerable strength or military prowess to kill an enemy

was considered “a leveler of those heroic and chivalric traits that ought to be the essence of the warrior” (Braudy, 2005). Weapons that allowed “any peasant ...to strike down a noble knight in armor” could be considered dishonorable. In these cases, instead of enhancing power in warfare, technology was believed to undermine the “moral claims” of the warrior because “he was not fighting as his own pure self” (Braudy, 2005).

The value a culture puts on human life can also impact how casualties in warfare are viewed, how warfare is carried out, how the enemy is treated, and attitudes about surrendering in battle (Luft, 2010). For example, some warriors believed in touching their enemy's body to prove fearlessness while other groups ate the flesh of their dead enemies (Harris, 1989). Evidence of attacking an individual's body after they were dead or incapacitated has been found in ancient burial grounds in areas such as France, the Ukraine, and Sudan (Guilaine & Zammit, 2004). The aim may have been to destroy the individual by destroying the body through extreme violence to “reduce them to nothing, permanently” (Guilaine & Zammit, 2004). Warriors also saw warfare as a status-enhancing activity and mutilating a body may have brought more prestige and admiration than just killing an enemy. This may also explain why certain parts of the body have been taken as trophies (Guilaine & Zammit, 2004). The bodies of soldiers killed by the Sioux or Cheyenne Indians were often found to have been struck several times and blows to bodies, scalping, evisceration, removal of organs, and emasculation were also common. The Celts often removed the heads of their enemies (Guilaine & Zammit, 2004).

In warfare, not all weaponry has been optimized just for killing and there have been numerous non-utilitarian factors that have played an important role in the design of weapons, including aesthetics. The way an act of violence unfolds visually, the type of terror that is inflicted on the observers due to the visual impact of an act of violence, the demonstration of power and strength, and symbolism have all played an important role in warfare choices. These factors are impacted by culture and may also impact proclivity towards certain types of weapons and tactics. Even at the expense of a weapon's effectiveness, weapons have been designed or decorated to demonstrate power or to terrify the enemy (Van Creveld, 1991; Potts & Hayden, 2010). Noise can also play an important role in frightening and disorienting an enemy or to signal the strength or cohesion of the attacker (Potts & Hayden, 2010). For example, early firearms performed poorly compared to bows and arrows in regard to reliability, accuracy, or rate of fire, but they were still used by some groups, possibly because the noise they made was a valuable attribute (Van Creveld, 1991). Additionally, there are several examples through history where the construction of very large weapons may have been to impress or intimidate to prevent war or for psychological advantage in battle (Van Creveld, 1991). In addition to confronting the enemy with terrifying weapons, measures were taken by the warriors themselves to appear more terrifying or more powerful, whether with painted faces and bodies like the berserkers or the males of the Suebi tribe who tied their hair into a topknot to appear taller and more powerful (Braudy, 2005). According to Roman historian Tacitus, the Harii, tribe would "black their shields and dye their bodies, and choose pitch



dark nights for their battles. The shadowy, awe-inspiring appearance of such a ghoulish army” terrorized the enemy (Braudy, 2005).

The examples discussed above demonstrate how culture has impacted warfare choices through, among others, ideas about aesthetics and the acceptability of certain tactics and weapons. Based on these historic warfare examples, this study explored how these cultural factors – aesthetics and acceptability of tactics and weapons - may similarly influence terrorist views about CBRN use to addresses some of the cultural awareness gaps in CBRN terrorism studies. This study focused on the influence of these cultural factors on AQ terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons.

For simplicity, this study will define “**AQ**” as the core AQ group in Afghanistan and Pakistan that financed and directed the September 11, 2001 attacks as well as AQ affiliates and adherents that share AQ doctrine, follow AQ instructions, and/or carry out violent attacks inspired by AQ. According to the most recent National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, the preeminent security threat to the United States continues to be from AQ and its affiliates and adherents<sup>3</sup> and these groups and individuals are the principal focus of the National Strategy for Counterterrorism (White House, 2011). Disrupting, dismantling, and eventually defeating AQ and its affiliates and adherents to ensure the security of US citizens and interests is one of the President’s top national security priorities (White House, 2011). Although US Counterterrorism efforts have

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<sup>3</sup> The National Strategy for Counterterrorism defines **affiliates** as: Groups that have aligned with al-Qa’ida, including those in regions such as the Middle East, East Africa, the Maghreb and Sahel regions of northwest Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. **Adherents** is defined as: those who have formed collaborative relationships with, act on behalf of, or are otherwise inspired to take action in furtherance of the goals of al-Qa’ida —the organization and the ideology.

degraded the ability of AQ's senior leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan to centrally plan and execute sophisticated external attacks, there has been a rise of AQ affiliates and "lone offenders" inspired by extremist ideologies to commit acts of terrorism against the US (US Department of Homeland Security, 2014). Threats from these lone offenders are especially difficult to detect (US Department of Homeland Security, 2014).

ISIL, a Sunni jihadist terrorist group that is designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the US, has also emerged as a terrorist threat to the US, its interests and allies (Obama, 2014; US Department of State, n.d.b). Although countering the ISIL threat is currently a counterterrorism priority, the group was not included in the data collection or analysis for this study because the emergence of this threat became widely recognized after the information cutoff for this study. However, given its current importance, a brief overview of the group's link to AQ is provided here. ISIL was formerly AQ's affiliate in Iraq (AQI), and has since gained territory in both Iraq and Syria by taking advantage of sectarian strife and the Syrian civil war. Al-Qaeda formally dissociated itself from ISIL in early 2014, the first time AQ leadership formally disavowed an affiliate (Sly, 2014). Although no longer part of AQ, ISIL is pursuing the al-Qaeda agenda of establishing an Islamist caliphate (Sly, 2014). According to Patrick Skinner of the Soufan Group, ISIL and AQ's ideology "is exactly the same. The only difference is who they swear allegiance to" (McClam, 2014). Although AQ and ISIL share a similar goal (the establishment of an Islamic caliphate) and ideology, there are several differences between ISIL and AQ (McClam, 2014). According to Secretary of State John Kerry, ISIL is more extreme than AQ (McClam, 2014). Additionally, ISIL is

operating more as a traditional insurgency and fighting force, “rolling in with tanks and capturing whole cities with brutal force rather than staging spectacular, carefully planned” attacks (McClam, 2014). Additionally, AQ’s disavowal of ISIL reflects friction that began in 2006 between AQI’s then-leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and AQ leadership. Both Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri criticized Zarqawi’s excessive brutality, before he was killed by U.S. forces in Iraq in 2006. Bin Laden and Zawahiri learned from Zarqawi’s brutal tactics and the resulting loss of popular support that not all press is good press (Sly, 2014). Although ISIL was not included in this study, focusing on AQ, as defined above, for this study still addresses counterterrorism priorities.

Historic warfare examples were used in conjunction with AQ terrorist statements to explore if and how cultural factors may influence AQ terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Because the goal of this study is to provide information on factors not widely addressed in terrorism studies, factors that are commonly addressed elsewhere that may play an important role in terrorist decisions to pursue or use CBRN weapons will not be included in this study (e.g. ease of CBRN use, access to CBRN materials, mortality, contagiousness, or ease of production of different CBRN weapons, religious justifications). Further, this study will focus on AQ’s proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons and will not examine other factors such as motivations for terrorism, if a terrorist group’s strategic objectives are met by the use of CBRN weapons, target vulnerability, and Islamic jurisprudence, such as the legality of killing civilians or Muslims. By focusing on factors not widely addressed in counterterrorism and CBRN

terrorism literature, this study therefore adds to the existing body of knowledge on CBRN terrorism and provides suggestions for additional study and opportunities to counter the CBRN threat. Additionally, understanding the importance of the acceptability and visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence can provide insight into a variety of terrorist threats beyond AQ and even CBRN weapons. Consideration of these factors and how they impact terrorist decision-making can provide useful insight into the nature of a variety of terrorist threats and opportunities to counter those threats.

The following section outlines the methodology used to explore this topic, followed by the results and discussion on how certain factors may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. A discussion is then provided on circumstances that may influence the importance or impact of the factors examined by this study. Finally, the conclusion section highlights suggestions for how these findings may advance CBRN counterterrorism efforts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

To examine how factors influenced by culture may impact terrorist proclivity towards or aversion to tactics, weapons, and violent actions, including CBRN weapons, this exploratory study addressed the following research questions:

1. What cultural factors play a role in proclivity or aversion to certain types of tactics, violent actions or weapon use in warfare?
2. Could cultural factors that influence weapon preference in warfare also play a role in terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons?

The goal of this study is to provide information on factors not widely addressed in terrorism studies. Therefore, factors that are commonly addressed elsewhere that may play an important role in terrorist decisions to pursue or use CBRN weapons were not included in this study (e.g. ease of CBRN use, access to CBRN materials, mortality, contagiousness, or ease of production of different CBRN weapons, religious justifications). Further, this study focused on AQ's proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons and did not examine other factors such as motivations for terrorism, if a terrorist group's strategic objectives are met by the use of CBRN weapons, target vulnerability, and Islamic jurisprudence, such as the legality of killing civilians or Muslims.

The exploratory research conducted by this study provided insight into an under-researched area to identify new concepts and topics for future study. The methodology chosen for this study permitted flexibility to explore concepts freely and to adjust the data collection and categorization as new themes or requirements for additional information emerged. Data coding and categorization (described in greater detail below under Stage 2) used for this study allowed for an ongoing process of data exploration and interpretation to identify emerging themes. Additionally, identifying new concepts through data exploration and interpretation also limited the influence of pre-existing assumptions that could bias the findings. Through an iterative process, the assigned codes and categories were also checked for inconsistencies and bias and were revised as needed. The data collection and analysis for this study was conducted in three stages, which are discussed in greater detail below:

**Stage 1. Identify Warfare Factors:** A literature review of historic warfare examples was conducted to collect data on factors impacted by culture that influenced warfighting tactics, violent actions, or weapon use. These are factors that can be influenced by a society's or group's values and beliefs, shared symbols and meanings, social practices, attitudes, behaviors, and morals. These cultural factors were then used to inform subsequent collection steps and analytic findings.

**Stage 2. Survey of Terrorist Statements:** Terrorist statements were collected and categorized. Terrorist statements are defined here as any means of first person communication by any AQ or AQ-linked individuals or groups that

provide insight into terrorist opinions/views on tactics, violent actions, or weapons. Statements by individuals that influenced contemporary AQ ideology are also included. Some examples include: verbal statements, letters, books, manifestos, oaths, rules, official media outlet statements, magazines written by or interviews with terrorist-linked individuals that provide insight into individual or terrorist group opinions and views.

**Stage 3. Analysis:** The information collected in Stage 1 from the literature review of historic warfare examples and the survey of terrorist statements (Stage 2) were analyzed to explore various ways the cultural factors identified in Stage 1 may impact terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons.

### **Stage 1. Identify Warfare Factors**

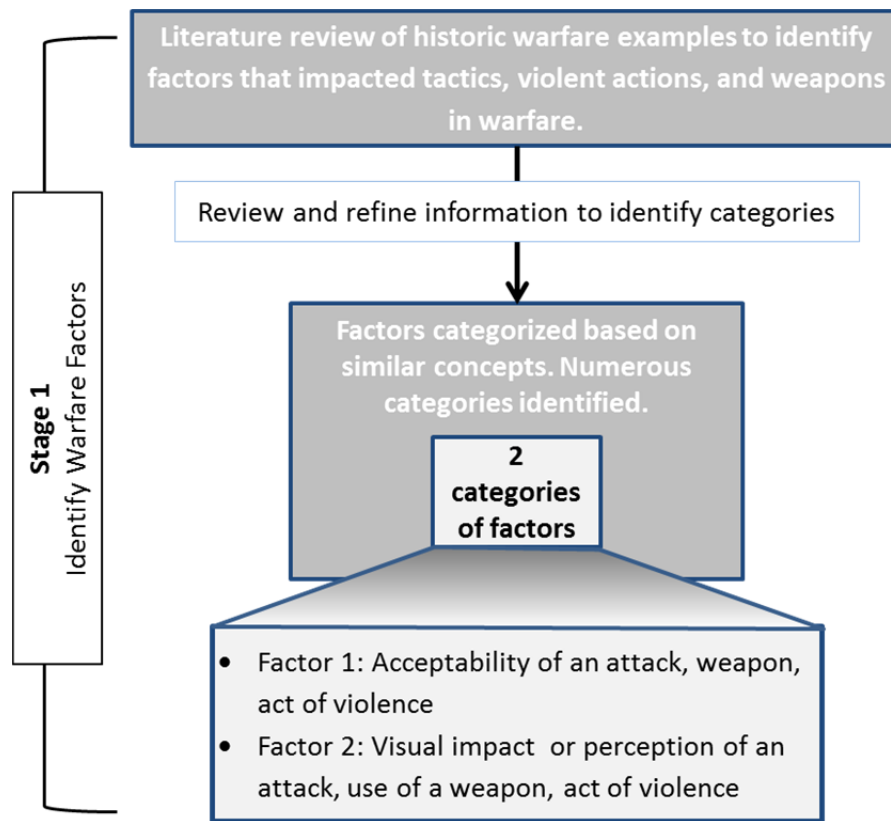
A literature review of historic warfare examples was conducted to identify and collect data on cultural factors that impacted warfighting tactics, violent actions, or weapon use. These cultural factors were then used to inform subsequent collection steps and analytic findings. Due to the breadth of available information on warfare, this review used multiple sources to identify a sample of factors for subsequent analytic steps.

The information collected about how culture influences tactics, violent actions and weapon use in warfare was categorized based on similar concepts to identify the two categories of factors used in the subsequent collection and analytic steps of this study. The two categories of factors chosen for this study were: 1) acceptability of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence based on the values of a group and 2) the visual impact of

an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence (Figure 1). Through this paper, these categories will be referred to as “Factor 1” and “Factor 2” for simplicity. The choice to focus on these two categories of factors was based on the following criteria:

1. The factors have been or could be influenced by culture and were shown, through the literature review on warfare in Step 1 to influence violent act, tactic, or weapon choice in warfare.
2. The factors have been minimally addressed in literature related to CBRN terrorism and factors that influence terrorist choices related to CBRN attacks
3. A greater understanding of the factors could offer opportunities to better understand or influence terrorist CBRN interest or success.





**Figure 1. Stage 1 of Methodology**

The evolution and use of certain weapons in war has not always been “governed solely by rational considerations pertaining to their technical utility, capabilities, and effectiveness”. In addition to functionality, “the design and use of weapons were intertwined with a host of anthropological, psychological, and cultural factors”, including those that correspond to the two factors chosen for this study, discussed in greater detail below (Van Creveld, 1991).

*Factor 1. Acceptability of an attack, weapon, or act of violence*

A review of the use or nonuse of weapons through history indicates that ideas about appropriateness of a weapon, often linked to values such as masculinity, courage, and honor have played a role in opinions about and willingness to use certain weapons. Ideas about the acceptability of weapons have also differed through time and across different cultures (Van Creveld, 1991). For example, ambush attacks have been viewed by some cultures as dishonorable, weak, and cowardly and attacking an enemy from behind was seen as an act carried out only by “barbarians” (Mayor, 2008). To some, defeating someone by an ambush was dishonorable because honor “must be risked in order to be validated” while others found the ambush to be a perfectly acceptable or preferable tactic (Braudy, 2005). Even recently, the ambush has been viewed as dishonorable. For example, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, many people believed the Japanese lacked courage and military honor (Maddox, 2004).

Through history, weapons that undermined strength, bravery, and honor (e.g. bow and arrow) have been classified as unacceptable by various societies (Van Creveld, 1991). According to Mayor, “wounds in the back were never honorable” and “archers were not models of bravery since they shot from afar, avoiding direct confrontation” (Mayor, 2008). Technological advancements in weaponry have also been seen as eroding honor in the battlefield as “a leveler of those heroic and chivalric traits that ought to be the essence of the warrior...technology, instead of being a way to enhance male power in warfare, actually undermined any moral claims the warrior might have, because he was not fighting as his own pure self” (Braudy, 2005). *Appendix 1* provides additional

excerpts obtained from the literature review related to the acceptability of an attack, weapon, or act of violence that led to the identification of the Factor 1 category.

*Factor 2. Visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence*

In warfare, not all weaponry has been optimized just for killing and there have been numerous non-utilitarian factors that have played an important role in the design of weapons, including aesthetics. The way an act of violence unfolds visually, the type of terror that is inflicted on the observers due to the visual impact of an act of violence, the demonstration of power and strength, and symbolism have all played an important role in warfare choices. These factors are impacted by culture and may also impact proclivity towards certain types of weapons and tactics. Even at the expense of a weapon's effectiveness, weapons have been designed or decorated to demonstrate power or to terrify the enemy (Van Creveld, 1991; Potts & Hayden, 2010). "Noise too is part of warfare. It frightens and disorients the enemy and signals the attacker's cohesion" (Potts & Hayden, 2010). Early firearms performed poorly compared to bows and arrows and mechanical artillery in regard to reliability, accuracy, rate of fire, and power but they were still used by some, possibly, because the most valuable attribute of these early firearms was the noise that they made (Van Creveld, 1991). Additionally, there are several examples through history where the construction of very large weapons could have been to impress and, by so doing so, either prevent war or obtain a psychological advantage (Van Creveld, 1991). According to Van Creveld, "though display for its own sake has always been an important consideration, much of the effort that went into

decoration of a weapon can be explained in some cases to terrify the enemy by confronting him with monstrous devices” (Van Creveld, 1991). In addition to confronting the enemy with terrifying weapons, measures were taken by the warriors themselves to appear more terrifying or more powerful, whether with painted faces and bodies like the berserkers or the males of the Suebi tribe who tied their hair into a topknot to appear taller and more powerful in battle. According to Roman historian Tacitus, the Harii, tribe would “black their shields and dye their bodies, and choose pitch dark nights for their battles. The shadowy, awe-inspiring appearance of such a ghoulish army inspires mortal panic...” (Braudy, 2005). *Appendix 1* provides additional excerpts obtained from the literature review related to the visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence that led to the identification of the Factor 2 category.

The evaluation of the information collected from historic warfare examples and identification of the two categories of factors from that information allowed for the refinement of the two preliminary research questions to develop a more specific hypothesis for the next phase of this study.

*Hypothesis:*

- Cultural factors, specifically views about acceptability or visual impact (Factors 1 and 2 described above) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to certain weapons and tactics, including CBRN weapons.

*Null hypothesis*

- Cultural factors, specifically views about acceptability or visual impact (Factors 1 and 2 described above) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may not be important factors that influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to certain weapons and tactics, including CBRN weapons.

## **Stage 2. Survey Terrorist Statements**

First person information on the opinions of terrorists was needed for this study; however, such information can be difficult to obtain directly from terrorists and must be inferred based on open source research and analysis. Therefore, for this study, terrorist statements were assessed for the insight they provided into terrorist's views on tactics, violent actions, or weapons, were reviewed and collected from open sources and categorized for analysis. Terrorists selected for statement review were identified from official US government terrorist profiles (e.g. nctc.gov; fbi.gov) and open-source collections of terrorist statements (e.g. West Point's Combating Terrorism Center; The Haverford College Global Terrorism Research Project).

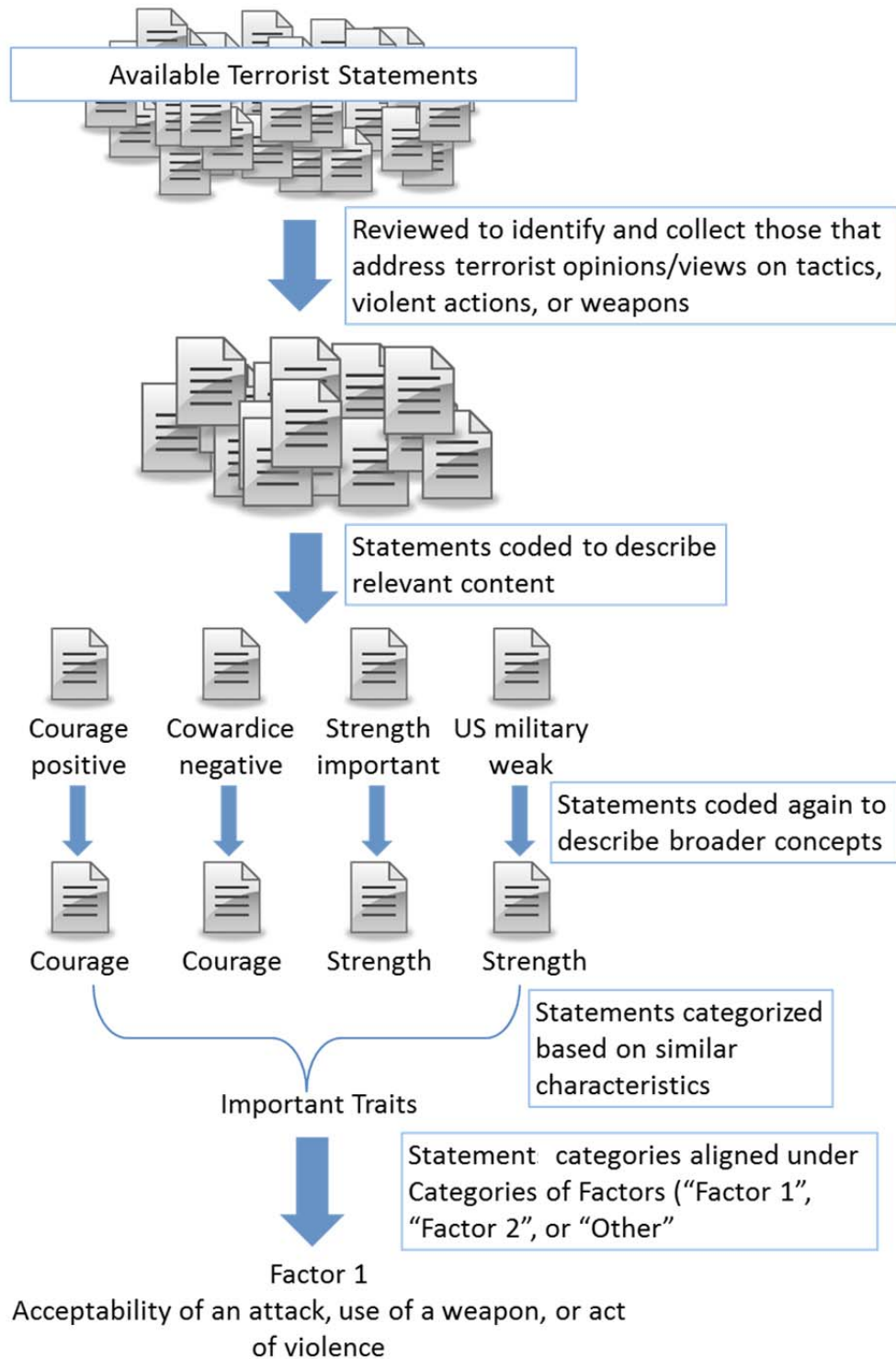
- **“Terrorist Statement”** is defined here as any means of first person communication by any AQ or AQ-linked individuals or groups that provide insight into terrorist views on tactics, violent actions, or weapons. Statements by individuals that influenced contemporary AQ ideology are also included. Some examples include: verbal statements, letters, books, manifestos, oaths, rules, official media outlet statements, AQ-linked magazines, and interviews with terrorist-linked individuals that provide insight into individual or terrorist group

opinions and views. A list of the statements reviewed for this study can be found in *Appendix 2*.

- Terrorist statements used for this study were unclassified, publicly available statements that were translated into English when needed.
- Multiple open-sources were used to identify a sample of approximately 250 statements. Resources with collections of terrorist statements used, included the NEFA Foundation, publicintelligence.net, The Jamestown Foundation, globalsecurity.org, West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC), The Investigative Project on Terrorism, The Haverford College Global Terrorism Research Project, The Middle East Media Research Institute, news websites (BBC, CNN, Jakarta Post etc...), and published compilations of terrorist statements. Collection of statements was conducted from January 2012 to September 2012. Statements made at any time before September 2012 were included in this study - any statements made available after September 2012 were not included in this study.

Pertinent statements were collected, reviewed, coded, and categorized through an iterative process. First, each statement or multiple portions thereof were reviewed and coded. Each code was a word or short phrase that described the relevant content of the statement. Next, the statements and their codes were reviewed again and the codes were revised to capture broader themes and concepts of the statements. Examples include statements that address courage, mercy, moderation, or public opinion. The codes were

then used to organize and group the statements into broader categories based on similar characteristics. Through this process, the codes and categories were checked for inconsistencies and bias and revised as needed. The categorized statements were then aligned under one of the two categories of factors (Factor 1: Acceptability; Factor 2: Visual impact) identified from the literature review in Step1 (Figure 2). If categories were identified that did not fit under one of the two categories of factors but were of interest and merited further consideration, they were aligned under an “other” classification (e.g. importance of environmental health, disease, or ideas about magic).



**Figure 2: Terrorist Statement Collection and Categorization**



### **Stage 3. Analysis**

The terrorist statements were analyzed to explore how the two categories of factors identified in Stage 1 (Factor 1: Acceptability; Factor 2: Visual Impact) may impact terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons.

- Terrorist views about tactics, actions, and weapons were used to examine if the acceptability or visual impact (Factors 1 and 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may be of importance to terrorists. The terrorist statements were reviewed and analyzed to identify themes and trends for the two factors (acceptability or visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence).
- Lessons were drawn from both historic warfare examples and the themes and trends identified by reviewing the terrorist statements to assess how acceptability or visual impact (Factors 1 and 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons.

Using historic warfare examples and terrorist statements, this study identified factors not widely addressed in current counterterrorism and CBRN literature that may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. To do this, it explored the various ways certain cultural factors may influence either positive or negative views about CBRN use and how that may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. This study could not definitively identify or quantify factors that will or will not influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Given the difficulty in obtaining direct evidence

about terrorist views related to these factors, this study is based on indirect information and the assessments are speculative.

The analysis for this study was based on both historic warfare examples and the views presented by terrorists in their statements. Terrorist statements may not always reflect the actual beliefs and intentions of the authors and may only be meant for propaganda purposes. Although this can limit insight into and certainty about the true views of those individuals, these statements are still useful because they provide insight into what the authors choose to address and believe is important to their constituents. For example, although a terrorist may not believe in showing mercy to his enemy, he may choose to discuss the importance of mercy because he believes mercy is important to the audience he is trying to reach. Terrorist statements offer indications about factors important in terrorist decision-making such as key values, beliefs, and aversions; therefore, they provide a useful tool when examining terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study used historic examples in conjunction with terrorist statements to explore how cultural factors may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. To supplement the terrorist statements and the historic warfare examples that form the basis of this study's findings, academic literature on terrorism and studies of Islamic symbolism and terrorist visual propaganda provided additional support.

A variety of factors are likely to influence terrorist weapon choices such as interest in inflicting mass casualties, financial status, and target vulnerability. These and a number of other elements are also likely to impact terrorist proclivity towards or aversion to CBRN weapons. Historic warfare cases reviewed indicate the acceptability (Factor 1) and visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence impacted proclivity or aversion to certain weapons and tactics. These factors may similarly influence terrorist views about weapons and tactics, including CBRN weapons. The results of this examination are presented in the following Results and Discussion chapter.

The first section of the Results and Discussion review terrorist statements that address the importance of public opinion. Public opinion is an important element of the discussions that follow on the acceptability (Factor 1) or visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence. The next section examines the importance of

the acceptability of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence (Factor 1) on terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Specifically, this section addresses how ideas about honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, brutality, suffering, death, and past warfare traditions and ideals may influence terrorist and terrorist constituent views about CBRN weapons. The following section discusses how the visual impact, aesthetics, and symbolism (Factor 2) may influence terrorist and terrorist constituent views about CBRN weapons. The final section of the Results and Discussion chapter addresses the “Other” category to briefly examine how environmental health, disease, and magic may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This “Other” category is composed of additional factors that were not related to the Factor 1 and Factor 2 categories but that were identified as topics of interest during the review of data from historic warfare examples and terrorist statements.

The following factors examined by this study were categorized under Factor 1 - the acceptability of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence based on ideas about:

- Honor
- Courage
- Physical strength
- Military prowess
- Masculinity
- Brutality
- Suffering
- Death

- Warfare traditions

The following factors examined by this study were categorized under Factor 2 - the visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence:

- Use of imagery and symbolism
- Terrorizing imagery
- Violent or gruesome imagery

Although not the primary focus of this study, the following topics were categorized under “Other” and were examined briefly by this study:

- Environmental health
- Disease and starvation
- Magic and myth

## **Public Opinion**

Terrorist statements highlight the importance of public opinion. The opinions of both the public and fellow terrorists about terrorist acts are an important consideration to some terrorists, based on the statements reviewed. Therefore, public opinion can play a role in terrorist proclivity towards or aversion to certain weapons or tactics. Several statements, including those by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Adam Gadahn, Abu Huthayfa, and Ayman al-Zawahiri emphasize the importance of how actions are viewed by the Muslim

public and fellow group members and how important Muslim public support is to the success of jihad. Anwar al-Awlaki recommends actions that do not target citizens of countries where public opinion is supportive of Muslim causes, terrorist organizations, or their actions. Several statements discuss the importance of not carrying out actions that will damage the reputation of those that undertake them while carrying out actions that the Muslim public will understand and agree with. Ayman al-Zawahiri and Usama bin Laden state that the Muslim people must feel that the Mujahidin love them, care about them, and defend them. The following are some examples of key terrorist statements related to this topic. Additionally, according to Long, AQ considers the opinions of Muslims when carrying out terrorist attacks and the potential negative impact that certain actions can have on the group's reputation (Long, 2006). AQ wants to "avoid a negative public image and is not blinded by zeal and it will formulate plans carefully that will play well with Islamic audiences" (Long, 2006).

- "I say to you: that we are in a battle and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma." (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- "And finally, we mustn't allow our lawless enemies to provoke us with their evil, sadistic and murderous crimes into crossing the boundaries laid down by Allah and His Prophet or doing anything which may have negative repercussions on the image of the Jihad and reputation of the Mujahidin." (Adam Gadahn)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

The statements reviewed also highlight a recognition that there is a need to effectively communicate to terrorist constituents the reasons for terrorist attacks so they understand and support terrorist actions and mission. Some statements reviewed also provide details about the types of actions that would or would not be seen favorably by the public.

- “... striking of petroleum plants will be carried out, especially pipelines where no humans will suffer from striking them or tankers which the infidels command and work on. Thus, striking plants and factories when there are no workers in them avoids harming Muslims and emphasizes that fact (to the public). Properly clarifying for the masses that they are in critical circumstances which compel us to do this and that stopping the petroleum sectors from working will not harm our people at all, God willing.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “We talked previously about the failure of the mujahideen on the inside to propagate their vision, goals and slogans in a clear way easy enough for the people to comprehend and support. They did not have a planned communicable public relations campaign capable of mobilizing their base, backers or supporters. They only issued few ineffective communiqués. When the “Moslem Brotherhood” took control of the campaign in exile they abandoned all forms of media/publicity inside Syria and limited it to the outside; they waged a propaganda campaign laden with fabrications, lies and exaggerations –especially regarding the events in the city of Hamah- that failed to garner support or produce

results. Their behavior was befitting of news reporters in search of high ratings rather than revolutionaries trying to win the hearts and minds of the masses both inside the country and out. This deficiency was evident to the observant people, and the worst thing about this harsh lesson is that the efforts and sacrifices of thousands of the faithful, and the blood of martyrs went in vain.” (Unknown author. From “Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria”)

- “We should develop the speech of al-Qaida to be convincing, easy, and clear. Additionally, it has to be sensitive to the people’s issues and suffering and to the general public...we need to pay attention to the words and meaning of our statements in order to avoid words that could be used for different meanings within the Islamic law...Some people do not like the word agents and consider it insulting...We need to stay away from words that will affect the people’s support to the Mujahidin.” (Unknown author most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or Atiyya)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

In the statements reviewed for this study, none were identified that indicate Muslim public opinion is not important and should not be considered, although this does not indicate that concern about public opinion is universal among all terrorists. This sensitivity to the opinions of others is an important element of the acceptability (Factor 1) and visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence and is discussed further below.



### **Factor 1. Acceptability of an Attack, Weapon, or Act of Violence**

Honor and related traits such as courage/cowardice, strength/weakness, military prowess, and masculinity may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Terrorist statements, supplemented by literature about societies from which many terrorist threats emanate and studies of Islamic imagery highlight the importance of these traits.

However, terrorist statements provided limited detail describing how specific actions, weapons, or tactics specifically relate to honor, courage, strength, military prowess, and masculinity. Therefore, additional sources of information, such as terrorism and warfare literature were used to inform the following discussion on how these traits may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

The following section first examines the importance of honor and related traits to terrorists as well as societies from which many terrorist threats emanate. Then, terrorist statements, in conjunction with past warfare examples inform a discussion on how cultural factors such as honor, courage/cowardice, strength/weakness, military prowess, and masculinity may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. As important drivers of behavior and belief, these cultural factors have played a significant role in views about and use of certain weapons and tactics in past warfare. Although honor, courage, strength, military prowess, and masculinity are often related, they are distinct and can influence views about violent actions, weapons, and tactics differently. For example, an act of violence may show bravery and strength but may not convey honor. Additionally, ideas about honor, courage/cowardice, strength/weakness, military prowess, and masculinity can vary culturally and have in the past, differed in how they

influenced views about weapons and tactics. Therefore, these factors may also influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons in a variety of distinct ways.

### *The Importance of Honor, Courage, Strength and Military Prowess to Terrorists*

Terrorist statements reviewed for this study highlight the importance of honor, courage/cowardice, strength/weakness, and military prowess to terrorists. For example, Adam Gadahn highlights that Muslims, unlike their enemies, are “people of courage, honor, decency, chivalry, and ethics who selflessly sacrifice themselves for the noblest cause on earth”. Gadahn also says this is why every Muslim and “Mujahid must continue to take the high road and protect the moral high ground... which we have fought so long and hard to secure”. Even if these traits are not of personal importance to some of the authors of these statements, their decision to highlight these topics in their statements indicates an awareness of their importance to their intended audiences.

- “We call you to be a people of manners, principles, honor, and purity, to reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, and trading with interest. We call you to all of this that you may be freed from that which you have become caught up in...It is saddening to tell you that you are the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind.” (Usama bin Laden)
- They pass the traits of dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness and sacrifice from father to father. They are most delivering and steadfast at war. They inherit these values from their ancestors, even from the Time of the Ignorance before Islam. (Usama bin Laden)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

More specifically, honor was commonly referenced in the statements reviewed, although there was often little discussion on what specific actions are considered honorable. This is a sentiment that is further reinforced by Bowman's statement that many terrorist statements often mention "honor" or "manhood", indicating the importance of these factors to terrorists (Bowman, 2007). The terrorist statements discuss the importance of honor, the need to punish those that violate Muslim honor, and how honor is impacted by a willingness and ability to fight. For example, Abu Yahya al-Libi states that many people would rather be killed than "have their honor spoken about" and Abu Mus'ab al-Suri highlights the importance of defending and preserving "the value system, morals, traditions, and customs inherited, such as honor and dignity".

- "Sharia laws state that it is permissible to kill anyone who transgresses on Muslims, their religion, their honor, or their belongings, even if the person is Muslim." (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- "The jihad movement must come closer to the masses, defend their honor, fend off injustice, and lead them to the path of guidance and victory." (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- "O Islamic nation! Stand up against oppression and tyranny, repression and aggression, humiliation and abasement. Bread is not dearer to us than our religion, and our property is not worthier than our honor, and death is not more difficult for us than life in humiliation and abasement!" (Usama bin Laden)

- “Those who love life and are afraid to fight against the enemies of God will most likely have no significant role [in the fight]; their cowardice and failure to join fight will result in loss of homes, honor, and money, the preservation of which caused them to avoid Jihad in the first place.” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group)
- “The issue...proceeds to instruct the militants that it is their responsibility to master the techniques described in the issue and their honor is dependent upon this.” (Unknown author; From Al Battar Magazine Issue No 6 or 7)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

The importance of courage to terrorists is also demonstrated in several statements reviewed for this study. Statements praise courage, criticize cowardice, and describe certain courageous or cowardly acts. For example, Abdullah Azzam and Abu Yahya al-Libi discuss Allah’s hatred of cowardice and Abu Mus’ab al-Suri praises the strength, courage, and fighting skills of the “Arab and Berber inhabitants”. Adam Gadahn praises Nidal Hasan, whose attack on Fort Hood, “reminded us of how much pride and joy a single act of resistance and courage can instill in the hearts of Muslims everywhere....”. Several statements by Adam Gadahn, Usama bin Laden, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi discuss the cowardice of the US military and its methods of fighting, a topic that will be discussed in greater detail below.

- “Jihad is built on two main pillars. Patience which reveals bravery of the heart, and generosity, by which one spends ones wealth and spirit... The Prophet (saw)

also underlined two of the most evil of faults: miserliness, and cowardice. These faults lead to the corruption of the soul and deterioration of the society.”

(Abdullah Azzam)

- “The Imam must be strong-hearted and severe so that he can fight the enemies and those who leave Islam, for cowardice may prevent him from doing this. Due to this trait which Allah hates, he will not fulfill the most important goal of leadership...”(Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “...those who love life and are afraid to fight against the enemies of God will most likely have no significant role [in the fight]; their cowardice and failure to join fight will result in loss of homes, honor, and money...” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Usama bin Laden highlights the importance of military prowess and a habit of combat: the “lions of God have a habit of combat”. In the reviewed statements, those that want to fight are described as strong and commendable while statements by Usama bin Laden mock US forces for a lack of fighting spirit, as illustrated by examples of American retreat from combat. Abu Bakr Naji equates the need for technology and “gadgets” in battle with weakness. Additionally, Usama bin Laden implies that failure to achieve success when carrying out an action, hesitation to act, fear of loss of life, retreat in battle, and getting help from others are signs of weakness.

- “We have seen particularly during the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage cold wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after two explosions, and also after the two explosions in Aden they ran in less than 24 hours, this was also repeated in Somalia.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youth to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations. These youth are commendable and praiseworthy.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The human structure of the enemy is weak with regards to battle. He compensates for that by using gadgets, (but) it is not possible for him to depend on them forever.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “We must rush to seek God Almighty’s forgiveness from sins, particularly the grave sins. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “Avoid the seven grave sins: polytheism, sorcery, killing, unless permitted by God, usury, taking the money of orphans, fleeing from combat, and slandering innocent faithful women.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “America strove to assassinate or capture Usama bin Laden and to tame the Taliban so that they might transform into a weak government like the rest of the countries that claim they are Islamic, and America was prepared to use all manner of violence and dirty, covert operations to that end. America did not carry out many of her plans due to the hesitation of her leaders to assume responsibility and

the losses of life of their soldiers. This is an indication of the weakness of our enemy.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “If we are not violent in our jihad and if softness seizes us that will be a major factor in the loss of the element of strength, which is one of the pillars of the Umma of the Message. The Umma which possesses strength is the Umma which is able to protect the positions it has won and it is the Umma which boldly faces horrors and has the firmness of mountains. These are the good qualities which we have lost in this age...Among the differences and one of the reasons for the success of the Abbasids and the failure of the others is the Abbasids' violence and the others' softness and protection of the blood (of others).” (Abu Bakr Naji)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

These terrorist statements referencing honor, courage/cowardice, strength, and military prowess demonstrate their importance to some terrorists. It is not surprising that terrorists value honor and related traits such as courage, strength, and military prowess. These traits play an important and extensive role in various societies including in many aspects of honor-shame cultures (Pryce-Jones, 2009; Patai, 2010). Here, a brief review of some of the literature on honor-shame cultures provides some examples of how honor and related traits such as bravery, strength, and military prowess may be important to certain societies or groups. It is important to point out that concepts of and definitions for honor are not universal and can differ across various cultures (Bowman, 2007). According to Pryce-Jones, in honor-shame cultures, people rely on concepts of shame

and honor that stem from regional and ancient tribalism and acquisition of honor, pride, dignity, and respect and the avoidance of shame, disgrace, and humiliation are key motivating factors (Pryce-Jones, 2009). According to Bowman, Islamic honor includes the obligation to maintain at least the appearance of power and control and appearing strong is what most of those brought up according to Muslim ideas of honor cared about more than anything else (Bowman, 2007).

Honor, related traits such as courage and strength, and tribal influence play an important role in a number of societies where terrorist threats against the US emanate, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen (Corstange, 2008). Iraq provides one example, where Bedouin tribalism is a crucial element of the Sunni Arab identity in the region (Yaphe, 2000; Todd, 2006; Khan, 2007). Many Iraqi Arabs consider the Bedouin tribal and moral code as an ideal to live up to. The Bedouins are seen as figures from the past or as living ancestors linking the modern day to concepts of ancient glory (Patai, 2010). In one of the statements collected and reviewed for this study, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, highlights the importance of Arabic roots when discussing the values of the Yemeni people.

- “During the extended jihadist experience in Afghanistan (1984—92), the Yemeni mujahideen were the second largest group among the Arab youths who came to participate. That was also the case during the Second Term of the Arab Afghans’ jihad in Afghanistan (1996—2001). They were famous for their bravery, their equestrian skills, and their steadfastness to their Arab roots. (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)



According to multiple sources, many of the Sunni Arabs of Iraq seek to emulate the Bedouin Tribal ideal as the best representation of “Arabness” and tribal traditions and values remain important to many Iraqis (Otterman, 2003; Todd, 2006; Bowman, 2007; Patai, 2010). Honor, dignity, self-respect, bravery, manliness, hospitality, generosity, gallantry, and attachment to and mastery of arms are dominant, prized elements in such societies that highly value Bedouin culture. Individual behavior often revolves around impressing others with such qualities and honor, dignity and self-respect depend on the views of and respect from others, highlighting the importance of one’s outward behavior (Patai, 2010). Shame and loss of dignity that comes when honor is lost is also a central component of Bedouin social values. For men, honor includes acting bravely in the face of danger, particularly in battle and honorable actions include raiding, “blood revenge”, hospitality, and generosity (Todd, 2006; Bowman, 2007; Pryce-Jones, 2009; Patai, 2010). Conversely, according to Patai, personality traits most condemned in Bedouin society include cowardice and meekness (Patai, 2010). Fighting in general is linked to one’s honor and “the aggressive propensity manifested in it was considered an honorable expression of manliness” (Patai, 2010).

Visual imagery used in terrorist propaganda provides further indication of the importance of honor, courage, strength, and military prowess to terrorists. The Combating Terrorism Center’s (CTC) Islamic Imagery project examined the most common images used by Islamic terrorists and multiple images revolve around these traits. Such imagery provides additional information, beyond the terrorist statements

reviewed, on terrorist views about these traits and the importance of various symbols to Islamic terrorists.

For example, the lion is an important and popular symbol in Islamic culture that evokes bravery, strength, and valor for Muslim audiences. The lion is generally associated with the early companions of the Prophet and their heroic actions in religious battle and is used in terrorist propaganda to convey honor (CTC, 2006). The horse is another important symbol in both Arabic and Islamic culture. Since pre-Islamic times, the horse has been identified with chivalry, bravery, victory, speed, and fierceness in battle (CTC, 2006). The eagle is used to denote fierceness in battle and generally suggests qualities of strength, power, speed, and victory in the jihadi struggle (CTC, 2006).

Images of certain weapons that are symbolically important in Islamic culture are commonly used in jihadi visual propaganda (CTC, 2006). Depictions of weapons can be broadly categorized as either modern or pre-modern. Pre-modern weaponry includes swords or spears while modern weapons include rifles and bombs. Swords are seen as noble weapons that embody the purity and righteousness associated with early Islamic heroes and warfare (CTC, 2006). Depictions of the sword indicate a desire to link the current jihadi movement and its aims to those of the early Islamic ancestors in order to legitimize and depict current activities as “the modern extensions of successful early Islamic campaigns” (CTC, 2006). When combining pre-modern and modern weapons, such as a sword and a rifle, the sword can be used to give a modern weapon a more noble

connotation, and link it to religiously legitimate and honorable jihadi campaigns (CTC, 2006).

Given the likely importance of honor, courage, strength, and military prowess to terrorists, this study suggests these factors will influence terrorist views and decision-making. The following sections expand on how these traits have influenced views about tactics and weapons in warfare and how they may therefore also influence terrorist proclivity for or aversion to CBRN weapons.

#### *Impact of Honor, Courage, Strength, and Military Prowess on CBRN Weapon Use*

This study suggests honor, courage, strength, and military prowess can influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons, given the importance of these traits to terrorists and their constituents and the role these traits have played in past warfare decisions about weapons and tactics. Some terrorists may view CBRN weapons as conflicting with key values such as honor, courage, strength, and military prowess, thus limiting their interest in CBRN weapons use. Additionally, opportunities may exist to dissuade terrorist CBRN use by linking these weapons to negative concepts such as dishonor, cowardice, and weakness. Limited focus on honor, courage, strength, and military prowess in terrorism studies, especially related to CBRN use, restricts insight into terrorist and terrorist constituent views about CBRN weapons in relation to these traits. The following discussion aims to address this topic by exploring the potential for these traits to impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This discussion is informed

by examples of how honor, courage, strength, and military prowess have impacted views about the acceptability of certain weapons in warfare.

Honor and related traits have played an important role in the acceptability of certain tactics and weapons and their use or nonuse in warfare, including CBRN weapons and can therefore provide insight into how they may also influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons (Mayor, 2008). Through history, conflicting ideas arose over which weapons and tactics were acceptable or questionable and one of the prime reasons for resistance to new weapons was the belief that they were dishonorable (Braudy, 2005; Mayor, 2008). CBRN weapons have also been included in the list of “unfair or “unacceptable” weapons (Mayor, 2008). In many cultures, both ancient and modern, CB weapons (often referred to in the literature as poisons) have been seen as more repugnant and dishonorable than conventional weapons and “...in most societies throughout history, poisons were explicitly or implicitly deemed inappropriate weapons of war” (Cole, 1998; Coleman, 2005; Mayor, 2008). Honor, courage, physical strength, and military prowess were key qualities in warfare and CB weapons undermined these values (Mayor, 2008).

### *Long Distance Weapons*

A primary reason why some weapons were viewed as undermining honor, courage, physical strength, and military prowess was because they enabled their users to kill from a distance and from behind cover (Van Creveld, 1991). The closer one was to the enemy in battle, the greater the honor (Braudy, 2005). The sword, ax, and other close-combat weapons emphasized strength and military prowess in battle (Van Creveld,

1991; Braudy, 2005). Conversely, long distance weapons such as the crossbow and firearms were viewed by some as cowardly and dishonorable because they made “valor superfluous” in war (Van Creveld, 1991). A charge into the ranks of the enemy was often considered the most honorable way to wage war and these weapons made this unnecessary (Van Creveld, 1991; Braudy, 2005). Long distance weapons, such as modern long range missiles, can also imply an unwillingness to face the enemy (Mayor, 2008). Additionally, using such long distance weapons was considered more murder than warfare because the victim was unable to retaliate (Van Creveld, 1991). For example, many believed archers were cowards because they shot safely from a distance and avoided direct confrontation (Van Creveld, 1991; Mayor, 2008). During the Renaissance, and as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, firearms were also held in contempt and like archers, users were seen as cowards and at times were killed for using these weapons (Van Creveld, 1991). Even as the effectiveness of firearms became evident, tradition still limited the use of these weapons and some societies were slow to accept firearms (Braudy, 2005). However, although slow to gain general acceptance, overtime, they came to be generally accepted as conventional weapons (Van Creveld, 1991).

In World War I, trench warfare and new weaponry resulted in an evolution away from past concepts of “honorable warfare” where the “supposedly supreme test of warrior resolve, hand-to-hand combat, was hardly ever possible” and death came from a distance from bombs and machine guns (Braudy, 2005). Despite this evolution away from “honorable” warfare, examples of chivalric hand-to-hand-like combat could be still found

and were often revered, such as pilots fighting battles against each other in the air war (Braudy, 2005). During WWI, the importance of courage and disdain for cowardice, retention of martial elements of the Samurai culture, and Japanese soldiers' fascination with what Luft calls the "culture of the bayonet" influenced Japanese fighting tactics (Luft, 2010). The Japanese preserved a tradition of hand-to-hand combat even while others preferred killing from a distance and as a result, the Japanese often led to a higher number of casualties (Luft, 2010). Even against gun fire, the Japanese soldiers were eager to charge their enemy with bayonets and felt disdain for fighters who used more conservative methods. The Japanese believed precautions to avoid casualties were "unworthy" and they were therefore more willing to take risks in battle while they viewed their more cautious enemies as weak and cowardly (Luft, 2010).

Today, there is less reluctance to use long distance weapons and in some societies, such weapons are highly valued. Additionally, the development, at great expense, of guided weapons has been driven by the need for more accuracy and reduction of civilian casualties (Potts & Hayden, 2010). However, the value of such attributes of long distance weapons may vary across different groups and still serve as a source of condemnation by some. For example, while fighting the Gulf War, the US tried to commit relatively few ground troops and was mocked by Saddam Hussein "as a collection of degenerate societies unwilling to sacrifice the men and face the body count that warrior societies like his own took for granted as the badge of honor" (Braudy, 2005). Whether Saddam Hussein truly preferred tactics that would lead to a greater body count over the security of long distance weapons or not, the use of long distance weapons

provided a propaganda opportunity for Hussein to suggest the US was cowardly and to diminish its warrior status that likely resonated with some people.

Many AQ terrorists are likely to value honor, based on the statements reviewed and similar to the views expressed in historic warfare examples, terrorists may also believe that honor must be risked to be validated. It is possible that some terrorists may also view certain long distance weapons negatively when their use requires little risk to the attacker and little need for the attacker to prove their military prowess and physical strength. Terrorist statements highlight negative views about long distance attacks that mirror views about the unacceptability of long distance weapons in past warfare examples and the dishonor, cowardice, and weakness in not meeting your enemy face-to-face. These statements specifically highlight the cowardice of the West for fighting from a distance.

Statements by Adam Gadahn, Usama bin Laden, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and spread by AQAP in an Inspire magazine imply that attacking from a distance, such as by aircraft, is cowardly and demonstrates weakness and a lack of a fighting spirit. Adam Gadahn clarifies this view further by stating that it is cowardly to “wage wars from behind the controls of a pilotless aircraft”. Usama bin Laden stated that the US must use air strikes to “conceal their most prominent point of weakness, which is the fear, cowardliness, and the absence of combat spirit among U.S. soldiers”. Further, Usama bin Laden says that the US military “are too cowardly and too fearful to meet the young people of Islam face to face”. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is disappointed that jihad in Iraq takes the form of “mines planted, rockets launched, and mortars shelling from afar”. He

states that “the Iraqi brothers still prefer safety...where nothing frightens them” and claims this apprehensive attitude is not compatible with victory. As noted above but also relevant here, Abu Bakr Naji equates the need for technology and “gadgets” in battle with weakness. Additionally, although not part of the data collection, a recent statement from ISIL to the US also equates cowardice and not fighting face to face...“I say to America the Islamic Caliphate has been established and we will not stop...Don’t be cowards and attack us with drones. Instead send your soldiers, the ones we humiliated in Iraq. We will humiliate them everywhere, God willing, and we will raise the flag of Allah in the White House” (Mosa, 2004).

- “We must always remember that we are different than the Zionists and Crusaders with whom we are locked in combat: We are not cowards who wage wars from behind the controls of pilotless aircraft.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “The raid [Clinton administration missile attacks in response to Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania – August 1898) has also proven that the American army is going downhill in its morale. Its members are too cowardly and too fearful to meet the young people of Islam face to face.” (Usama bin Laden)
- "...Jihad here (Iraq) unfortunately (takes the form of) mines planted, rockets launched, and mortars shelling from afar. The Iraqi brothers still prefer safety and returning to the arms of their wives, where nothing frightens them. Sometimes the groups have boasted among themselves that not one of them has been killed or captured. We have told them in our many sessions with them that safety and



victory are incompatible... that the [Islamic] nation cannot live without the aroma of martyrdom and the perfume of fragrant blood spilled on behalf of God.” (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Although the statements reviewed do not indicate that terrorists also view CBR weapons as long distance weapons, it is possible that terrorist views about long distance attacks have the potential to influence terrorist views about CBRN use. In warfare, negative views about long-distance weapons have played an important role in how CB weapons were viewed. One reason for the unacceptability of CB weapons in historic warfare examples has been their categorization as long distance weapons (this characterization can also be applied to R weapons). CB weapons have been characterized as dishonorable and cowardly because, like arrows and guns, CB weapons allowed attacks from a position of safety without risking battle and death (Mayor, 2008). Poison weapons were believed to corrupt “the meaning of courage and skill on the battlefield for both victor and victim alike. A warrior's valor, physical strength, and prowess were nullified” by the use of CB weapons (Mayor, 2008). This link between CB weapons and long distance weapons in past warfare examples highlight the possibility that terrorists could also characterize CBR weapons in this way. There is also potential for strategic counterterrorism communications efforts to leverage these historic warfare examples to portray CBR weapons as dishonorable or cowardly long distance weapons to encourage negative terrorist views such weapons.

Terrorists that share the views of Adam Gadahn, Usama bin Laden, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi that the West is cowardly for their long distance attacks may be more likely to view CBR weapons negatively if they recognize the link between CBR weapons and long distance weapons. Terrorists may believe that CBR weapons allow anyone to attack an enemy from the safety of cover with little risk to themselves and little need to prove their military prowess, skill, and physical strength. Some terrorists may believe that individuals who use weapons that kill from a distance are weak, afraid to face their enemy, lazy, or passive participants who sit back and wait for their enemy to die instead of killing the enemy themselves. These terrorists may also be reluctant to use a CBR weapon in these cases, because they could be viewed by others as weak, lazy, sneaky, or cowardly. Additionally, long distance weapons depersonalize killing and today's fighters are often able to kill without having to look at their victims (Potts & Hayden, 2010). However, terrorists may not want to depersonalize the killing of their enemy. A desire to depersonalize the killing of an enemy could be seen as weakness, cowardice, or feminine (discussed further below in the section on masculinity). Terrorists may be less likely to view N weapons negatively with respect to attacking from a distance because nuclear weapons are more easily equated to a conventional explosion, a familiar method already commonly used by terrorists. N weapons, although certainly different from a conventional bomb, can resemble an explosive and therefore may be more familiar to terrorists as an acceptable method of attack. It is important to note that today, terrorists typically use long distance weapons, such as guns. However, although bombs and guns kill from a distance, their effects are more tangible and their impact on the victims is

more observable and immediate, therefore, the killing of their enemy is not as depersonalized. CB weapons also had the reputation for being an “insidious, subtle, and sneaky” way of attacking from a distance, further disparaging their use (Cole, 1998; Mayor, 2008). Depending on the dissemination method, (e.g. secretly spraying CBR material or leaving a device to contaminate a target) a CBR attack can also require less risk or traditional military skill for the attacker compared to other methods, such as using a gun.

### *Weakness*

CB weapons have also been and continue to be characterized as weapons of the weak or a “poor man’s bomb”, a characterization that could be seen as condescending to terrorists and their constituents (this assertion can also apply to R weapons). This classification does not apply to nuclear weapons, which are seen as technologically advanced weapons. The “poor man's bomb ... echoes its disdain for an equalizing weapon of the weak. Low-cost and efficient weapons of destruction are derided as an insufficient entry fee into the club of civilized warfare manned by industrial/ technological power” (Price, 1995).

Such statements about weapons of the weak or the poor man’s bomb may resonate with those that value warrior traditions and military prowess or where social approval, pride, and saving face are especially important. A need to project strength and military prowess may dissuade CBR use and statements about a poor man’s bomb could

dissuade those who feel that needing to rely on a poor man's bomb while others have "real" weaponry could harm their honor.

The view that CBR weapons are for the weak or poor may not be universal. Asahara, leader of the Aum Shinrikyo cult, found CBRN weapons attractive because they enabled him to feel that he alone had the power to destroy the world. They could offer him control over the death and rebirth of the world (Lifton, 1999). Similarly, some terrorists could disregard the negative association of CBR material to weapons for the weak and the poor and instead focus on their potential destructive power. Of the CBR modalities, BW would be the most likely to instill in terrorists a sense of power because they have the greatest potential to spread and, "destroy the world". Additionally, mastery of a BW could further instill a sense of power because it would require the ability to control living organisms. This ability to feel as though it is possible to control nature could instill a sense of power similar to that felt by Asahara.

Statements about the difficulty or technical inability of terrorists to develop and deploy certain CBRN weapons could be seen by some terrorists as an insult or accusation of ignorance which could lead to misinformation or bolster terrorist CBRN efforts. In these cases, the need to preserve honor and protect one's status when faced with criticism "can manifest itself in creative descriptions of facts or in the dismissal of conclusions, in order to protect one's reputation, avoid shame, and maintain respect. This cultural trait will generally take precedence over the accurate transmission of information" (Todd, 2006). Patai discusses the importance of rhetoric and a greater proclivity for exaggeration in some Arab societies (Patai, 2010). Commonly, statements are

exaggerated to express what one hoped to do or believed he was capable of doing in the future but “in reality, these statements were not followed up by serious or sustained efforts to translate them into action” and events the speaker wishes to happen are referred to as an accomplished fact (Patai, 2010). Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War, provides an example of behavior that placed an emphasis on personal honor and pride. "Saudi officers were so protective of their prestige and honor that they were willing to compromise tactical considerations to save face and such pride often skewed military judgments (Luft, 2010).

The use of exaggeration in some cultures should be considered when examining the terrorist CBRN threat and when assessing terrorist statements on CBRN weapons. Although some may claim to have a CBRN capability or a willingness to use that capability, those statements should not be blindly accepted without further consideration. A simple statement showing a willingness to obtain or use a CBRN weapon could be an exaggeration or a lie to protect one’s honor and is not enough to determine with high confidence the likelihood that someone will use that capability or is even interested in obtaining it.

Additionally, messages about the level of difficulty of obtaining and using CBRN weapons, if taken as an insult by terrorists, could provoke what Pryce-Jones calls a shame reaction that could lead to greater resolve and determination to develop that weapon instead of dissuading a terrorist from using it. Pryce-Jones provides an example of how certain messages about the level of difficulty of an action could be taken as an insult and bolster someone’s determination to carry out that action:

“A modern pump, some ambitious local leader thinks, will improve agriculture in his village. Money will flow in, and the credit will be his, he will earn a reputation as a patron. Warning him of technical obstacles, a consultant succeeds only in making the local leader feel ignorant, provoking a shame reaction that makes him dig in his heels. When the local leader, in power-challenge style, moves the issue higher up the decision-making hierarchy, he has already attached his honor to it. Installed, the pump encourages over irrigation, which exacerbates the salinity of the soil, precipitating the ruin of the village agriculture, the uselessness of the pump, and the waste of that resource. Instead of being blamed for promoting an imperfectly analyzed project, the local leader will be honored for knowing how to get his way” (Pryce-Jones, 2009).

This example provides a cautionary tale of how certain messages about CBRN weapons could inadvertently influence terrorist views about such weapons, further demonstrating the importance of understanding cultural influence on terrorist decision-making as it relates to honor and shame.

### *Honor Codes*

One way in which cultural factors such as honor or courage can impact both terrorist views and action is through honor codes or rules of war. As discussed above, honor is important to terrorists and may influence terrorist ideas about conducting violent acts, including CBRN attacks. These ideas can form the basis of an honor code that sets

limits on certain behaviors, weapons, or tactics based on key values, such as what is honorable and acceptable. Restrictions that limit terrorist actions based on honor codes could similarly restrict CBRN weapons. Honor codes, described by Braudy, are “the shaping of male physical violence into socially acceptable ... forms” that become part of custom and tradition (Braudy, 2005). They set limits on what a fighter can and cannot do so that they “continue to be regarded as warriors, not as murderers or cowards” (French, 2004). Honor codes are diverse and reflect the values of different cultures to ensure humanity, civilized restraint, honorable ideals, and humane weaponry (French, 2004; Braudy, 2005).

Terrorists are often characterized as without any rules or restraints compared to traditional warriors with honor codes and rules of war (French, 2004). However, this is not always the case and some terrorist statements reviewed by this study can be interpreted as referring to some form of an honor code. For example, Abu Yahya al-Libi describes American soldiers who “spill as much blood as they want to” as “barbaric”, while Ayman al-Zawahiri admonishes the US for its disregard for taboos and disrespect for the customs of wars and conflicts. Shaykh Abu Sufyan and Usama bin Laden talk about enemies who have forgotten the “basic morals of war” (Shaykh Abu Sufyan) or do not understand the “meaning of principles” (Usama bin Laden). Abu Yahya al-Libi states that “... enemies have no morals at which they might stop in their war, and therefore, they don't have - in their attempt to attain victory - a single method to which they stick and don't overstep”.

- “One should note that violence and coarseness must not transgress the limits of the Sharia and that one must pay heed to the benefit and harm (that results from) it, which the Sharia considers to be, in the rules of jihad. (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “This does not mean that the mujahideen respond in an indifferent way by which obtaining the traits of the butchering infidels or utilize their method in the fight, but the mujahideen have their own morals and sharia limitations and restrictions that aren’t absent from them and which they don’t avoid under any circumstance.” (As-Sahab Media)
- “As for America...it has been at war with the Muslims...committing the worst of atrocities towards them, imprisoning their men and women, crossing seas and oceans to commit mass killings of their women, children, elders and weak, and kidnapping their best...and they have unleashed and given free rein to their barbaric soldiers to spill as much blood, kidnap as many men and women, desecrate as much honor, plunder as much wealth as they want...” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “And finally, we mustn't allow our lawless enemies to provoke us with their evil, sadistic and murderous crimes into crossing the boundaries laid down by Allah and His Prophet...” (Adam Gadahn)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

These terrorist statements indicate that some form of an honor code can limit terrorist violence and this study suggests such codes may also influence terrorist



proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. Although the above statements do not specifically restrict CBRN weapons, the violent actions they do restrict could also apply to CBRN weapons. For example honor codes that limit conventional acts of violence that are considered “barbaric” could also be applied to CBRN weapons, which are typically characterized as barbaric. Some terrorist statements that address rules of war and limits to violence renounce coarseness, overstepping boundaries and basic morals of war, disregard for taboos, principles, and customs of war. As one example, use of excessively brutal weapons may be considered coarse, immoral, or overstepping of boundaries. These limitations to violence may or may not be applicable to CBRN weapons, depending on one’s perspective. For example, from one perspective, CBRN weapons may be viewed as excessively brutal. In this case, honor codes that restrict acts of excessive brutality could also apply to CBRN weapon use. From the alternative perspective, CBRN weapons may not be viewed as especially brutal compared to other, conventional methods and therefore their use would not be restricted. Additionally, the application of these rules can also vary across various CBRN modalities. One or more of the CBRN modalities could be considered more brutal than others, depending on what constitutes brutality and one’s views about death and suffering.

Although the statements reviewed in this study address rules of war and limitations to violence, they provide limited detail in what those rules of war are. For example, what constitutes coarseness, principles, boundaries, taboos, and customs of war. Therefore, greater insight into what these and other terms referenced in the statements mean are important to understanding how honor codes may also apply to CBRN weapons

and how ideas about coarseness, boundaries, or morality may align with notions about CBRN weapons. Awareness and understanding of terrorist honor codes or rules of war can provide insight into the types of violent actions or weapons that are deemed unacceptable to terrorists. This information can provide greater insight into the level of terrorist interest in or willingness to use one or more of the CBRN modalities as well as highlight opportunities to dissuade use of any CBRN weapons that violate honor codes.

Although honor codes may be important to some terrorists, it is likely that many could find it easy to carry out attacks that go against these codes if their actions can be justified. Therefore, although honor codes may limit CBRN use, they may be relatively easy for terrorists to ignore or to justify violations of those rules. For example, many terrorists are able to justify attacks that kill innocent Muslims if those Muslim casualties are avoided as much as possible or if there is no other way to fight the enemy. For example:

- “The Shari'ah permits Muslims to attack their enemies by night if they need to, although in such an attack one cannot distinguish noncombatant women and children from other persons who are combatants. All scholars quoted permit the use of night warfare even if it means killing women and children. This Hadith contains proof of the permissibility of attacking by night and of raiding those who have been reached by the call [to Islam] without giving them prior notice. Al-Nawawi's words, "if they are not intentionally targeted without necessity", mean that it is permissible to attack them by night when there is necessity.”( Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “So it becomes clear that there is a great need for research and prudence before carrying out any single operation so as to prevent or lessen the possibility of hurting Muslims. This is what is claimed and requested by shari'ah; as Al-Ghazali, may God have mercy on his soul, said: 'We know for sure that the objective of shari'ah is to reduce killing, as well as to stop it when it is possible; if we cannot stop it at least we can minimize it.' (Al-Mustasfa, 1:176).” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

(These considerations are discussed widely throughout the terrorism literature and will not be discussed in greater detail here).

Terrorist limitations to violence can be leveraged to demonstrate any apparent similarities between unacceptable actions or weapons and CBRN weapons. However, as noted above terrorists may be able to justify violating such restrictions. Therefore, honor codes may be important to some terrorists while others may not fully adhere to rules and restrictions.

### *CBRN Taboos*

Some terrorist statements were identified that suggest CBRN weapons are given special consideration compared to “conventional” weapons and tactics. This special consideration suggests terrorists may have some degree of aversion to CBRN weapons. This aversion may reflect terrorist adherence to a wider, global CBRN taboo that has restricted use of these weapons through history. It is possible that adherence to this taboo

could reinforce negative views about CBRN weapon related to concepts of dishonor, cowardice, or weakness. Although CBRN taboos are addressed in CBRN terrorism literature, this topic deserves further consideration here given the terrorist statements that suggest adherence to a taboo and the potential link of a taboo to concepts of honor.

Terrorist statements describe the need for special justification or careful consideration for CBRN weapon use. Although some of this justification is required because CBRN weapons can kill indiscriminately, these statements suggest an additional need to justify the use of the CBRN material itself. In comparison, in statements where bombings are being justified, it is not the bomb itself or the explosive materials that need justification but instead the timing, target, or potential casualties of the bombing. Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd seems to acknowledge a special consideration given to CBRN weapons, saying that their use would result in more public outcry than a conventional bomb, even one that caused more casualties. In another statement, an unknown author in a letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan requests guidance because he recognizes that use of chlorine gas could tarnish the group's image and alienate people from them. Several statements also characterize WMD as weapons that can be used for deterrence. For example, Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd refers to WMD as "deterrence weapons" giving WMD special status and differentiating them from other types of weapons. These statements discuss the POSSESSION of WMD for deterrence purposes, not USE of WMD for deterrence, which suggests special consideration for CBRN weapons because their possession does not automatically equate use. These statements seem to suggest that if in possession of such weapons, it would not be an automatic

conclusion that they should be used, despite the difficulty and effort needed to acquire them in the first place. Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd also call for the use of CBRN weapons only as a last resort when no other means can repel the enemy while Abu Mus'ab al-Suri and Ayman al-Zawahiri suggest obtaining CBRN weapons because their possession would allow a strategic balance with the West.

- “We need guidance from you on the issue of using chlorine gas technology...However, I informed them that matters as serious as this required centralized [coordination] and permission from the senior [al-Qa'ida] leadership.” (Unknown author: From Letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan)
- “If such a weapon [chemical, biological, or nuclear] is at Al Qaeda’s disposal, then it is a deterrent weapon, and not for initiating an action. Let the Americans fear the worst possible scenario when they use any unconventional weapons. We are lying in wait for them.” (Mahfouz Walad al-Walid)
- “Certainly, the infidels of our time have made these so-called weapons of mass destruction (deterrence weapons) only to frighten others.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)
- “Q: Some Western media claim that you are trying to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons. How much truth is there in such reports? UBL: I heard the speech of American President Bush yesterday. He was scaring the European countries that Osama wanted to attack with weapons of mass destruction. I wish to declare that if America uses chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we

may reply with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as a deterrent.” (Usama bin Laden)

- "The infidels might be in such a position that they cannot be resisted or repelled from Islamic territory and Muslims be spared their violence unless they are bombed with what are called weapons of mass destruction, as people with experience in jihad affirm. If people of authority engaged in jihad determine that the evil of the infidels can be repelled only by their means, they may be used. The weapons of mass destruction will kill any of the infidels on whom they fall, regardless of whether they are fighters, women, or children. They will destroy and burn the land.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

A statement by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri that classifies the use of nuclear weapons as “barbaric”, further highlights special consideration given to N weapons by terrorists and mirrors a similar notion about CBRN weapons in warfare. CBRN weapon use is commonly described as uncivilized in historic warfare examples and this characterization may explain one reason why such weapons have not been used in past wars. For example, Price suggests the lack of gas warfare during World War II demonstrates the ideals of the conduct of war among “civilized” nations (Price, 1995). Similarly, one reason the US did not use nuclear weapons in the 1991 Gulf War was a belief among US leaders that only the “uncivilized” or barbaric would use them (Tannenwald, 1999, 2008).

- “In war where there is an aggressor, his aggression must be repelled... The issue here is not what is permitted and what is not permitted or that this is barbaric and this is not barbaric. The first ones to put down laws of barbaric warfare in the modern world are the “World Order” [i.e. the West]. [This happened] between themselves before [it happened] between us and them. London and Berlin adopted the bombings of civilians by dropping explosives on the cities and killing 42 million in the course of four years. ‘Then, they ended [the war] by Hiroshima and Nagasaki... So it is they who established their laws of [barbaric] warfare.’ They kill civilians indiscriminately. For our part ... to repel this aggression, you have to kill civilians indiscriminately. But we have mercy on our part. They kill women even when they are separate from others. We do not kill women when they are separate from others.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

The special consideration that some terrorists give to CBRN weapons mirror broader, worldwide sentiments about CBRN taboos. Separate from a code of honor, adherence to a CBRN taboo that characterizes these weapons as dishonorable may represent an inherent, deep rooted aversion to CBRN weapons. Terrorists influenced by a CBRN taboo may inherently believe that use of these weapons is dishonorable and immoral. Adherence to such a CBRN taboos may therefore influence terrorist and terrorist constituent proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons in the way that taboos have influence CBRN use in warfare (Price, 1995; Cole, 1998; Tannenwald, 2008). The argument has been made for the existence of a global CBN weapon (referred to as CBRN

taboo from this point forward for simplicity) taboo that stigmatizes and inhibits use of these weapons (Tannenwald, 1999). This taboo is a wide-spread popular revulsion against CBRN weapons that characterizes their use as dishonorable and immoral. These widely held inhibitions on their use “go beyond fear of retaliation and obedience to international law” and instead is a more inherent, negative belief about these weapons (Tannenwald, 1999). For example, today, the use of nuclear weapons could be seen as a violation of US values that “would violate America's conception of itself as a moral, civilized nation” (Tannenwald, 1999, 2008). This taboo may be one factor that inhibited the US’s use of nuclear weapons in more recent conflicts such as the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars (Price, 1995; Tannenwald, 1999). For example, according to Tannenwald, “in both Afghanistan and Vietnam, nuclear superpowers chose to lose a war rather than “win” it with nuclear weapons” (Tannenwald, 2008). It is important to consider that this CBRN taboo is not based solely on the level of destruction or number of casualties caused but is more of an inherent revulsion about the use of nuclear weapons. For example, although nuclear weapon use was ruled out in the Gulf War, the US was still willing to consider using conventional weapons capable of delivering a similar blast and destructive power as a small nuclear weapon against Iraq. The US did not need to use nuclear weapons in the Gulf War because they could create equivalent damage with conventional forces without the moral "downside" of using nuclear weapons (Tannenwald, 1999). For all CBRN taboos the origins and factors driving these taboos are not completely understood (Cole, 1998).



This study suggests that CBRN taboos may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Although little is known about these taboos and their origins, even less is known about the role of these taboos in the decision-making of terrorists (Tannenwald, 2008). Tannenwald hypothesizes that terrorists may not be restrained by such taboos and might relish in violating them because “terrorists derive their political impact precisely through flouting accepted norms and defying the authority of states to control violence” (Tannenwald, 2008). Conversely, Wellen suggests that as “steeped in taboos as Islamic extremists are, they wouldn't seek to take pleasure in breaking one” (Wellen, 2011). Although no terrorist statements specifically address any CBRN-related taboos, as noted above, terrorist statements were identified that suggest some terrorist recognition of taboos in war:

- “The Mujahid Islamic movement must escalate its methods of strikes and tools of resisting the enemies to keep up with the tremendous increase in the number of its enemies, the quality of their weapons, their destructive powers, their disregard for all taboos, and disrespect for the customs of wars and conflicts....The targets as well as the type and method of weapons used must be chosen to have an impact on the structure of the enemy and deter it enough to stop its brutality, arrogance and disregard for all taboos and customs..” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

The statements reviewed by this study suggest that some terrorists and their constituents may be impacted by the global CBRN taboo discussed above. For those terrorists that are not impacted by this taboo, many likely recognize that their constituents

are. A better understanding of the extent to which terrorists adhere to CBRN taboos will provide much needed insight into terrorist views about such weapons. This information can also better inform the implementation of counterterrorism efforts to counter CBRN use. Counterterrorism efforts to dissuade terrorist use of CBRN weapons may be more successful in cases where an inherent aversion to CBRN weapons exists compared to when honor codes or rules of war place restrictions on CBRN use. It is likely more difficult for terrorists to overcome restrictions on CBRN use when they are based on an inherent aversion and are deeply-rooted in an individual's belief system. An inherent aversion to certain acts of violence, such as CBRN weapon use may be harder for terrorists and their constituents to overcome because of their inherent, personal, and possibly unexplainable nature. Although honor codes or rules of war play within terrorist groups and their constituents remain useful and important for future study, understanding the role of CBRN taboos in terrorism may be of greater interest and utility for future counterterrorism studies and efforts to influence terrorist views on CBRN weapons through strategic counterterrorism messaging.

### *Masculinity*

*"Manliness died when firearms were invented." (Braudy, 2005)*

The use of certain CBRN weapons may be perceived as less masculine than other weapons or acts of violence. For example, demonstrations of strength and aggression can be equated to masculinity, and depending on how CBR weapons are deployed, they may

not provide a demonstration of masculinity. Additionally, notions of CBR weapons as “womanly” could also influence terrorist constituents and stigmatize CBR use, which could dissuade terrorists with concerns for public opinion. The following section explores the various ways masculinity could influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This discussion is informed by both the examples of the impact of masculinity on violence, weapons, and tactics and the terrorist statements.

Masculinity is an important cultural factor that impacts ideas about violence and warfare and is a valued trait in numerous societies, including honor-shame cultures. Masculinity is an important component of a warrior and masculinity is often linked to violence, strength, or aggression (Braudy, 2005). For example, Luft describes the “culture of manliness and pride” of the Lebanese that includes the need to be perceived as manly, courageous, and resilient (Luft, 2010). Arab tribal values include manliness in conjunction with other traits such as courage, attachment to and mastery of arms, and gallantry (Todd, 2006). The Berserkers provide one extreme example of the link between aggression, violence, and manliness. Braudy describes the berserker, with their extreme version of military masculinity, as the “quintessential man of violence” (Braudy, 2005). The link between masculinity and male honor and aggression or lack of aggression differs culturally and masculinity is not necessarily connected with physical bravado in all societies (Spierenburg, 1998). According to Spierenburg, in honor and shame societies, “men may take pride in attacking fellow men...while passivity, in violent and peaceful situations, is a cardinal feminine virtue” (Spierenburg, 1998). Bravado or machismo is described by Bowman as typical of honor-shame cultures and honor for the

male lies in fulfilling traditional masculine virtues, including being a warrior (Bowman, 2007; Pryce-Jones, 2009). In these societies, participation in war is a way to publicly demonstrate masculine virtue (Braudy, 2005). Conversely, shame derives from being a "bad" man through cowardice or appearing "womanly" (Pryce-Jones, 2009).

Multiple statements reviewed for this study reference masculinity and its link to violence. "We believe that we are men, Muslim men who must defend the greatest place in existence, the Holy Ka'aba. We want to have the honor of defending it." Usama bin Laden describes positively, those that fight as "men" and those that do not fight are described negatively as women. Bin Laden also quoted Abu-Al-Hasan Al-Masri, who links masculinity with face to face confrontation. Abu Yahya al-Libi lists effeminacy as a negative trait and the result of stripping away of values and morals. One statement highlights the importance of weapons to one's masculinity.

- "Abu-Al-Hasan Al-Masri, who appeared on Al-Jazeera TV a couple of days ago and addressed the Americans saying: "If you are true men, come down here and face us." (Usama bin Laden)
- "I gave no orders [for the attacks in East Africa], but I am very happy about what happened to the Americans there... What I know is that those who risked their lives to earn the pleasure of God... are the real men, the true personification of the word men. They managed to rid the Muslim community of disgrace. We highly respect them and hold them in the highest esteem, and pray to God... to accept them as martyrs and permit them to intercede on behalf of their kin." (Usama bin Laden)

- “It is in fact a war on its judgments, destroying its principles and stripping its people of all values and morals. At the level of morals; disintegration, pornography, immorality, drinking and effeminacy are the creed and signs of development. On the contrary, anything other than that is considered stagnation, underdevelopment and extremism.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “In reference to the issue of abandoning weapons, this would never happen because, with education and iron, our religion will be victorious. Weapons are part of our survivors and history. Men without weapons are incomplete, and any men who leave their weapons have no respect by others.” (Unknown most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or `Atiyya)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Additional sources also highlight the importance of masculinity in terrorism (Bowman, 2007). Braudy characterizes the conflict between the current “war against terrorism” and the “jihad against the West” as a conflict between, among several others, female and effeminate versus masculine and virile (Braudy, 2005). The attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001 were carried out by a masculine culture against what it considers to be an emasculated culture (Braudy, 2005). Braudy further characterizes the 9/11 attacks as being about masculine tribal self-esteem and nostalgia for a particular style of warrior masculinity (Braudy, 2005). “With bin Laden’s brand of Islamic fundamentalism, the seamless identification of the warrior image with general

masculinity thus preserves a sense of male uniqueness and an overcompensation familiar in warrior societies” (Braudy, 2005).

This study suggests these links between masculinity and aggression and warfare can also play a role in terrorist perceptions about CBRN weapons, most specifically CB weapons. For example, one dimension in the discrediting of poisons and the unacceptability of CB weapons through history was its association with weakness and the ideas of “womanly deception” (Price, 1995). The following quote from Price provides an excellent example of how CB weapons may be viewed related to masculinity:

"The dueler is open, honest, and strong; the poisoner, fraudulent, scheming, and weak. A man with a gun or a sword is a threat, but he declares himself to be so, and his intended victim can arm himself: may the best man win and have the public glory of being acknowledged the best man.... Poison is an insidious equalizer of strength in the battle of the sexes. The poisoner uses superior secret knowledge to compensate for physical inferiority. A weak woman planning a poison is as deadly as a man with a gun" (Price, 1995).

Additionally, although not the exclusive domain of women, poison is often perceived as a “woman’s weapon” and according to several studies, poisoning has long been the preferred murder method for female serial killers (Schechter, 2003; Vronsky, 2007). According to Hickey, who examined a sample of 62 female serial killers, women tend to be quiet killers and poison the most common weapon choice (Hickey, 2010; Kelleher, & Kelleher, 1998). In Vronsky’s study of female serial killers, the overwhelming weapon choice of female serial killers is poison (Vronsky, 2007). In a

study that examined patterns of serial homicides committed by women from 1600 to 2004, women were found to be less likely to use physical violence and more likely to use poison (Scott, 2007). Additionally, poisoning is often considered a less grisly way of killing compared to other methods such as slitting a victim's throat or mutilation and such studies found a female preference for less violent means of killing and weapons, in contrast to men, who often selected more violent means of killing (Hickey, 2010).

Vronsky, points out the contrast between the male's use of force, weapons, ropes, chains, duct tape, and other forms of restraint to incapacitate their victims compared to the female's surreptitious means of murder such as poison, drugs, or suffocation (Vronsky, 2007). Male serial killers have also shown a tendency to use a "hands-on" approach in killing by using knives, blunt objects, and hands to kill their victims which is in contrast with the choice of the majority of female serial murderers who used some form of poison to kill their victims (Keeney & Heide, 1994).

Given the importance of masculinity in warfare, its link, by some, to warrior prowess, strength, and aggression and its role in many modern societies including those from which many terrorist threats emanate, masculinity could be an important factor in decisions about CBRN weapons (Braudy, 2005; Todd, 2006; Bowman, 2007; Pryce-Jones, 2009; Luft, 2010). The relationship between physical force and male honor differs based on culture, highlighting the need for greater information on concepts of masculinity and how masculinity is linked to violence and warfare (Spierenburg, 1998; Braudy, 2005). Certain violent actions can be perceived as more or less masculine and in warfare, CB weapons have been stigmatized, in part, because of their link to femininity.

Additionally, the use of certain CBR weapons may be perceived as less aggressive and therefore could be seen as less masculine than other weapons or acts of violence. As noted above, demonstrations of strength and aggression may be seen, by some, as counter to using certain CBR weapons, depending on how the CBR materials are deployed. CBR weapons can be more subtle, quiet, and in some cases slow. There is no loud, big show of power or aggression when used (unless used with an explosive but in that case, the explosive, not the CBR weapon is demonstrating power). To those that value demonstrations of manliness through aggression and displays of force and strength, CBR weapons may not convey a sense of masculinity, depending on the views of the actor and his audience about force and strength.

The perception that poison is a woman's weapon, along with several studies on a male preference for the use of force and greater and more physical acts of violence in murder compared to the female preference for more surreptitious means of murder such as poison could serve as a powerful strategic message that links CBR weapons to a feminine weapon and method of violence. Associating CBR weapons with femininity could resonate with groups that value masculinity or where masculinity plays a role in one's honor and how one is seen by others. Such sensitivities to masculinity could be used to dissuade interest in the use of a "woman's weapon" and therefore a CBR weapon. Additionally, propaganda that exploits notions of CBR weapons as "womanly" could also influence terrorist constituents and could further stigmatize CBR use, which could dissuade terrorists with concerns for public opinion. However, the potential use of women by terrorist groups may limit the resonance of such efforts to link CBR weapons



with femininity. The use of female operatives or attackers by terrorist groups could provide avenues for terrorists to carry out CB attacks without concerns about masculinity. Additionally, considerations about masculinity may not be of importance to lone female actors or small groups with female members inspired by terrorist groups. The following statement from 1898 provides an example of how the use of poison may be perceived and offers an example of stereotypes that may remain and could be leveraged in strategic counterterrorism messaging campaigns:

“...it is well known that poison murder is predominantly committed by women... All kinds of murder require courage, will power and physical strength, poison murder alone does not necessitate any of these characteristics, and since women possess none of them, they automatically murder by poison. There is nothing strange or remarkable about this, it follows logically from female characteristics familiar to us all. Thus it makes sense, when in doubt regarding a murder by poison, suspect a woman in the first instance and a weakly, effeminate man in the second” (Gross, 1898)

### *Brutality, Suffering, and Death*

Throughout history, certain weapons, including CBRN weapons, were seen as unacceptable or dishonorable, partly because they caused unnecessary suffering and dishonorable deaths. This study suggests these characteristics of CBRN weapons could influence terrorist views about using or dying from CBRN weapons. The following section highlights terrorist statements that address topics related to brutality, suffering,

and death such moderation, mercy, pain, and killing in a good manner. Finally, this section discusses how perceptions about brutality, suffering, pain, and death from CBRN weapons may influence terrorist or terrorist constituent views about using or dying from CBRN weapons.

Based on the terrorist statements reviewed, terrorist opinions about suffering and brutality seem to differ, ranging from those that denounce excessive brutality and “barbaric” acts to those that believe all out brutality and violence is acceptable. Some opinions fall in the middle, where although not ideal, at times, it is necessary to carry out brutal acts. For example, Abu Yahya al-Libi states the “best of matters is moderation and the worst is its extremes” and condemns those that do not show moderation or limits to their violent actions. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri finds fault in a jihad movement that acts without restraint. Abu Bakr Naji describes burning people with fire as “odious” and stated that a love of killing is “for coarse people”. Bombing attacks that killed and dismembered children were described as hideous and transgressing all bounds by Usama bin Laden while Ayman al-Zawahiri equates killing thousands of, who he considers, innocent people with insanity.

- “...the scholars have made it a condition that the Imam of the Muslims be strong and bold in implementing the Truth and establishing it...This does not mean he should be an obstinate satanic tyrant with a merciless and hard heart. The best of matters is moderation, and the worst is its extremes... It is not suitable that someone take charge of affairs unless he has four traits: softness without

weakness, strictness without roughness, withholding without being stingy, and tolerance without overdoing it.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “We are carrying on the mission of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge in massacring people.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The mention of the US reminds us before everything else of those innocent children who were dismembered, their heads and arms cut off in the recent explosion that took place in Qana (in Lebanon). This US government abandoned even humanitarian feelings by these hideous crimes. It transgressed all bounds and behaved in a way not witnessed before by any power or any imperialist power in the world.” (Usama bin Laden )
- “Even the Friend (Abu Bakr) and Ali b. Abi Talib (may God be pleased with them) burned (people) with fire, even though it is odious, because they knew the effect of rough violence in times of need. They did not carry it out and the leaders (among the Companions) and their troops did not undertake it because they loved killing; they were certainly not coarse people.”( Abu Bakr Naji)
- “Explosions at the checkpoints and control points in a number of areas in an illegal way. These target the points at the peak hours with the presence of cars and pedestrians. They could have been targeted at other times, where the traffic is slow. There is another issue; the suicide bomber could be heading to carry an operation in another location, but he is intercepted at the point or trying to search his car or his body, then he would immediately explode himself not caring what

could happen of killings and injuries to the people around him. He should have been supplied with a firearm to fight with until he died or he may have used it to get the people away from him before exploding the bomb in a random way. I do not know who ordered that, or gave a fatwa about its legality?” (Adam Gadahn)

- “During the Second Arab Afghani Term jihad under the Taliban, I realized that the jihadists of the third generation are particularly ignorant and suffer from a lack of education even though a stable environment was available under the Taliban ruling. Jihadists, during this 1996— 2001 period, concentrated on military training, neglecting other educational programs. The many young men from the general and average classes of Muslims were charged with zeal, loyalty, and emotions, but they suffered from clear lack of religious knowledge and compliance as well as the rules of Islamic dealing and ethics...Likewise, the lack of good morals led jihadists to act in a gang like manner and not as proper jihadists. Also, most jihadists narrowed the Islamic religion to the concepts of jihad and forgot that there are other sides and aspects to Islam. They narrowed Islam to fighting and fighting to just discharging firearms, forgetting the requirements of patience, preparation and ethics. I and other veteran jihadists observed the new that a major suffering would return these good souls to the proper character, and this is what came with the September occurrences and what happened afterward.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Some statements discuss the importance of mercy and how mercy has been forgotten by today's jihadists or is no longer taught or encouraged through proper preparation of today's jihadists. The importance of minimizing fighting is also addressed. For example, according to an unknown author, in *The Five Letters to the African Corps*, the "noble tradition" of assassination could minimize the loss of life in a major battle. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir highlights that it is best to minimize the intensity of fighting and the Prophet Muhammad sought to minimize the fighting through weapon power that could scare the enemy from attacking. CBRN weapons are also identified by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri as a means of minimizing the level of fighting through deterrence. Conversely, The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad suggests using methods that will harm the enemy the most. Instead of acting with moderation, an unknown author in AQAP's *Inspire Magazine*, Version 1 asks what major catastrophic event the West will need to start listening to demands and Abu Basir suggests wiping the US off the "map completely". Adam Gadahn says "we might not show the restraint and self-control we have shown up until now" and the *As-Sahab Media* outlet recommends an operation that is "heavy and definite".

- "We will not be exaggerating if we say that our current dying age has drowned in the depths of the dark sea of ignorance, a drowning that is unprecedented. Our society is skilled in breaking away from values, mercy, and spreading corruption.... The meanings of mercy, leniency, and sympathy are absent from them ... Attributes have been overcome by barbarianism, cruelty, and brutality, as the principles of greed, selfishness, and self-interest have become the ruling

principles in all dealings within the society and in all politics, during war and peace.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- "I'll draw your attention again to a noble tradition related to assassinating the leaders of infidelity and inciters of sedition. The killing of a single man could possibly save much blood threatened in a major battle. So, contemplate, consider, and then act. Act according to the traditions of God's Messenger.” (Unknown author; From The Five Letters to the African Corps)
- “Q. How about using nuclear weapons by Muslims, is it justified?  
A. Yes, if necessary. But the Islamic Ummah should seek to minimize [the intensity of the fighting]. Allah has said in verse 8 chapter 60 that we should equip ourselves with weapon power—that is an order—but preferably to scare and not to kill our enemy. The main goal is to scare them. If they are scared they won't bother us, and then we won't bother them as well. But if they persist, we have to kill them. In this way, Prophet Muhammad sought to minimize the fighting.” (Abu Bakar Ba'asyir)
- “Imam Al-Nawawi said...: ...the permissibility of hitting with the purpose of fighting the unbelievers and avoiding the Muslims as far as possible, because the evil that results from abstaining (from attacking the unbelievers) is much worse than that of venturing (an attack on them)...and safeguarding all the Muslims is closer to what is intended in religion, because we definitely know that what is intended in religion is minimizing the killing, as well as preventing it altogether as

far as possible. If that is not possible, we could at least minimize it.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “What major catastrophic event upon the Western world will its leaders need in order to start actively listening to Usamah bin Laden’s demands?” (Unknown author ; From Inspire Magazine Version 1)
- “When one compares the already huge number of dead, wounded, displaced, and deprived Muslims, and other people for whose suffering you bear responsibility, with the relatively small number of American’s we have killed so far, it becomes crystal clear that we haven’t even begun to even the score. That’s why, next time, we might not show the restraint and self-control we have shown up until now...” (Adam Gadahn)
- “The hatred of kuffar is a central element of our military creed. We need to realize that Allah will not grant us victory as long as we still have some love towards his enemies in our hearts. The spiritual condition of total loyalty towards Allah and total animosity towards his enemies was a necessary precursor to the judgment of Allah between His prophets and their disbelieving nations. Never was victory attained by the Prophets of Allah and their people until their loyalty towards Allah was complete and their disassociation with the kuffar was complete.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd discusses the importance of killing in a “good manner” described as quickly, with restraint, and without inflicting excessive pain, although there are exceptions and one kills in a good manner when one can. Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd also states that tactics such as bombing, burning, and flooding do not kill in a good manner but are permissible when they are the only options available and the Mujahidin are forced to use such means.

- “That the Basic Rule in Killing is To Do It in a Good Manner. An authentic tradition in the Sahih from Shaddad ibn Aws, a Companion of the Prophet, says: “God has enjoined benevolence on everything. If you kill, kill in a good manner. If you slaughter animals, slaughter in a good manner; let the slaughterer sharpen his blade and put his victim at ease.” Al-Nawawi said in his commentary on the Sahih of Muslim (13:107): “The Prophet’s words, ‘Kill in a good manner,’ include every animal slaughtered, every killing in retaliation or execution, and similar things. This hadith is one that sums up the foundations of Islam.” Ibn Rajab said in Jami’ al-ilium wa-al-I-Ikam: “Doing good with regard to such humans and animals as may lawfully be killed is to take the life as swiftly, easily, and desirably as possible, without inflicting excessive pain...” It has been established that whenever the Prophet sent out a raiding party, he said to them: “Do not mutilate, and do not kill a young child.” Both Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah transmit a hadith from Ibn Mas’ud, a Companion of the Prophet, that the Prophet said: “The most restrained people in killing are the people of faith.” Al-Bukhari transmits as part of a hadith from ‘Abdallah ibn Yazid, a Companion of



the Prophet, that the Prophet said: “Mutilation has been forbidden.” The traditions concerning this are many. All indicate that the basic rule is to kill in a good manner any such as may lawfully be killed and not to be excessive. However, this basic rule has exceptions.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

- “Scholars have deduced from these and similar texts the rule that there is no obligation when there is inability; there is no prohibited thing when there is necessity. One kills in a good manner only when one can. If those engaged in jihad cannot do so, for example when they are forced to bomb, destroy, bum, or flood, it is permissible.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

Through history, certain weapons were seen as unacceptable because they caused unnecessary suffering (Van Creveld, 1991). “Poisoned projectiles, created to inflict extreme suffering and bring ignominious death, were more feared than hand-to-hand combat with swords, spears, axes, and clubs” (Mayor, 2008). Criticism of weapons that are designed to intensify suffering continues today and war protocols prohibit weapons that cause unnecessary injury or suffering (Mayor, 2008). For example, soft-nosed bullets or “dumdum bullets” expanded on impact and were criticized for causing extensive damage and were banned by the Geneva Convention of 1899 (Braudy, 2005). CBRN weapons have also been vilified in warfare, in part, because they are seen as brutal weapons that cause unnecessary suffering and horrific, drawn-out deaths.

Similar to past warfare examples, this characteristic of CBRN weapons may also influence terrorist or terrorist constituent views about the use of CBRN weapons. Based

on the statements reviewed, some terrorists argue against excessive violence and for mercy, moderation, minimizing fighting, and killing in a good manner. Those terrorists concerned about mercy and unnecessary suffering may be dissuaded from using CBRN weapons because they can cause long, drawn out, painful deaths. Although death by the initial blast of a N weapon may be analogous to other types of explosions and therefore not long and drawn-out, some casualties would not be immediate. Many would suffer from the effects of radiation and would have long, painful deaths. Conversely, some terrorist groups or individuals will not be concerned about limiting the suffering of their enemy or killing their enemy in a good manner. It is also important to consider that perceptions about brutality can differ. For example, death by disease or radiation poisoning, even if drawn-out, could be seen as less brutal than being beheaded, shot, or blown up in an explosion. This highlights the importance of understanding the various views about brutality and suffering and how those views may differ across groups and individuals.

Considerations about unnecessary brutality and suffering are likely to be more relevant to terrorists in cases of accidental “innocent” Muslim casualties. The suffering and long, painful deaths that could impact unavoidable “innocent” Muslim casualties as a result of a terrorist CBRN attack may dissuade both terrorists from using and terrorist constituents from supporting CBRN weapons. Terrorists may be reluctant to cause unnecessary suffering to the Muslim population or reluctant to use weapons that could increase the likelihood of impacting the Muslim population, especially with weapons that are difficult to control such as B weapons. Additionally, CBRN weapons may not be perceived by terrorists or their constituents as showing moderation, given the potentially

large impact of such weapons, especially sophisticated biological or nuclear weapons. It is also likely that CBRN weapons would not serve to minimize fighting because their use could result in a strong, violent response from the victim of the CBRN attack as well as a number of nation states.

Terrorist statements that argue against excessive violence and for moderation and mercy may be useful to dissuade terrorist CBRN interest and use. Therefore, the pursuit or use of a CBRN weapon by any group or individual linked to the statements noted above that call for moderation, mercy, and to minimize fighting could be used to demonstrate hypocrisy and discredit the authors of those statements. Counterterrorism strategic messaging efforts to depict CBRN weapons as extreme, brutal and painful may dissuade those that support moderation and mercy and especially those concerned about the impact of terrorist actions on innocent Muslim populations. CBRN weapons that cause painful, long, drawn-out deaths may also conflict with ideas about “killing in a good manner”. Strategic messages that emphasize mandates to kill in a good manner could dissuade some terrorists from using CBRN weapons or limit the support of terrorist constituents for such weapons. However, for those that support or relish in excessive brutality, efforts to portray CBRN weapons as especially brutal could have the opposite effect and may instead further encourage interest in CBRN weapons. Therefore, a better understanding of how terrorists and their constituents view suffering and brutality is necessary to properly tailor strategic messaging efforts.

Ideas about painful and dishonorable deaths may also play an important role in how CBRN weapon use is viewed when considered from the perspective of a suicide

attack. According to Cronin, in the case of suicide terrorist attacks, instantaneous death in an explosion is very different from the slow, agonizing death caused by a biological disease or chemical or radiation poisoning (Cronin, 2004). From the terrorist's perspective, death by a CBR attack may not be the same as by a N explosion or other, more traditional means such as conventional suicide bombings (Cronin, 2004). Terrorist statements reviewed for this study further support the view of Cronin and others that some suicide attackers may have an aversion to dying from CBRN weapons.

Several terrorist statements address views about death, including those that glorify and encourage death and discuss a love for death. Usama bin Laden and Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi highlight the lack of pain, quickness, and joy that comes with martyrdom. Conversely, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir suggests trying to avoid death when possible.

- “We will come to you with slaughter and have prepared men who love death as you love life, and with the permission of Allah we will come to you with something you cannot handle.” (Unknown author; From Inspire Magazine Version)
- “And: “A martyr will not feel the pain of death except like how you feel when you are pinched” [Saheeh al-Jame As-Sagheer].” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Other people [participate in it] out of a desire to make things easy for themselves when death meets them, for the death of a martyr is easier than any other form of death. In fact, it is the best of all manners of dying.” (Taqi-ud-Deen Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah)

- “The martyr is given five things with the first drop of his blood... He is spared the torture of death and protected from the great fear.” (Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi)
- “The consideration is: “if I do this, will Islam benefit or lose? If I must die and without my dying Islam will not win, then my dying is allowed.” If one can avoid dying that is better. But to die is also permitted. Because to die in jihad is noble.” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Terrorist statements discuss a lack of pain and quickness of death with martyrdom, however, these concepts conflict with the slow, drawn-out death by some CBRN weapons. As noted above, death by disease, poisoning from chemicals or toxins, and radiation poisoning can be long, painful processes that may intimidate or dissuade some suicide attackers. Additionally, watching a suicide attack die in such a manner could dissuade other group members from following their example of using CBRN weapons. Producing and handling CBRN weapons can also be dangerous and accidental expose and deaths could dissuade group members from pursuing a CBRN capability after seeing such deaths. Even experiments where animals are used to test CBRN weapons will provide terrorists examples of the painful deaths caused by such weapons.

Terrorists may also be averse to dying from CBRN weapons if they view such a death as dishonorable. In warfare, death by CBRN has been seen as dishonorable or cowardly. Poisons were viewed as bringing about “ignominious death” and were often more feared than other weapons for this reason (Mayor, 2008). According to Mayor,

poison weapons took away the honor of both the victim and the killer (Mayor, 2008). Additionally, images of the symptoms poison weapons caused were grim “for a culture steeped in warrior ethic, where bravery and physical might was valued above all and death in battle was expected to be violent but at least swift and honorable” (Mayor, 2008). In the terrorist statements reviewed, Usama bin Laden and As-Sahab Media highlight the importance of and encourage a dignified, honorable, and brave death and condemn those who die as cowards.

- Let me die dignified in wars, an honorable death is better than my current life.”  
(Usama bin Laden )
- "If you have to die ...It is of incompetence to die as a coward" (As-Sahab Media)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

The importance of dying an honorable death instead of a cowardly one may dissuade suicide attacks from using CBRN weapons. As discussed above, the potential for terrorist aversion to CBRN weapons may revolve around notions of honor, courage, strength, military prowess, and masculinity that may conflict with such weapons. Terrorists may also view death by CBRN weapons as dishonorable, perhaps as a result of the slow, drawn-out death. Slowly wasting away from disease or radiation poisoning may not be seen as honorable or dignified to some terrorists. However, a suicide terrorist that dies instantly in a N explosion or detonates an explosive containing CBR material may avoid this concern about a drawn-out, undignified death. Therefore, terrorists may be more averse to CBR dissemination methods that do not involve explosives, such as an

infected suicide attacker spreading disease, or that increase the chance of the attacker being exposed, such spraying or aerosolizing CBR material.

A better understanding of how different groups view death, to include pain, quickness of death, and what constitutes a courageous, honorable, and dignified death could help identify potential areas for strategic communications opportunities. It may be possible to foster ideas about a dishonorable and undignified death and CBRN weapons. Strategic communications could highlight the long, drawn-out death caused by certain CBRN weapons that lead to the deterioration of an individual into a sick, helpless, frail weakling on his deathbed. These negative connotations may dissuade individuals from carrying out suicide attacks using CBR weapons or from attempting to manufacture such weapons, for fear of contamination or self-infection.

### *Tradition*

Terrorist statements and Islamic symbolic imagery indicate terrorists value tradition and feel the need to link current terrorist actions to concepts of historic Islamic warfare. The importance of tradition and reverence for historic battles and warriors may limit terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN weapons if terrorists find it difficult to link CBRN weapons with honored traditions and past warfare. Below is a discussion about the difficulties of making such links and the potential for this to influence terrorist and terrorist constituent views about CBRN weapons.

Several terrorist statements highlight the importance of tradition in warfare, where justifications for actions are often based on the behaviors of historic figures and Prophetic

tradition is used to inspire current actions. Assassination is one tactic that is discussed by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri and an unknown author in *The Five Letters to the African Corps*, as an action that is a Prophetic tradition and therefore should continue to be used today. Historic examples are important not only as models for how to behave but also for learning from mistakes and successes. Conversely, one statement, by Adam Gadahn counters the argument that today's behavior can be modeled after historic actions, saying that "some of the rulings of the scholars concerning Jihad...were released when Islam was strong, mighty and defensible. So it cannot be implemented on the days of weakness like our present days".

Several statements also indicate the importance of raids to terrorists and a desire to link their current terrorist actions to the accepted and honored tradition of the raid or "ghawz". Several statements by Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Seif al-Din al-Ansari, Abu Ayman al-Hilali, Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, and Al-Qaida's Committee in Northern Europe call upon the tradition and honor of raids when speaking about terrorist actions, classifying attacks, such as the 9/11 and London terrorist attacks, as raids. Additionally, according to Long, Usama bin Laden believed Arab honor was tarnished by the colonialist West and reprisal attacks, after the pattern of ghawz, was necessary to restore the honor and remove the shame (Long, 2006).

- "I'll draw your attention again to a noble tradition related to assassinating the leaders of infidelity and inciters of sedition. The killing of a single man could possibly save much blood threatened in a major battle. So, contemplate, consider,



and then act. Act according to the traditions of God's Messenger." (unknown author; From The Five Letters to the African Corps)

- "This magazine stresses the importance for Jihad to follow the past good deeds of the early Muslims and be based on the strong beliefs of the early Muslims and the guidance of the Quran and its laws." (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad)
- "As to how to resist these enemy forces from outside, we must look back at the previous Crusader wars against our countries to learn lessons that will help us confront this onslaught, understand the most important causes of these attacks, and learn how they were repulsed and resisted." (Usama bin Laden)
- "I remind myself as well as you of the actions of the pure and righteous, the first soldiers of Islam, the noble Companions, God be pleased with them, so that we might imitate them in spreading Islam and succeed in imitating them." (Usama bin Laden)
- "We have made a covenant with God that we will revive the ancient principles and adhere to the tradition of the wise caliphs." (Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi)
- "They carried out the raid by means of enemy planes in a courageous and splendid operation, the like of which had never been known before by mankind." (Usama bin Laden)
- "We raided you with wings of death... And the ruin never crossed your minds. On their backs rode knights of glory...Who saw that in embracing death is relief. So they embraced the towers in an embrace of fury..." (Usama bin Laden )

- “With this raid (9/11) al-Qa’ida established a model of a proud Islamic mentality. This outlook does not view anything as impossible. By embracing the principle of initiative and action over reaction, preparing the next move before finishing the current move, and avoiding reactions that might upset the plan.” (Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi)
- “The blessed London raid is one of the raids that the Qaeda Al-Jihad organization had the honor of carrying out against the British Crusader arrogance, as well as the British Crusader aggression towards the Muslim nation for more than 100 years...”( Al-Qaida’s Committee in Northern Europe)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

These statements indicate that some terrorists value tactics and weapons that are or can be characterized as honorable or courageous and that can be aligned with notions of a warrior ethos. In addition to these terrorist statements, visual imagery used in terrorist propaganda, examined by the CTC Islamic Imagery Project, further highlights the importance of tradition to Islamic terrorists (CTC, 2006). For example, terrorists use visual imagery to link modern weapons and actions to notions of righteous Islamic warfare and warriors and past successful battles (CTC, 2006). Symbolic images demonstrate the importance of prophetic tradition and the glory of historic battles. For example, horses are used in Islamic terrorist imagery to evoke the first generation of Muslims and the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, their military victories, and notions of purity and the practice of the “true” version of Islam. Islamic terrorist imagery

that links terrorist actions to symbols of pre-modern battles and the first generation of Muslims is meant to convey to the audience “a connection (both religious and practical) between the jihad of early Islam” and terrorist acts occurring today (CTC, 2006). This topic will be discussed further in the section on Factor 2 – Visual Impact.

Göle further highlights the importance of tradition when addressing modernization in the Islamic world (Göle, 2000). According to Göle, the new generation of Islamists aim to change society in the light of “true Islam”. There is a call for a “return to the fundamentals of Islam and an idealized past” where “the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate companions, provides a model ideal community” (Göle, 2000). This “leap backwards endows Muslims with a sense of mythical continuity with the past” and “bestows contemporary Islamist actors with a critical sense of earlier traditions...Instead of a future-oriented utopia, fundamentalist religious movements call for the rediscovery of memory, of a golden age...” (Göle, 2000).

Terrorist statements linking their attacks to raids also demonstrate the importance of past warfare and tradition. According to the Iraq Tribal Study, “the glory of the raid is a key aspect of Bedouin tribal warfare.” Participation in a raid was considered a dramatic test of courage, skill, and dedication to the goals of the tribal group and bestowed honor on the tribe (Todd, 2006). This tactic is well known, respected and honorable (Patai, 2010). Statements reviewed for this study highlight terrorists’ need to show their attacks, even those using conventional, widely used weapons (e.g. explosives) in a noble, honorable light by characterizing them as raids. The authors of these statements aspire to

carry out terrorist actions that they believe or their constituents believe follow in the path of honorable, traditional warfare.

The importance of tradition and reverence for historic battles and warriors and the need to link current terrorist actions to the past may impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Terrorists who feel the need to link current actions to past warfare traditions will likely feel an even greater need to do so with CBRN weapons. Similar to linking CBRN weapons to concepts of honor, courage, strength, and military prowess, it may also be difficult for terrorists to link CBRN weapon use to ideas of “righteous” warfare and noble warrior traditions. This reverence for warfare traditions also indicates that terrorists can be susceptible to strategic counterterrorism communications that leverage past warfare examples to demonstrate negative characteristics and unacceptability of CBRN weapons.

A detailed examination of past battles and Prophetic traditions that are favored by certain terrorists could provide insight into the types of violent actions and tactics most valued by terrorists. Counterterrorism efforts to highlight these historic battles and tactics used by revered warriors to further certain ideals of past warfare traditions while highlighting aspects of CBRN weapons that contrast with such ideals could be used to dissuade terrorist use or constituent support for CBRN weapons. Symbolic imagery can also be exploited to highlight negative aspects of CBRN weapons and to put them in contrast with noble traditions in warfare.

Conversely, certain traditions and examples from past battles could inspire or justify terrorist CBRN use. For example, the tradition of assassination is mentioned and

encouraged in a number of terrorist statements. CBR materials can be effective weapons for assassination and terrorists may be able to justify their use of this tactic using historic examples (Jordan & Finn, 2006; Schep, et al., 2009). Once used for assassinations, it may be easier for terrorist to justify and escalate CBRN use for larger attacks. Further, any example of biological warfare, such as purposefully spreading disease to an enemy, by the Prophet and his companions, if any, could certainly provide an endorsement for biological use by terrorists today. Therefore, warfare traditions and examples from historic battles could serve to encourage CBRN use in certain circumstances. For this reason, further study is needed into traditions and historic battles revered by terrorists to identify factors that could either encourage or be used in counterterrorism efforts to dissuade terrorist CBRN use.

### *Summary*

Based on historic examples of factors that impacted views about the acceptability of violent actions, weapons, and tactics and a review of terrorist statements, this study suggests ideas about honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, brutality, suffering, death, and past warfare traditions can influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

This study suggests terrorists and terrorist constituents may be less accepting of CBRN weapons if they view them as conflicting with the key values of their societies. For example, in honor-shame societies, associated terrorists and their constituents may be averse to using weapons or tactics that undermine key values such as honor, courage,

strength, military prowess, and masculinity, such as CBRN weapons. It is also important to consider the level of importance of these factors and the extent to which they may influence terrorist decisions. For example, although honor may be important enough to dissuade terrorists from actively pursuing “dishonorable” CBRN weapons, honor may not be a strong enough factor to deter terrorists from using such weapons if they obtain a capability inadvertently. Alternatively, honor may be importance enough to dissuade use of CBRN weapons even if a CBRN attack capability was obtained inadvertently. The importance of certain traits can also impact which characteristics of CBRN weapons resonate the most powerfully for terrorists. For example, N weapons can be viewed either negatively (dishonorable) or positively (as a show of strength and military prowess). When honor is more valued than physical strength, terrorists may be more averse to using N weapons. Conversely, if showing strength is more important, terrorists may be more inclined to use N weapons. As another example, use of CBR weapons could be viewed as both innovative (positive) and cowardly or weak (negative). Therefore, it is important to consider what traits terrorists and their constituents value most.

The Counterterrorism community should take the factors examined in this study into consideration and tailor their efforts to enhance or encourage factors that have the potential to inhibit terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN weapons. Additionally, consideration of these factors should inform academic and counterterrorism analytic assessments on the nature of the CBRN terrorism threat. Future in-depth examination of how the cultural factors categorized under Factor 1 (acceptability of an

attack, weapon, or act of violence) influence terrorists and their constituents could advance insight into terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This insight can inform national security efforts to counter the CBRN threat and identify actions carried out by the US that could either dissuade or encourage CBRN use by terrorists and limit terrorist constituent support for groups that pursue or use CBRN weapons. Culture will play a key role in the level of importance of each of the factors examined in the study, how each is defined by terrorists, and if views about CBRN weapons can be aligned to those definitions. Therefore, cultural understanding will be crucial for any efforts that use these factors to understand or dissuade terrorist interest in CBRN weapons.

## **Factor 2. Visual Impact of an Attack, Weapon, or Act of Violence**

*No enemy can withstand a vision that is strange and, so to speak, diabolical; for in all battles the eyes are overcome first. —Tacitus, Germania (Braudy, 2005).*

Visual impact and aesthetics are important factors to terrorists and this study suggests these factors may impact terrorist views and decision-making about violent actions. Further, these factors can also play a role in terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. Aesthetics and visual impact are non-utilitarian factors that have played an important role in the use of weapons in warfare. These historic warfare cases provide examples of how visual impact may also influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. The discussion below reviews terrorist statements that address the importance of how a violent act appears to an audience and the importance of visual impact. Historic warfare

examples along with terrorist statements inform a discussion on the various ways visual impact of an attack, weapon, or act of violence (Factor 2) may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

In the terrorist statements reviewed, Adam Gadahn acknowledges that people are more influenced by visuals.

- “Many people do not read, and even if they read, they are more influenced by visuals.” (Adam Gadahn)

Statements by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Usama bin Laden, and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir address the importance of terrorizing the enemy as a religious duty, to deter an enemy from attacking, to minimize fighting, and to ensure the safety and protection of the Muslim people and property. In one statement, Abu Bakr Naji recommends using more force than is necessary to increase the enemy's fear and to get more media attention. Yahya Ibrahim indicates a preference for a “terrorizing element” in an attack and discusses what the aftermath of the attack would look like. An additional statement by Adam Gadahn uses the term “bloody” as a positive description of the aftermath of an attack. Yahya Ibrahim also states that the scene of planes blowing up in the sky would add to the element of fear and shock, which would be an advantage but not the reason for a successful attack.

- “You have access to welding equipment, the operation of “The ultimate mowing machine” would be another simple and effective operation. The advantages of this one: This method has not been used before; It would cause chaos and trauma



among the public. The “terrorizing” element here is great. With blades welded to the truck and slashing out at the enemies of Allah at high speed, you can imagine the scene after such an operation!; It is a simple operation with great results.”

(Yahya Ibrahim)

- “The policy of violence must also be followed such that if the demands are not met, the hostages should be liquidated in a terrifying manner, which will send fear into the hearts of the enemy and his supporters.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “From the start our objective was economic. Bringing down a cargo plane would only kill a pilot and co-pilot. It is true that blowing up the planes in the sky would add to the element of fear and shock but that would have been an additional advantage to the operation and not a determining factor of its success.” (Yahya Ibrahim)
- “Terrorizing the American occupiers is a religious and logical obligation.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Allah has said in verse 8 chapter 60 that we should equip ourself with weapon power—that is an order—but preferably to scare and not to kill our enemy. The main goal is to scare them.” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)
- “To all the brothers who inquired on explosives and how to get them, we say: Manufacturing explosives is not as hard as the enemies of God are projecting it to be. They are doing so, in order to keep the young generation from using this effective and scary device against them.” (Mu’askar Al-battar)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Statements also discuss limitations on the use of terror to impact an audience. For example, in one statement from Usama bin Laden, it is suggested that terrifying an innocent person is wrong while another by Ayman al-Zawahiri suggests that some scenes of slaughter are not “palatable” to the public and therefore should not be used, even if the act itself is permissible. For example, some statements highlight an aversion to actions that are too gruesome or violent. According to Ayman al-Zawahiri, scenes of “slaughtering” hostages is something that the public does not support and recommends less gruesome means of killing a hostage, such as shooting in the head, to limit public outcry. These statements suggest an aversion of some terrorist audiences to certain violent, gory, or tortuous acts. The importance some terrorists place on public opinion, visual impact, and aversion to seeing certain violent acts suggests that terrorists are not unlimited in the weapons and tactics that they may use.

- “Among the things which the feelings of the Muslim populace who love and support you will never find palatable - also- are the scenes of slaughtering the hostages....And your response, while true, might be: Why shouldn't we sow terror in the hearts of the Crusaders and their helpers? All of these questions and more might be asked, and you are justified. However this does not change the reality at all, which is that the general opinion of our supporter does not comprehend that...And we would spare the people from the effect of questions about the usefulness of our actions in the hearts and minds of the general opinion that is essentially sympathetic to us...And we can kill the captives by bullet. That

would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “Q. In your personal view, what do you think of bombings in our homeland, namely the Bali, Marriott and Kuningan bombings?

A. I call those who carried out these actions all mujahid. They all had a good intention.... So in terms of their objectives, they are right, and the target of their attacks was right also. But their calculations are debatable. My view is that we should do bombings in conflict areas not in peaceful areas. We have to target the place of the enemy, not countries where many Muslims live That was one them. In my calculation, if there are bombings in peaceful areas, this will cause fitnah [discord] and other parties will be involved...” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)

- “In general, the jihadist message is vainglorious, egotistical, and over bearing; it may even be uncompromising, threatening, impassionate, and rigid. It is lacking in sentiment and is nonappealing to the masses and their psychological spirit. Again, it was unilateral and elitist.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “As for exposing our weak spots in front of our enemies to exploit it, these attacks are –I swear– a greater shame and more horrible weak points, and it has been exploited by the enemies to a great extent. It has been exploited to distort the picture of the pious and loyal Mujahidin. Now many regular people are looking at the Mujahidin as a group that does not hesitate to take people's money by falsehood, detonating mosques, spilling the bloods of scores of people in the way to kill one or two who were labeled as enemies. While they shy away from

listening to music or looking at a foreign woman – while those issues means very little to the common public, who see it as trivial issues. They are not, but no comparison to the sins that we are talking about.” (Adam Gadahn)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Effective use of imagery and visual impact (Factor 2) will be an important factor in terrorist decision-making about conducting violent attacks and can impact terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons in a number of ways. However, the influence of visual impact on terrorist decision-making can vary depending on the audience. In addition to what the terrorist himself thinks about a visual image (e.g. what the terrorist thinks is most visually terrifying), terrorists may also consider what their audience thinks about a visual image. Such terrorist audiences can include: 1) populations the terrorist group want to intimidate or terrorize (e.g. enemy populations, rival terrorist groups, co-located populations); 2) the population of terrorist supporters the group wants to impress or please; 3) the population of potential recruits; and 4) fellow group members. The same visual image of a violent action can convey different meaning to these various audiences and terrorists will have to consider the visual impact on all important audiences. In some cases, what an image conveys to one audience may conflict with what it conveys to another audience and terrorists will have to weigh these various perspectives in their decision-making. Zawahiri’s call to limit actions that appear too gruesome, specifically beheading, may provide one example. To some audiences, the visual imagery of beheading may convey a sense of traditional warfare, power, or domination but to others,

that same image could be considered barbaric or too gruesome. Zawahiri may or may not have believed that such imagery was too gruesome but he understood that some terrorist constituents may be turned off by images of beheadings and therefore called for less gruesome ways of killing. This suggestion was made despite the positive visual impact beheadings had on certain audiences, such as terrifying enemy populations or conveying power and fierceness to some terrorist constituents. Additionally, aesthetics, symbolism, and visual impact of a violent act or use of a weapon can also differ across groups of people, time, and situations, and as noted above, can be impacted by culture. Therefore, understanding the impact of visual imagery on various audiences and terrorists is important.

To address how visual impact may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons under various circumstances, this study considers the influence of visual impact from the following perspectives:

1. Actions and images that have a dramatic visual impact and /or that terrorize
2. Actions or images that are too violent or gruesome
3. What certain actions and images convey about the attacker (i.e. terrorist)

*1. Actions and images that have a dramatic visual impact and /or that terrorize*

When considered from the perspective of visual impact, terrorists may be less inclined to use CBR weapons compared to traditional weapons and tactics such as bombings, kidnappings, or beheadings. CBR weapons can act invisibly, subtly, silently, and often gradually and such attacks can lack an observable act of violence or immediate

result, in contrast to weapons like guns or bombs that “smash or palpably penetrate their target” (Tucker, 2001; Propst, 2002; Coleman, 2005; Cole 1998; Sinai, 2005). Terrorist statements discuss the importance of dramatic, terrifying violent images and the “bloody” aftermath of an attack. CBR weapons are less likely to provide this type of dramatic, terrifying, and bloody imagery.<sup>4</sup> Use of a CBR weapon will not provide the stunning, dramatic image of a building exploding or the bloody, terrifying aftermath of a “mowing machine” with blades that slash at high speed, as described by Yahya Ibrahim. In addition to the statements reviewed that celebrate dramatic, violent images, Tucker also suggests that conventional bombings could be attractive to some terrorists because of the shock, drama, and “cathartic effect of an explosion” (Tucker, 2001). Tucker contends that CB weapons lack the immediate, spectacular effects of an explosion or nuclear weapon (Tucker, 2001; Potts & Hayden, 2010). Azeez emphasizes the importance to terrorists of engaging in a kind of symbolic action that is visually dramatic, stating that they “unleash a common pattern of emotional display-thrill of anger, tension of anticipation, fear, anger and grief. This they do by the constant broadcast of dramatic and explicit images of horror, as exemplified by the repeated broadcast of the two aircrafts crashing into the two towers of the World Trade Centre in the 9/11 attack and the heroic flight impulse of the man who jumped from the top level of the towers” (Azeez, 2009). For these reasons, this study suggests terrorist that value and find gratification from observable acts of violence that provide spectacular and bloody imagery will be drawn to

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<sup>4</sup> Explosive devices that contain CBR material can result in dramatic and bloody visual images, similar to a conventional bombing. However, in these cases, the explosion would cause the dramatic, bloody, and violent imagery, not the CBR material themselves; therefore this discussion does not pertain to explosive devices that contain CBR materials.

more conventional attack methods or to the N modality over CBR weapons. Unlike CBR weapons, N weapons deliver the dramatic, visual impact that some terrorists prefer. Nuclear weapons provide immediate, stunning visual imagery of a powerful explosion and a dramatic aftermath praised in some terrorist statements. Additionally, Maddox highlights Oppenheimer's view that when compared to conventional weapons capable of inflicting comparable damage, the spectacular visual effects of an atomic explosion provided "incontrovertible evidence that an entirely new force was responsible" (Maddox, 2004). It is important to consider the method of CBR dissemination here. The above discussion focuses on the effects of CBR materials themselves and not of the dissemination methods, specifically, explosive devices that contain CBR materials. In contrast to dissemination devices that spray or deposit CBR materials, an explosive containing a CW can provide the same dramatic visual impact as a conventional weapon with the added effects of a CW on the victims (if the CW attack is successful and effective).

Although it is possible that CBR use may not provide dramatic or violent imagery, it is important to consider alternative perspectives when examining visual impact because the meaning of an image can vary based on personal preference or cultural differences. Views about the type of imagery that is most violent, terrifying, or gory will depend on both the perspectives of the terrorist and their constituents. While some terrorists or terrorist constituents prefer immediate, loud, visually spectacular attacks, others may differ in their opinions of what is visually terrifying. Although not addressed in the statements reviewed, it is important to consider an alternative

perspective, where some terrorists could view the aftermath of slow, sneaky, or invisible attacks as more terrorizing for a victim and more gratifying for the attacker. Continuous media coverage, over a long period of time showing people in Hazmat suits can also be visually dramatic and terrifying, as can images of people sick from disease or radiation poisoning. Out of the CBR modalities, CW can offer the most immediate and visually dramatic effects. CW can act quickly and have rapid, visible physical effects on victims such as disorientation, unconsciousness, choking, gasping for breath, and convulsions that can be visibly dramatic and terrifying for those watching.

Although low level CBR weapons may result in fewer casualties than conventional attack measures such as guns and bombs, they are likely to have greater psychological impact that will cause fear and panic and some of that impact will result from the visual imagery of such attacks (Coleman, 2005; Walker, n.d.). This fear-effect of CB weapons has impacted weapons choice in past warfare. For example, poison arrow makers in India used “grotesque poisons and broadcasted the disgusting recipes” to potential enemies, which was an important psychological aspect of warfare and the very idea of facing archers with such poison was terrifying for their victims (Mayor, 2008). In Germany during WWI, there was interest in the use of chemical gas due to the demoralizing effect, a characteristic of the gas of greater importance than its ability to produce casualties (Coleman, 2005). In contrast to CB weapons, according to Tarvainen, nuclear or radiological weapons do not have the same fear-effect (Tarvainen, 2005). In these cases, this study suggests some terrorists or terrorist constituents could find images from a CBR attack to be more terrifying, and therefore possible more dramatic, than an



explosion or numerous bloody victims, making these terrorists more inclined to use CBR weapons.

## *2. Actions or images that are too violent or gruesome*

Terrorist statements highlight a concern about images that are too violent or gory. For example, instead of beheading, Ayman al-Zawahiri recommends using less gruesome means of killing a hostage, such as shooting the hostage, to limit public outcry. However, the terrorist statements reviewed provide little detail to determine how terrorists may think CBRN weapons compare in gruesomeness to traditional acts of violence. Because views about the gruesomeness of various violent acts are likely to vary (e.g. reactions to the gruesomeness of beheadings can differ, as discussed above) and ideas about what is considered more or less gruesome depends on the perspective of the terrorist and the terrorist constituents, it is important to consider CBRN weapons from multiple perspectives.

First, CBR weapons may be considered less gruesome than a violent act using explosives or a gun or nuclear weapon (Tucker, 2001; Potts & Hayden, 2010). A victim covered in blood, and with visible dramatic physical trauma to their body, such as gunshot wounds or missing limbs, could be considered more gruesome than someone who is ill as a result of disease or radiation poisoning (BR modalities). Even the image of a CW attack victim, who, as described above, could have visible physical damage (coughing, gasping for breath, convulsions), could be considered less gruesome (Tucker, 2001; Potts & Hayden, 2010). However, the initial explosion of an N weapon will result

in visibly gruesome images similar to a traditional explosion. When considering the gruesome nature of CBRN weapons from the above perspective, terrorists wishing to avoid gruesome images but still cause casualties or terror could consider a CBR attack while terrorists interested in displaying the most gruesome acts of violence would be less inclined to use a CBR weapon.

Second, the gruesomeness of CBR weapons can be viewed from an alternative perspective where some terrorists or their constituents could view CBRN weapons as more gruesome than bombs, guns, or knives. The visual image of illness and the deterioration of the body could be seen as more grisly than someone who has been shot in the head. For example, according to Mayor, “Poisoned weapons...killed but never cleanly and images of the symptoms they cause were grim for a culture steeped in warrior ethic...” (Mayor, 2008). For N weapons, in addition to the gruesome imagery that results from the explosive nature of these weapons, the longer-term effects can also result in the imagery of illness and deterioration similar to CBR weapons – images of those sickened by and dealing with the long-lasting effect of radiation poisoning. When considering the gruesome nature of CBRN weapons from this alternative perspective, terrorists that demonstrate sensitivity to and concern for violent actions that are too gruesome may have an aversion to using CBRN weapons compared to traditional methods. Alternatively, terrorists interested in gruesome imagery could be drawn to CBRN weapons if they believe that images of victims impacted by and dying from CBRN materials is more grisly than from conventional attacks.

### *3. What certain actions and images convey about the attacker (i.e. terrorist)*

The visual impact of a terrorist attack on an audience and what that image conveys about various attributes such as honor, courage, strength, military prowess, or masculinity (factors discussed above under Factor 1) can also impact terrorist views about weapon and tactic choice, and therefore, aversion or proclivity to CBRN weapons.

Terrorists could be either drawn to or repelled by the quiet, invisible nature of CBR weapons depending on what meaning they or their audience may attribute to those characteristics. For example, the lack of a dramatic observable act of violence could be seen by some as weak or cowardly (discussed further in the next section). In past warfare examples, noise, and size were important characteristics to impress and intimidate the enemy, either prevent war or obtain a psychological advantage during warfare (Van Creveld, 1991). CBR weapons lack the intimidating effect of a loud or large explosion, therefore limiting their ability to convey an attacker's power to the enemy and audience. However, N weapons provide a display of power that can outdo a conventional attack. In WWII, despite the ability to inflict comparable damage using conventional weapons, the "spectacular visual effects" of an atomic explosion were an important reason for why such a weapon was used. Their use could show great power and elicit fear and shock that would be a key factor in securing Japanese surrender (Maddox, 2004). Terrorists that rely on visible displays of power through noise and images of large attacks would be drawn to N weapons but less interested in CBR attacks compared to a conventional attack using explosives or even guns. Conversely, some terrorists or terrorist constituents could view an attacker that uses quiet, sneaky, insidious weapons, such as CBR weapons as

more dangerous or cunning. In these cases, terrorists could be drawn to CBR weapons, if they valued such characteristics.

A CBRN attack may not demonstrate valued traits such as strength, courage, or honor to those watching. For example, a CBR attack may not be able to visually demonstrate the bravery and physical strength of an individual or group. Honor requires recognition and publicity because “there can be no honor without show and even swagger” (Pryce-Jones, 2009). The visual impact of a terrorist attack may be an important factor in gaining or maintaining honor. A violent act may need to be something that publicly and visually demonstrates honor. For terrorist groups that rely heavily on violent imagery to demonstrate their strength or to attract supporters captivated by such violence, a CBR attack may not be able to provide the “swagger”, referred to by Pryce-Jones that an explosion or shooting attack could provide. The visual image, perhaps in a video, of a fighter in a fierce fire-fight and outnumbered by the enemy could easily provide visual demonstration of bravery whereas visual imagery of an individual dispersing a CB weapon may not provide the same dramatic, brave image. The image of an individual silently and sneakily dispersing a weapon and then leaving the attack site without having to fight or defend his life may demonstrate cowardice to audiences. For those that wish to demonstrate their military superiority, images of CBR weapon use may not provide that visual confirmation of military prowess the way the use of guns and bombs can. Alternatively, the successful use of a CB weapon could illustrate military sophistication, although this would be a difficult concept to convey through visual imagery. In comparison with CBR weapons, the use of a nuclear weapon may

provide a visual demonstration of power and military prowess and sophistication of a group, however, the use of a N weapon may not convey honor in cases where terrorist or their constituents are adhere to a CBRN taboo. The likelihood of all of the scenarios described above, among others, will depend on what actions and images are considered honorable, cowardly, strong, and militarily proficient. Variations in how these factors are defined will determine how they will impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

Additionally, some terrorists may not care about generating positive public opinion or may not need the support of constituents, therefore limiting the importance of visual impact. Alternatively, actions that create predominantly negative public opinion may benefit a group. For example, visual imagery of extreme brutality and violence that repels most people may appeal to and attract new adherents. Furthermore, instead of relying on positive public opinion and the support of local populations, violent imagery could serve to frighten and intimidate a local population into compliance.

### *Islamic imagery in propaganda*

As noted above, honor, courage, strength, and military prowess are also important themes incorporated into the visual symbolism used in Islamic terrorist propaganda. In addition to the terrorist statements reviewed, the CTC Islamic Imagery Project further highlights how imagery is a primary vehicle used for communication by terrorist groups. Understanding Islamic imagery and symbolism and how imagery that is used by terrorists impacts audiences is an important field of study and CTC continues to explore the use of imagery and visual themes by militant groups in its Militant Imagery Project. This

project provided a basic contextual understanding of the images commonly used by terrorists, the ideas those images convey, and the emotions they evoke (CTC, 2006). These images provide insight into important visual themes and characteristics that terrorists value. The information presented by the CTC project highlights the symbolic importance of certain violent actions and weapons to both terrorists and terrorist constituents.

Beheadings provide one example of the importance of visual impact and symbolism in a violent, terrorist act. Beheading by terrorists is seen by many as especially revolting, gruesome, and frightening and terrorists have exploited these feelings by using this tactic for the terrorizing effect it creates. Terrorist beheadings have also been deliberately painful and the act is extremely bloody and gory (Jones, 2005). Beheading is not just a violent act for the sake of violence to terrorize those watching but also has cultural and symbolic significance (Dalrymple, 2005; Jones, 2005; Perlmutter, 2005). Beheading has been described as a time-honored warrior tradition that has significant meaning and a long precedent in Islamic theology (Jones, 2005). “The beheading ritual is full of symbolism that places militants closer to Islam's roots when the sole way of fighting was the sword. These rituals authenticate the ideal that they are in the same war that the prophet and the first Muslims were fighting” (Perlmutter, 2005). The sword used for beheadings provides additional meaning to this act because the sword is an important Islamic symbol (Jones, 2005). In the Muslim world, the sword’s symbolism comes from its connections with the past. In Arab warfare, the sword remained a key symbol of an Arab fighter and the sword is also a prominent symbol in

the Quran (Jones, 2005). Swords are seen as noble weapons that embody the purity, nobility, and overall righteousness that is associated with early Islamic heroes and their jihadi campaigns (CTC, 2006). The 9/11 attacks present another example of the importance of visual imagery in terrorism. Through the “stunning visual impact” of the 9/11 attacks and symbolic, visually dramatic collapse of the Twin Towers, terrorists were able to demonstrate their ability to threaten structures that symbolized stability, security, and power (Beever, 2011).

As noted in the previous sections addressing Factor 1, Islamic terrorist propaganda uses symbolic imagery to depict modern weapons and conflict as noble and honorable and suggests some terrorists are sensitive to how weapons and violence are viewed in relation to honor (CTC, 2006). If there is a need for terrorists to depict modern, widely used weapons as noble and honorable using symbolic visual propaganda, it may be even more difficult to do so for CBRN weapons. Fewer options may exist for terrorists to link symbolic images of nobility, military prowess, and honorable past Islamic warfare to CBRN weapons. For example, terrorist propaganda sometimes includes imagery of a modern weapon with an individual to suggest heroic participation in the violent side of jihadi activism and to enhance that person’s credibility but it is unclear if it possible to do the same thing with certain CBRN weapons (CTC, 2006). An image of an individual with an image of a CBRN weapon may not elicit the same meaning. Such an image may not have the same dramatic or symbolic impact as it would if the individual was shown with a tangible, visual object, such as a rifle.

It is therefore important to understand what imagery and symbols convey honor, bravery, strength, military prowess, and masculinity to different groups in various circumstances and how CBRN weapons can be associated with visual portrayals of dishonor, cowardice, weakness, and femininity. Such information may reveal exploitable opportunities to dissuade interest in and support for CBRN weapons. As visual impact and symbolism are important to terrorists when carrying out conventional violent acts such as beheadings, this study proposes that terrorist views about CBRN weapons can be similarly influenced by visual impact. Multiple terrorist statements reviewed demonstrate the sensitivity of some terrorists to how a violent act or use of a weapon appears visually and the message certain images convey to fellow group members and terrorist constituents. Terrorist reliance on symbolic images in terrorist propaganda could provide US national security officials opportunities to diminish respect for CBRN weapons and dissuade terrorist use and constituent support for such weapons.

### *Summary*

The importance to terrorists and their constituents of aesthetics and the visual impact of an attack can play an important role in terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons as well as how terrorist constituents respond to CBRN use. However, the degree to which and the way visual impact may influence views about CBRN weapons remains understudied and therefore, unclear. Therefore, several perspectives were considered by this study to examine how this factor could impact terrorist views about



CBRN. It is also likely that culture will play a role in visual impact. The visual impact of a violent act can differ across groups of people and time and as noted above, aesthetics and symbolism can be impacted by culture. Beheadings provides one example of how an image can convey different things to various audiences, where some may find them abhorrent and gruesome while others find symbolic meaning in and are less averse to such actions. Additionally, research unrelated to terrorism or violent imagery also highlights the important role culture plays in how an image is perceived. One study found that when people raised in a Western culture look at a picture, they instinctively isolate the central subject from its surroundings, but when East Asians look at the same image, they see its entirety, suggesting that culture can impact perception of an image (Masuda et al., 2008; Keim, 2008). According to the study's co-author, Takahiko Masuda, in a press release, "East Asians seem to have a more holistic pattern of attention, perceiving people in terms of the relationships to others...People raised in the North American tradition often find it easy to isolate a person from its surroundings..." (Keim, 2008).

To address the knowledge gaps highlighted by this study, future work should examine how cultural differences impact aesthetics and visual imagery, views about violent visual impact and perceptions of how terror is inflicted. For example, understanding what is terrifying or too violent or gory to different groups and examining how CBRN weapons and each CBRN modality align to those different perspectives will provide greater insight into terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Additionally, this

information can be used to inform and tailor efforts to impact terrorist and constituent views about CBRN weapon use through strategic counterterrorism communications.

### **Other Factors**

Although not specifically linked to the two categories of factors originally identified for this study (Factor 1 and 2), additional themes of interest were identified through either the literature review or while reviewing terrorist statements. Although not the primary focus of this study, these topics deserve brief consideration here and further examination in future studies. Below are discussions on how views about environmental health, disease and starvation, and magic and myth may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons.

#### *Environmental Health*

Several terrorist statements discussed the importance of environment health. Although some of these statements were not directly linked to acts of violence and warfare, statements about environmental health were reviewed because they provide insight into how terrorists may view the acceptability of certain violent actions if they impacted the environment. In these statements, water is identified as an important resource that should not be threatened and Usama bin Laden described global warming as a vital issue, criticizes pollution, and discusses the danger of climate change, labeling “the assault on the global climate” as a crime against humanity.

- “Regarding the talk about a network of pipelines and wells in the Gulf...the reality is that water is getting drained by agriculture and most countries are getting their water from a few water desalinization stations on the Gulf. Whenever a war starts in the region and some oil tankers gets attacked, the oil will get in the water and pollute it. Also if the stations themselves get attacked, 20 million Muslims will be at risk of dying out of thirst.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “This is a chance to explain our motives for continuing the war. The wise people would tell you to give people their rights in order to be able to focus on other vital issues such as global warming. They have the option to stop the war, but we do not have any option, except to defend our nation. This is a conflict between the biggest cultures in the world at a time when the climate is changing rapidly.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “This is a message to the whole world about those who cause climate change and its dangers – intentionally or unintentionally – and what we must do. In front of the world are the records which show the huge numbers of victims of climate change, some of whom died of hunger and others of whom died of drowning. Kyoto Protocol and have agreed to reduce emissions of harmful gases. However, Bush Junior – and prior to him, Congress – rejected this agreement in order to please the major corporations. They, therefore, are the real culprits behind the assault on the global climate, and this isn’t the first of their crimes against humanity. The corruption of the climate stems from the corruption of hearts and deeds...So if the peoples of the world were to stop consuming American goods,

this last link would become even weaker, leading in turn to a decrease in harmful gases.” (Usama bin Laden)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

These statements highlight a concern for the environment that could be exploited through strategic counterterrorism messaging targeting both terrorists and their constituents. Such efforts could emphasize the potential destructiveness of CBRN weapons to environmental health (CBRN weapons have the potential to contaminate the environment, make natural resources unusable, and kill organisms in affected areas). Given the current popularity of environmental health, a focus on the environmental impact of using CBRN weapons could be used to create greater aversion to these weapons and could make groups trying to use such weapons appear out of touch with today’s popular “green movement”, old fashioned, or hypocritical. Resonance of such an argument will differ across various societies, groups, and likely ages, highlighting a need for greater insight into how terrorists and their constituents view and value environmental protection.

#### *Disease and Starvation*

Links between CBRN use, disease, and starvation could be used in strategic messaging campaigns to influence terrorist views about CBRN weapon use. Terrorist statements condemn the use of disease and starvation as weapons or methods of death. Negative views about disease and starvation are especially applicable to BW use,

although CRN weapons could also be seen as causing disease and decimating food and water supplies. This link could be used to dissuade CBRN use or to discredit and reduce support for groups that use CBRN weapons.

Several terrorist statements condemned the use of disease and starvation as weapons or methods of death. For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri speaks about the joy that practicing medicine, as a sacrifice to Allah, provides and states that such joy can never be experienced by those who have twisted it into a tool for other, negative reasons. Additionally, Abu Yahya al-Libi describes a case where children were supposedly injected with AIDS by the West on purpose as heinous, hideous, evil, extreme lowliness, despicable, a complete abandonment of all human values, and hatred in its ugliest form. Allowing people to die of disease by inhibiting their access to medicine is also denounced by Usama bin Laden.

The majority of statements reviewed that address starvation condemn actions that allow people to starve, pointing out that the US has taken such “evil” actions. However, Muhammad bin Ahmad as-Salim states that if there is a shortage of money for feeding the hungry as well as for Jihad, preference should be given to jihad even if the hungry die, because the hungry are dying by an act of Allah.

- “As part of the series of crimes which the Crusader West presents from time to time as civilized gifts...All have heard of that heinous crime for which we haven't found an appropriate description in the dictionary, due to its extreme ugliness and lowliness; that ugly crime which five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor committed by injecting more than 400 Libyan children with the AIDS virus in a

Benghazi hospital, injections which carried latent hatred and criminality; that crime which indicated a complete abandonment of all human values and revealed hearts in which hatred is embodied in its ugliest form.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “A reaction might take place as a result of US government's hitting Muslim civilians and executing more than 600 thousand Muslim children in Iraq by preventing food and medicine from reaching them. So, the US is responsible for any reaction, because it extended its war against troops to civilians.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Q.) “How do you reconcile the values of your medical training—to help people and prolong their lives—with the fact that you killed Anwar al-Sadat and that you shape the minds of bombers and suicide commandos?” A.) ‘During my medical studies, I learned that life is Allah’s miracle and his gift. Thus, one must be careful to obey him. I have learned from surgery about how to save the body by amputating failing organs and removing cancers, and how to cure illness-inducing bacteria. Medicine, when practiced as a sacrifice to Allah and to help the oppressed, will grant the soul happiness and joy, which will never be experienced by those who have twisted it into a tool for greed, robbing others and exploiting their pain for their own benefit.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “You [U.S.] have been described in history as a nation that spreads diseases that were unknown to man in the past. Go ahead and boast to the nations of man that you brought them AIDS as a Satanic American Invention.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “The US does not consider it terrorism when hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers in “What does it mean when ... Iraq is placed under embargo for several years, during which over a million children died, shocking and distressing all who visited Iraq, including the Westerners themselves?” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Ibn Tavnthvah was asked regarding ... a shortage of money for feeding the hungry as well as for the Jihad which would be hindered without it, so he said: “We put preference on the Jihad even if the hungry die, just as in the issue of human shields (in which the disbelievers are to be attacked despite the fact that they are using Muslim human shields, and that those Muslims might unintentionally be killed as a result of this attack), and this issue is more deserving of (us preferring to continue the Jihad despite the deaths of some Muslims). This is because in the case of the human shields, we are killing them by our actions, while in this case they are dying by an act of Allah.” (Muhammad bin Ahmad as-Salim)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Negative views about disease and starvation are especially applicable to BW use. BW use can cause disease in people as well as food sources such as animals and plants. CRN weapons can also kill or damage food sources. These factors could dissuade terrorist use of CBRN weapons and could especially influence how terrorist constituents view such weapons, since some constituents could be impacted by resulting disease or starvation.

Additionally, ideas about disease could influence terrorist and constituent aversion to CBRN weapons. Cole notes that groups around the world have used poisoned arrows to hunt animals but never in wars against people (Cole, 1998). For example, the !Kung Bushmen in southwest Africa freely hunted with poisoned arrows, but refrained from using them in war (Cole, 1998). It is unknown why these groups did not use poisons in battle when they were capable of doing so. The reasons were not likely related to production, deployment, or reliability of effects since their effectiveness was proven when hunting animals (Cole, 1998). According to Cole, the mysterious action of poisons and their linkage to medicine could provide one explanation for nonuse of poisons against humans by some groups (Cole, 1998). “In the human psyche resides a deep-seated aversion to disease and agents that cause it” (Cole, 1998). Additionally, according to Potts and Hayden, “physicians may tend to find biological weapons particularly loathsome” (Potts & Hayden, 2010). Folk lore and phobias may also play a role in aversion to CB weapons according to Cole, who suggests a potential link between human aversion to poison weapons and phobias of poisonous creatures such as snakes or scorpions. Human sources of poison may therefore be viewed differently from users of other weapons such as swords or guns (Cole, 1998).

Fostering this aversion to disease and poisons, while exploiting terrorist statements that condemn those that use disease as a weapon, may dissuade terrorist BW use through strategic counterterrorism communications efforts. It would also be interesting to consider how one’s profession or educational background in medicine may impact their views of and decisions on using BWs, especially for key terrorist leaders and



decision makers (e.g. Ayman Al-Zawahiri). The impact of CBRN weapons on food supply could also be used effectively in strategic communications efforts given terrorist condemnation of death by starvation. Any terrorist actions that threaten to damage Muslim food sources are also vulnerable to strategic communications campaigns aimed at both terrorists and their supporters. A greater aversion to using CBRN weapons could be fostered if links between the use CBRN weapons and a negative impact on food supplies and the potential for starvation could be made in conjunction with terrorist statements that describe those that bring about the starvation of innocent populations as shocking, distressing, and objectionable. Terrorists who choose to pursue or use CBRN weapons could be characterized as bringing about disease and starvation to Muslims. Of course, if terrorists were targeting the US or other enemy countries with CBRN weapons, causing disease and starvation as a result of the attack may not be of great concern to terrorists or their constituents. In these circumstances, highlighting the uncontrollable nature of BW and the potential for disease to spread around the world, including to areas important to terrorists and their constituents may help to dissuade some terrorist interest in biological weapons.

### *Magic and Myth*

Although most terrorist statements reviewed did not address views about myth, superstition, or mystical properties as they relate to weapons, one statement by Ayman al-Zawahiri possibly addresses a spiritual or mystical quality of poisons:

“Ibn al-Majishun said that someone who murders using fire or poison is not killed by the same means. This is because the prophet said, 'No one except God chastises with fire.' Poison is intestinal fire. But the great majority held the view that he is to be killed by the same means because of the general wording of the verse.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

Although this statement is vague and Ayman al-Zawahiri discounts concerns that poison can only be used by God, this statement could imply a perception by some of an otherworldly or spiritual property to poisons. Additionally, according to Samir Khan, the use of magic and communication with the jinn has been used by the enemy to locate Mujahidin fighters. This statement is also vague and it is unclear what the author is referring to but it may suggest some belief in or concern for the use of magic, which may also deserve additional attention.

- “This is only the beginning. Then comes Saudi’s romantic relationship with America that includes military aid to fight Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula and in return the Crusaders are given military bases to launch wars against the Muslims around the world that go beyond the boundaries of their own laws in killing and weapon deployments; their protection of Israel from the Muslims; their childish interfaith dialogues that shamelessly calls for a new religion; the scholars they promote who justify anything that the government does; their use of magic and communication with vile jinn’s to locate positions of the Mujahidin...” (Samir Khan)

See *Appendix 3* for additional examples.

Belbutowski, citing Ernst Cassirer's six categories of the "Circle of Humanity" as a model for discussing human culture, identifies myth as an important consideration in understanding culture and its impact on the "will of the enemy to fight, the determination of resistance groups to persevere, or the willingness of the populace to support insurgents or warlords" (Belbutowski, 1996).

"Weather, magic, or the words of a tribal leader may make the individual feel the energy of those mythical great stories in his own particular tribal culture. This brings great force and direction to the individual and may account for tremendous prowess on the battlefield, even in the face of superior firepower or numerical odds. People often fight according to the strength of the myth active in them" (Belbutowski, 1996).

Myth and magic may also play a role in perceptions about CB weapons. According to Cole, poisons and medicine have long been steeped in mystery and were often associated with magic and the occult and therefore were under the authority of specialized personnel such as the shaman or medicine man (Cole, 1998). As noted above, poisons act invisibly and subtly and their actions often seemed mysterious and incomprehensible which, according to Cole could be one reason for reticence to use poisons as weapons.

"To fight with poisons would, in effect, risk disturbing the spirit...using poison weapons could have meant dabbling in mysteries that displeased the gods...using

poisons might tempt the wrath of the spirits. These attitudes were surely nurtured, in part, by culture” (Cole, 1998).

Aum Shinrikyo’s leader Shoko Asahara may provide one modern-day example of such mythical or spiritual thinking. To Asahara, sarin gas took on mystical proportions and he had what was described as an “intense attraction to the gas” (Lifton, 1999). Although Aum scientists had been working on BW for several years before sarin, Aum “never developed a possessively worshipful attitude towards” the BWs (Lifton, 1999). Additionally, Asahara may have expressed a form of “nuclearism”, an attraction to and identification with the weapon and its power. Asahara viewed them almost like deities, possessing a capacity not only for unlimited destruction but also for godlike creation (Lifton, 1999). This special quality assigned to poisons by some, both past and present, highlights an interesting topic for future consideration in terrorist CBRN studies.

The role of myth and magic in terrorist weapon and tactic choice is unclear and not widely addressed, but may be another factor that could impact terrorist decision-making. For example, ideas about the mystical properties of poison weapons could dissuade some terrorists from using these weapons. Conversely, weapons steeped in mystery or seen as having mystical properties could be preferred by those who are drawn to such traits. Others may believe that the mystery and magic surrounding poison weapons adds an element of danger to their use, therefore the user may be seen as courageous for his willingness to use poisons or powerful for his ability to control and use such weapons. Additional focus on these topics to better understand how such factors may influence certain populations or individuals and whether they are of

importance to terrorists or their constituents could identify opportunities to leverage certain myths, superstitions, or spiritual beliefs to influence opinions about CBRN weapons.

## **CHAPTER SIX: IMPACT OF CULTURAL FACTORS**

The following discussion addresses circumstances that could influence the extent to which the cultural factors examined by this study may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapon use. Given the reported cases of CBRN pursuit or use by AQ, the assumption has been made that AQ terrorists are interested in CBRN weapons and if they are able to obtain these weapons then they will not hesitate to use them (Robertson, 2011; White House, 2011; Mazzone, 2013). This assumption could possibly limit or even negate the relevance of the factors examined in this study, such as honor, courage, masculinity, and visual impact and their impact on terrorist CBRN decisions. However, as noted in Chapter Two, the reported cases of CBRN pursuit or use do not necessarily signify absolute commitment to and interest in carrying out a CBRN attack by all AQ terrorists. The likelihood that a group will pursue or use a CBRN weapon is not guaranteed and questions remain regarding the likelihood that some groups will use these weapons (Betts, 2005). Several studies identify a number of potential reasons that may limit interest in or use of CBRN attacks, including pressure from counterterrorism efforts and military campaigns, fear of retaliation, patience for the right time or the right CBRN material, and technical or financial difficulties (Bale & Ackerman, 2004; Shea & Gottron, 2004; Blum et al., 2005; Bunn & Wier, 2006; Quillen, 2007; Mowatt-Larsen, 2010; Robertson, 2011; Tishler, 2013). The cultural factors identified in this study, such as

honor, courage, strength, masculinity and visual impact may also provide an additional explanation for the relatively limited use of CBRN attacks, even in cases where a group has previously pursued or tried to use CBRN weapons. For example, changing conditions may make a group more or less susceptible to the influence of these factors and their impact on terrorist CBRN views. The importance of the factors examined in this study will not apply equally to everyone. Leadership and member turnover in a group can result in changing ideas, priorities, and values, and the importance of the factors examined in this study can change as the composition of a group changes. Additionally, the level of autonomy within a group could explain cases of CBRN pursuit or use even when cultural factors, such as those examined in this study, dissuade the majority of individuals in a terrorist group from using CBRN weapons.

Groups may also abandon their efforts to develop a CBRN capability. It is possible that as a group works to acquire or experiment with CBRN weapons, the influence of the cultural factors may increase. For example, the lack of a dramatic or powerful visual impact or the quiet, subtle, or uninspiring nature of a chemical weapon may not be obvious until demonstrated through experimentation. Watching the death of an animal exposed to a CW in an experiment may demonstrate undesirable aspects of a CW that conflict with key values such as honor, strength, and military prowess. The results of experiments may shape negative views of terrorists about such weapons. Additionally, terrorist groups may be willing to publicly encourage others to carry out CBRN attacks while being reluctant to carry them out themselves. Past terrorist CBRN development efforts may have also been more for deterrence than use due to negative

views about the use of such weapons. Further, some terrorist groups may prefer to develop or use one CBRN modality over others. As noted in the Results and Discussion section, the factors examined in this study could influence views about each CBRN modality differently. For example, terrorists could pursue N weapons but still have an aversion to CB weapons because of their link to cowardice, weakness, or femininity.

Additionally, the factors examined in this study may not inhibit use of CBRN weapons but may influence the method for carrying out a CBRN attack. For example, a group may only be willing to use CBR material if it is added to an explosive. The explosive could negate concerns about the lack of a sudden, dramatic visual impact or appearing cowardly, weak, or sneaky.

It is possible that claims of interest in or possession of CBRN weapons could be an exaggeration or propaganda to terrorize enemies. Cultural factors, such as normal use of exaggeration and over-statement in some cultures should be considered when assessing terrorist statements on CBRN weapons. A statement showing a willingness to obtain or capability to use a CBRN weapon could be an exaggeration or a lie to protect one's honor and does not provide enough evidence to determine with high confidence the likelihood that a terrorists will use a CBRN capability or is even interested in obtaining it.

Even if the factors examined in this study have not yet influenced terrorist views about CBRN weapons, there is still potential for these factors to dissuade further interest in or use of these weapons if the factors are leveraged by strategic counterterrorism communications campaigns. Additionally, in cases of CBRN use by terrorists, these



factors can be exploited in strategic communications campaigns to discredit the group that used the CBRN weapons and limit recruitment to and public support for that group.

In cases where the cultural factors examined by this study do play a role in inhibiting terrorist interest in or use of CBRN weapons or influence terrorist constituent support for such weapons, some conditions may override these inhibitions. Historic warfare cases provide some examples of circumstance that overruled beliefs about the unacceptability of using CBRN weapons and factors that inhibited their use. In past warfare examples, even when CBW use was unacceptable, multiple conditions lessened these inhibitions and led to their use, including desperate situations where CBW use was needed for self-defense or when defeat seemed certain, to break a stalemate or end long wars, in retaliation for CBW use, when used against “outsiders” or “barbarians”, and in frustration when other methods had no impact (Price, 1995; Maddox, 2004; Coleman, 2005; Mayor, 2008; Tannenwald, 1999). Actions taken by Western powers could similarly drive terrorist CBRN use and the lifting of inhibitions to CBRN weapons. For example, terrorists may use CBRN weapons in retaliation for CBRN use against them. This may especially be the case in revenge oriented cultures and when revenge is tied to honor. Western efforts to defeat terrorist groups that are successful enough to threaten the existence of that group could lead terrorists to use CBRN weapons as a last resort in self-defense or when the group has nothing to lose. According to Asal, Ackerman, and Rethemeyer, terrorists may only seek CBRN capabilities after becoming frustrated with other forms of attack (Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). Counterterrorism and security measures can make it difficult for terrorists to carry out successful attacks using

traditional methods, forcing them to use new weapons and tactics. Terrorists could see CBRN use as a way to overcome counterterrorism measures and security barriers (Stern, 1999).

In past warfare examples, inhibitions to CBRN use have been superseded when opponents were classified as cultural or religious outsiders, uncivilized, or non-human. These views about the enemy can lessen restraints on violence or provide an excuse for using prohibited weapons (Mayor, 2008; Coleman, 2005). Similarly, in the case of religious terrorism, religion can provide justification for use of unacceptable weapons against religious “outsiders” (Parachini, 2003; Bale & Ackerman, 2004). Several studies have examined the role of religion in proclivity towards CBRN use, including whether terrorists, such as Islamic terrorists, may be more willing to use such weapons (Stern, 1999; Tucker, 2001, Gurr & Cole, 2002; Parachini, 2003; Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). For example, religious outsiders, such as Christians, may be more easily attacked by Islamic terrorists with brutal or indiscriminate methods or religion may justify using any means necessary to carry out the will of a divine power (Stern, 1999). Although religion may be an important factor that can reduce inhibitions to using CBRN weapons, it is not the only factor and religion by itself does not sufficiently explain decision-making about CBRN weapons use (Parachini, 2003; Bale & Ackerman, 2004).

The terrorist threat has become both more diverse and decentralized. People from various nations and cultures are attempting to join terrorist groups and at the same time, the threat from lone actors or individuals inspired by terrorist groups is growing (US Department of Homeland Security, 2014). Such diversity will certainly result in

variations in how certain traits are viewed and their level of importance within a terrorist group. A group that offers a high degree of autonomy will provide opportunities for these culturally diverse individuals to carry out actions, some of which are likely to conflict with the values of certain group members. Diversity and autonomy can dilute the importance and influence of honor and related traits.

Although concern about public opinion could inhibit CBRN use, this factor could also lower such inhibitions to CBRN weapons. If a terrorist group loses support from its constituents because they are perceived as weak or ineffectual, this could lower inhibitions to using CBRN weapons. Terrorist use of CBRN weapons would cause panic and garner significant media attention, potentially reviving the constituent base or attracting new supporters. However, constituents could instead further reject a declining group if they viewed terrorist use of CBRN (especially CBR) weapons as a demonstration of weakness, emasculation, or desperation. If a terrorist group is successfully gaining support and adherents based on its conventional weapon and tactic use and current method of operation, it is less likely that they will overcome inhibitions to CBRN use if doing so could damage their reputation and risk the support of their constituents. Additionally, terrorist groups may have to compete for support and attention with new or rival groups, which could lead a group to use CBRN weapons if they needed a new, novel attack approach to attract attention (Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). Alternatively, a group could consider secretly carrying out a low level CBR attack in order to frame a rival group for the attack in hopes of damaging the group's reputation and weakening their support base. Actions that create negative public

opinion may nevertheless benefit a group. For example, visual imagery of extreme brutality and violence that repels most people may appeal to and attract some new adherents.

Additionally, some terrorists may not care about generating positive public opinion or may not need the support of constituents, therefore limiting the importance of visual impact. Terrorist groups with independent sources of income will also be less reliant on supporters for funding and therefore may be less concerned about public opinion. Some groups or individuals may use fear and intimidation to garner compliance instead of trying to win public support and may benefit more from violent, brutal, and gruesome imagery. In these cases, CBRN use could be either beneficial or harmful to a group's reputation. CBRN threat or use could enhance public fear and intimidation. Conversely, CBRN use (especially CBR) may not provide the gruesome imagery that other methods, such as beheading could. Alternatively, some populations may consider death by CBR weapons to be more gruesome and brutal than by an explosion, beheading, or gunshot.

It is also possible that technological advances and greater dependence on technology could lead to greater reverence for technologically savvy individuals. Veneration for scientific and technological individuals could eliminate perceptions that CBRN weapons undermine honor and military prowess, therefore favoring CBRN development and use. Additionally, as terrorist groups become more diverse and draw more members from technological developed societies or with scientific or technical experience, perceptions of CBRN weapons may change. It is possible that individuals

with technical experience may view CBRN weapons in a more rational and scientific way versus from a mystical perspective or from the standpoint of honor, courage, or masculinity.

Although no terrorist statements reviewed address the issue of personal experience with CBRN weapons, the literature review on factors that impacted past weapon choices provides some examples that highlight the potential importance of personal experience with CBRN. For example, Coleman highlights the impact of CW exposure to Adolf Hitler's decision-making in WWII.

“In one of the final Allied chemical assaults of the First World War the British fired mustard gas into German positions at Wervick in Belgium. One of the injured was a corporal by the name of Adolf Hitler who was evacuated back to Germany burned and temporarily blinded. As a result of that experience, Hitler developed a distaste for the use of poison gas on the battlefield. The experience of this German corporal would, in turn, shape the events of another world war 20 years later.” (Coleman, 2005).

Similarly, in Britain, military personnel disagreed on the development and use of chemical weapons in WWII and those with personal experience with gas in WWI were more likely to obstruct development of such weapons (Coleman, 2005). Therefore, personal experience with CBRN materials could influence the role and importance of honor and related traits. Experience could strengthen negative views about CBRN use, such as the dishonor and cowardice of using these weapons. Conversely, someone could begin view these weapons as powerful or mysterious as they gain experience with and

greater knowledge about CBRN material. Given the potential recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, greater focus on how personal experience with chemical weapons may influence views of such weapons, should be considered.

The way a terrorist group sees itself or chooses to represent itself to its audience may also influence the importance of honor and related traits. If a group sees itself or wants to act as authentic representatives of traditional, honored cultures (e.g. Islamic or Bedouin culture), values aligned to these cultures will be more important both to the group and its constituents. In these cases, honor and related traits are likely to have a strong impact on terrorist views about violence, weapons, and tactics, including CBRN weapons. However, some groups may not see themselves as or want to act as representatives of traditional cultures, and in these cases, honor and related traits may not be as important. A group or individual may find themselves torn between traditional values and other factors such as their strategic goals or modern advances in technology and connectivity. The methods needed to bring about strategic goals may conflict with traditional values and greater worldwide connectivity and access to advances in technology can dilute the influence and importance of traditional values.

Finally, other factors such as willingness to take risk and level of innovation can vary across cultures and may also impact the importance of the visual impact, perception (Factor 1) or acceptability of an attack, weapon, or act of violence to terrorist views about CBRN weapons (Tucker, 2001; Asal, Ackerman, & Rethemeyer, 2012). Terrorists more willing to take risks may be less inhibited by cultural limitations and more willing to face the repercussions of CBRN weapon use. Innovation may also impact the willingness of

terrorists to try new attack methods and weapons and this interest may limit the importance of other factors such as ideas about honor, courage, strength, or masculinity. Some may also view risk taking and innovation as courageous and therefore the use of CBRN as courageous as well.

As one example, some of the conditions discussed above may apply to Islamic terrorist group ISIL, although this study cannot make any definitive judgments about the group. For example, it remains unclear if the group chooses to represent itself as authentic representatives of traditional, honored Islamic culture, which may influence the importance to ISIL of demonstrating traditional values such as honor, courage, and strength to their audience. Additionally, ISIL may not care about developing positive public opinion. The group has found success by using violence and fear to intimidate local populations into submission. The group also seems to rely on gruesome, violent imagery to intimidate and to scare their constituents while at the same time attracting adherents with the power and warrior prowess such violent imagery conveys. The use of a CBR weapon may not provide the gruesome imagery and violent means of death the group and its supporters glorify and value or conversely, the psychological impact of a CBR use may terrify the local population into further submission. Additionally, as noted above, the group is also operating more as a military force and the use of more sophisticated weaponry, such as CW munitions, may further their image as an advanced military power on par with the militaries of nation-states. The group has also attracted recruits from around the world, including Westerners (McCoy, 2014; Yan, 2014; Here's

How ISIS Recruits, 2014). The diversity of the group may dilute the importance and influence of certain cultural factors.

Although this study suggests that concepts of honor, courage, strength, and military prowess can influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons, the nature of these cultural factors are not static. The way honor and related traits are defined can change or they may become less important as other factors gain in significance. Culture is passed from generation to generation and informed by past experiences but it is also dynamic and can change based on recent or current circumstances and social interactions (Avruch, 1998). Modernization theory provides an example of how such changes may occur. According to modernization theorist Seymour Martin Lipset, economic development results in profound social changes that together, tend to produce democracy. For example, wealthier societies tend to have higher levels of education and urbanization, more sophisticated and varied means of communication, larger middle classes, and greater social equality and mobility, all necessary components for democracy (Lipset, 1959). Samuel Huntington agreed that economic development could result in profound social changes in a society but disagreed that those changes would always be benign or have positive outcomes (Huntington, 1993). Additionally, one aspect of modernization theory is that technological and economic development brings about pervasive social and cultural changes in society and is “linked with coherent and, to some extent, predictable changes in culture and social and political life (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). “Evidence from around the world indicates that economic development tends to propel societies in a roughly predictable direction, such as occupational specialization,



rising educational levels, rising income levels” (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Theories of modernization arguing that distinct social and cultural traits would fade and societies would converge as a result of economic and technological development have been refuted by multiple scholars who argue that cultural values are an enduring influence on society (Eisenstadt, 2000; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Shmuel Eisenstadt suggests that many societies are distinctively modern but not homogeneous and greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences (Eisenstadt, 2000). Huntington contends that cultural differences are the product of centuries and “cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones (Huntington, 1993).

One study tested the theory that economic development is linked with systematic changes in basic values and found evidence of both cultural change and the persistence of distinctive cultural traditions. “Although economic development is associated with shifts in norms and values of a society, the cultural heritage of a society leaves an imprint on values that endures despite modernization” (Eisenstadt, 2000). According to this study, although economic development tends to change societies in predictable ways, cultural change does not take a simple linear path. “Different societies follow different trajectories even when they are subjected to the same forces of economic development, in part because situation-specific factors, such as cultural heritage, also shape how a particular society develops.” Cultural differences that have persisted for centuries are “still powerful today, despite the forces of modernization” and distinctive cultural traits continue to shape a society's political and economic performance (Eisenstadt, 2000).

The impact of modernization and changes in the nature and importance of the cultural factors examined in this study to terrorist are difficult to predict, especially given the limited insight into what specifically constitutes honor, courage, strength, and military prowess to AQ terrorists and their constituents. Historic warfare examples demonstrate how technological advancements in weaponry conflicted with values of honor but, with time, these new weapons, such as guns, overcame such barriers and become accepted and preferred weapons. Today, fighters going into battle with guns are considered honorable, courageous warriors. However, use of these weapons are still viewed as less honorable and courageous than weapons or tactics that require more risk and allow for closer engagement with the enemy. Hand-to-hand combat can still trump warfare with guns and bombs when considered from the perspective of honor, courage, strength, and military prowess. Although there is certainly less reluctance to use long distance weapons today, use of such weapons can still be a source of condemnation (Braudy, 2005). Despite this, guns and bombs are preferred tactics in modern warfare. Although considerations about the types of weapons that are honorable have changed as technology advances, it also seems as though the importance of honor and related traits in determining what weapons are used can also diminish over time. Therefore, it is possible that with time, honor and related traits may play less of a role in terrorist views about CBRN weapons, as a result of either changing definitions of honor and related traits or diminishing importance of the traits. This may happen if CBRN weapons are used multiple times and people become desensitized to their use or as terrorist groups become more diverse. According to Bowman, the importance of honor and related traits varies by culture and he describes the

West as more detached from concepts and importance of honor (Bowman, 2007). It may be possible that an evolution towards more culturally diverse terrorist groups could impact the level of importance of honor and other, related traits, and therefore views about the acceptability of CBRN weapons. However, although numerous weapon technologies have gained acceptance despite beliefs that they undermine key values such as honor, CBRN weapons have not followed this trend. Unlike the catapult, the bow and arrow, and firearms, CBRN weapons, despite their recurrent use through history, have not gained acceptance and continue to provoke condemnation (Van Creveld, 1991; Mayor, 2008). This may be the result of a CBRN taboo discussed above which may continue to inhibit terrorist views about CBRN weapons, even as the importance of honor and related traits change. Alternatively, as technology advances and terrorists consider new weapons and tactics, concepts of honor and related traits may not need to change for these new methods to be accepted and used if terrorists are able to find ways to link these new methods to key values and honored traditions. For example, terrorist characterizations of terrorist attacks using planes (9/11 attack) and bombs (London bombings) as raids confers honor and notions of traditional Islamic warfare on these modern weapons and tactics. Islamic symbolic imagery linking modern weapons such as rifles to symbols of noble, warfare traditions are also meant to confer honor on these weapons. However, as noted above, this may be more difficult to do with CBRN weapons that lack visual elements that can be linked to key values.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION**

This study suggests that honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, brutality, suffering, death, past warfare tradition, and visual impact are important in terrorist decision-making and can influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Additionally, views about environmental health, disease and starvation, and magic and myth were also briefly examined by this study and may also influence terrorist decision-making and views about CBRN weapons. These results identify areas for future research and should be used by policy makers and counterterrorism officials to counter and dissuade CBRN terrorism.

The results of this analysis adds to the body of knowledge about factors that can predict, indicate, or dissuade terrorist CBRN use, which remains a priority concern, especially as the terrorist threat is evolving and attack planning and operations become more decentralized and harder to detect. The focus of this study addresses the counterterrorism goal of preventing terrorist development, acquisition, and use of CBRN weapons by identifying factors that may influence terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. Future in-depth examination of the influence of the factors examined by this study on terrorists and their constituents could advance insight into terrorist views about weapons and tactics, including CBRN weapons, inform counterterrorism efforts to counter the CBRN threat, and identify actions carried out by the US that could either

dissuade or encourage CBRN use by terrorists. This study suggests opportunities for national security officials to use strategic counterterrorism communications to dissuade terrorist CBRN interest and use and to limit terrorist constituent support for groups that pursue or use CBRN weapons.

This study does not assert that AQ core and any AQ-linked group or individual is a homogeneous group in which the findings of this study will apply similarly across all groups and individuals. The findings can apply across different groups, but how they apply will be specific to the composition of the group and the various cultures and regions represented by both the terrorists and their constituents. As terrorist groups become more diverse, a variety of cultural influences will be represented within a group and the impact of the factors examined in this study can vary from one individual to the next.

## **Summary of Findings**

### *Factor 1. Acceptability*

This study suggests that honor, courage, strength, military prowess, and masculinity will play a role in terrorist views about the acceptability of certain behaviors and weapons, including CBRN weapons. Such traits have played an important role in the acceptability of tactics and weapons and their use or nonuse in warfare and several terrorist statements also indicate the importance of these traits to terrorists. In warfare, CBRN weapons were often seen as undermining key values such as honor, courage, physical strength, military prowess, and masculinity. Terrorists may therefore also view

CBRN weapons as unacceptable if they link CBRN weapons to negative notions about the cowardice, dishonor, weakness, and lack of military prowess associated with CBRN weapons.

The assertion that CB weapons are weapons of the weak or a “poor man’s bomb”, may resonate with those that value warrior traditions and military prowess or where social approval, pride, and saving face are especially important. Conversely, some terrorists could disregard the negative association of CBR material to weapons for the weak and poor and instead focus on their potential destructive power. For example, mastery of a BW could instill a sense of power because it would require the ability to control living organisms. Additionally, statements about the difficulty or technical inability of terrorists to develop and deploy certain CBRN weapons could be seen by some terrorists as an insult or accusation of ignorance which could lead to exaggeration or bolster terrorist CBRN efforts instead of dissuading a terrorist from using such weapons.

Certain violent actions can be perceived as more or less masculine and in warfare, CB weapons have been stigmatized, in part, because of their link to femininity. Demonstrations of strength, power, and aggression are often linked to masculinity and can be seen as counter to using certain CBR weapons, depending on how the CBR materials are deployed. The use of certain CBR weapons may therefore be perceived as less masculine than other weapons or acts of violence. Notions of CBR weapons as “womanly” could also influence terrorist constituents and could further stigmatize CBR use, which could dissuade some terrorists. However, the potential use of female

operatives by terrorist groups could provide avenues for terrorists to carry out CB attacks without concerns about masculinity. Additionally, considerations about masculinity may not be of importance to lone female actors or small groups with female members inspired by terrorist groups.

Some terrorist statements were identified that suggest CBRN weapons are given special consideration by terrorists, suggesting an inherent aversion that may reflect terrorist adherence to a wider, global CBRN taboo that has restricted use of these weapons through history. Adherence to CBRN taboos may influence terrorist and terrorist constituent proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons. Understanding the role of CBRN taboos in terrorism may be of greater interest and utility for future counterterrorism studies than understanding honor codes or rules of war. Efforts to dissuade terrorist use of CBRN weapons may be more successful in cases where an inherent aversion to CBRN weapons exists than when honor codes or rules of war limit CBRN use.

The use of CBRN weapons may also conflict with those terrorists who argue against excessive violence and encourage moderation, mercy, killing in a good manner, and honorable death. CBRN weapons can not only cause slow and painful deaths, but death by such weapons can also be seen as dishonorable or cowardly. Terrorists that value mercy, unnecessary suffering, and honorable deaths may be dissuaded from using CBR weapons for this reason while terrorists who support or relish in excessive brutality, bloodlust, and bringing dishonor to their victims may be drawn to CBRN weapons.

Terrorist statements and Islamic symbolic imagery indicate terrorists feel the need to link current terrorist actions to concepts of tradition and notions of honorable warfare. Aspects of CBRN weapons may contrast with ideals of past noble traditions in warfare and the importance of tradition and reverence for historic battles and warriors may limit terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN weapons.

### *Factor 2. Visual Impact*

This study suggests the importance of aesthetics and visual impact of an attack, weapon, or tactic can also play an important role in terrorist proclivity or aversion to CBRN weapons as well how terrorist constituents respond to CBRN use. Terrorist statements demonstrate sensitivity to how a violent act or use of a weapon appears visually and the message that imagery conveys to fellow group members and terrorist constituents. Terrorists could view CBRN weapons in a number of both negative and positive ways related to the visual impact and level of terror resulting from CBRN use. For example, terrorists may be less inclined to use CBR weapons compared to traditional weapons and tactics because CBR weapons can act invisibly, subtly, silently, and often gradually. Therefore, CBR attacks can lack an observable act of violence or immediate dramatic result. Terrorists that value and find gratification from observable acts of violence that provide spectacular and bloody imagery will be drawn to more conventional attack methods or to the N modality over CBR weapons. Alternatively, some terrorists may view the aftermath of slow, sneaky, or invisible attacks as more terrorizing than a conventional attack.



Terrorist statements also highlight a concern about images that are too violent or gory. However, views about the gruesomeness of various violent acts are likely to vary and ideas about what is considered more or less gruesome depend on the perspective of the terrorist and the terrorist constituents. CBR weapons may be considered less gruesome than a violent act using explosives or a gun or nuclear weapon. Conversely, some terrorists or their constituents could view CBRN weapons as more gruesome than bombs, guns, or knives. In this circumstance, the visual image of death by illness and the deterioration of the body could be seen as more grisly than someone who has been shot in the head.

A CBR attack may not be able to visually demonstrate the bravery and physical strength of an individual or group. For terrorist groups that rely heavily on violent imagery to demonstrate their strength and military prowess, or to attract supporters captivated by such violence, a CBR attack may not be able to provide the “swagger” that an explosion or shooting attack could provide. In comparison with CBR weapons, the use of a nuclear weapon may provide a visual demonstration of power and military prowess and sophistication of a group. At the same time, however, the use of a N weapon may not convey honor.

Finally, for terrorists that feel the need to depict modern, widely used weapons as honorable and courageous using symbolic visual propaganda, it may be difficult to do so for CBRN weapons. Compared to conventional weapons and attacks, fewer options may exist for terrorists to visually link symbolic images of honor, courage, strength, military prowess, and masculinity to CBRN weapons.

### *Other Factors*

Other factors, such as views about environmental health, disease, starvation, and myth and magic were briefly examined. Although not the primary focus of this study, these topics may also impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Terrorist statements highlight a concern for the environment that could influence the views of terrorists and their constituents about CBRN weapons. Additionally, links between CBRN use, disease, and starvation may also foster negative views about CBRN use by terrorists. Although most terrorist statements reviewed did not address views about myth, superstition, or mystical properties as they relate to weapons, myth and magic may play a role in terrorist and constituent perceptions about CBRN weapons. For example, ideas about the mystical properties of poison weapons could dissuade some terrorists from using these weapons. Conversely, weapons steeped in mystery or seen as having mystical properties could be preferred by those who are drawn to such traits.

### **Implications for CBRN Counterterrorism**

The results of this study identify new areas for research and present policy makers and counterterrorism officials with a tool to influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. This study also identifies factors for counterterrorism analysts to consider when assessing the CBRN terrorism threat. The Counterterrorism community should take the factors examined in this study into consideration and tailor their efforts to enhance or encourage factors that have the potential to inhibit terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN weapons. For this purpose, the information presented in

this study provides the following benefits for Counterterrorism efforts, which are discussed in greater detail below:

1. Identifies opportunities to advance understanding of terrorist views about CBRN and factors important to terrorist CBRN decision-making. These findings identify topics (listed below) for future study in order to:

- advance insight into terrorist interest in and decision-making about CBRN weapons.
- inform counterterrorism efforts to counter the CBRN threat.
- identify CT or security actions carried out by the US that could either dissuade or make CBRN use more likely by terrorists.

2. Identify opportunities for US efforts to counter the CBRN threat. These findings of this study suggest areas for strategic counterterrorism communications in order to:

- foster negative terrorist views about CBRN weapons and dissuade CBRN interest and use.
- foster negative terrorist constituent views about CBRN weapons and dissuade support for CBRN use.
- leverage terrorist statements to point out hypocrisy or deceitfulness of the speaker in cases of terrorist CBRN pursuit or use

- show a terrorist group or individual that pursues or uses CBRN weapons in a negative light to constituents or adherents (e.g. use of CW by group X demonstrates its desperation, dishonor, cowardice, femininity, or collapse).

### **1. Future Study to Advance Understanding of the CBRN Terrorism Threat**

Additional research is needed to examine what actions and elements denote honor, courage, strength, military prowess, masculinity, brutality, suffering, ideals of traditional, honorable warfare, and effective visual impact in both terrorist and terrorist constituent populations. Greater understanding of how certain populations or groups think about these different factors will better inform the US's understanding of the CBRN threat and efforts to counter it.

Knowledge about how these factors impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons can provide decision-makers with insight into US actions that could either encourage or dissuade terrorist CBRN use. This information can help the US develop better approaches that are more likely to dissuade, than encourage, terrorist interest in or terrorist constituent support for CBRN terrorism. The US can be better positioned to leverage and enhance factors with the greatest potential to inhibit terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN weapon use through actions such as strategic counterterrorism communications. The topics suggested by this study can inform effective strategic counterterrorism communications that resonate with target audiences. Additionally, greater insight into the influence of the factors examined in this study can enhance analytic assessments about the nature and extent of the terrorist CBRN threat.

This study recommends additional research on the following topics to inform counterterrorism efforts:

- Aesthetics, visual impact of an attack, and the impact of certain imagery.
- Perceptions of how terror is inflicted on a victim and the visual results of an action.
- What is considered terrifying, too violent, gory, or gruesome to different groups.
- What imagery and symbols convey honor/dishonor, courage/cowardice, physical strength/weakness, military prowess/weakness, masculinity/femininity.
- How CBRN weapon use could impact terrorist visual communications.
- What are acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and actions and why?
- What actions, weapons, and tactics convey honor/dishonor, courage/cowardice, physical strength/weakness, military prowess/weakness, and masculinity/femininity.
- Do terrorists give special consideration to CBRN weapons compared to “conventional” weapons and tactics?
- What roles do honor codes and taboos play in terrorist and terrorist constituent views and decision-making?
- Do terrorists and terrorist constituents adhere to a CBRN taboo?
- The acceptability of and what constitutes brutality and unnecessary suffering.
- How death is viewed, to include pain, quickness of death, and what constitutes an honorable/dishonorable and courageous/cowardly death.
- What is considered “killing in a good manner”?

- Suicide attackers' views of slow, painful, or dishonorable deaths.
- How a profession or educational background in medicine may impact views and decisions about CBRN weapons.
- Past battles and Prophetic traditions that are favored by certain terrorists to identify types of violent actions and tactics most valued by terrorists.
- Views on and value of environmental health and protection.
- Views on myth, magic, and spirituality.
- How personal experience with CBRN weapons or material may influence views on such weapons.

For all topics listed above, the following should also be considered:

- How views about these topics and their level of importance differ across various groups and circumstances.
- How CBRN weapons and each CBRN modality align to the various perspectives on all the topics listed above.

It is important for additional studies to consider not only which factors, such as honor, courage, strength, and military prowess may influence terrorist decisions but also to the extent they may do so. Additionally, although these traits are often related, they are distinct and can influence views about violent actions, weapons, and tactics differently. For example, both positive and negative traits can be associated with N weapon use (dishonorable to use vs. use conveys strength and military prowess).

Therefore, honor and related traits should all be considered independently and the level of importance of each one is important to consider. For example, when honor is more valued than physical strength, terrorists may be more averse to using N weapons. However, if showing strength is most important, terrorists may be more inclined to use N weapons. Additionally, variations in how these factors are defined by various groups will determine how they will impact terrorist views about CBRN weapons. Culture will play a key role in the importance of these various traits to terrorists, how each is defined by those terrorists, and if views about CBRN weapons can be aligned to those definitions. Additional research should also focus both across a variety of typical geographic and social lines as well as within terrorist groups, which can be an amalgam of individuals from various regions, societies, and tribal affiliations.

Opportunities for research to examine these factors further could range from in-depth anthropological studies to polls and surveys of various populations or interviews with terrorist detainees. This information may reveal exploitable opportunities to dissuade interest in and support for CBRN weapons. A study could compare AQ attitudes about the acceptability (Factor 1) and visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence to statements made by other terrorist groups not examined in this study (e.g. ISIL members or adherents). Additionally, social media provides an excess of statements (both official and from supporters) from a variety of terrorist groups. Text clustering or sentiment analysis, informed by the findings of this study, could be used to examine terrorist statements on social media to further explore the importance and meaning of the factors such as honor, courage, strength, and masculinity. Warfare

examples can provide additional insight as well. In warfare, acceptability of weapons based on ideas about honor, courage, strength, and masculinity have changed through time. Weapons once deemed unacceptable, such as the gun, have become commonplace in war. Future research could examine the various conditions that led to changes in how weapons were viewed, how weapons became acceptable, and how those conditions may apply today to terrorist CBRN use. These past warfare examples can provide a basis for examining conditions that could lessen inhibitions to CBRN use.

## **2. Opportunities for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications**

This study recommends policy makers and counterterrorism officials leverage the findings from this study, as well as additional information on the topics listed above, to inform actions that may influence terrorist views about CBRN weapons. The US can develop strategic counterterrorism communications that encourage factors likely to dissuade terrorist interest in and constituent support for CBRN weapon use. These efforts could impact how terrorists and their constituents view CBRN weapons in relation to key values such as honor, courage, strength, and masculinity in an effort to dissuade interest in or support for CBRN weapons. Additional insight into the topics listed above can inform these strategic counterterrorism communications and shape these efforts so they effectively resonate with intended audiences. This study identifies opportunities for such communications efforts. The following list identifies topics that strategic counterterrorism communications efforts could leverage to dissuade terrorist and constituent interest in CBRN weapons:



- The impact of visual imagery and symbols. For example, views about what is considered terrifying and what is not and what is too violent, gory, or gruesome.
- Honor codes, rules of war, or limits on certain behaviors, weapons, or tactics.
- Inherent aversions to certain behaviors, materials, weapons, or tactics.
- Concepts of honor/dishonor, courage/cowardice, physical strength/weakness, military prowess/weakness, and masculinity/femininity.
- Views about CBR weapons for the weak or poor and the impact of this characterization of CBR weapons on social approval, pride, and saving face.
- Views on hand-to-hand combat, facing one's enemy in battle, killing from a distance, and long distance weapons.
- Views on women's weapons, including the perception that poison is a woman's weapon.
- Concepts and importance of excessive violence, brutality, suffering, pain, moderation, and mercy. Additionally, terrorist statements that argue against excessive violence and for moderation, mercy, and to minimize may be useful to dissuade CBRN interest and use could be used to demonstrate the hypocrisy of such statements and discredit the authors of those statements in cases where CBRN weapons are pursued or used.
- Concepts of weapons or tactics that are extreme, brutal and painful.
- Ideas about painful, long, drawn-out, or dishonorable deaths and "killing in a good manner".

- Ideas about and symbolic imagery linked to past noble warfare traditions, historic battles and tactics used by revered warriors noble traditions in warfare.
- Ideas about disease, including phobias or aversion to disease and poisons.
- Ideas about starvation and protection food and water supplies.
- Concern for environmental health.
- Ideas about and importance of myths, superstitions, or spiritual beliefs.

Tailored strategic counterterrorism communications campaigns can highlight links between CBRN weapons or each CBRN modality to aspects of the topics listed above to encourage negative sentiments about CBRN weapons. For example, in situations where a terrorist group has a strong aversion to actions or weapons they consider cowardly, feminine, or weak, strategic communications could link CBRN weapons to ideas about dishonor, femininity, and weakness. This may generate negative views about CBRN weapons that could dissuade terrorist interest in or constituent support for CBRN pursuit and use. However, such efforts to dissuade CBRN interest must be tailored to the appropriate circumstances and intended target audience based on an understanding of what traits or topics are most valued, thus highlighting the importance of cultural understanding.

As one example for future consideration, given the possible recent use of CW by ISIL in Iraq, strategic counterterrorism communications may be able to leverage any CW use to discredit the group and undermine perceptions of their power and warrior prowess. CW use by ISIL could weaken their support or recruitment success if such use was

viewed as a sign of the group's degradation, weakness, dishonor, femininity, or lack of warrior prowess, especially if the group had to resort to using a dishonorable, unmanly weapon out of desperation because they could not be successful enough using conventional weapons.

In some respects, it may be easier to use strategic communications that appeal to inherent feelings or beliefs, such as those about courage, honor, or masculinity than strategic communications that rely on more logical, academic arguments, such as those that discuss Islamic rules or teachings in the Koran. It may be easier for terrorists or their constituents to discount or counter academic arguments than it would be to ignore or argue against deep-rooted feeling.

Although this study focused on AQ and AQ-linked individuals or groups, the findings and suggestions from this study can apply more broadly. The AQ categorization used in this study was solely meant to set boundaries on the terrorist statement collection. The factors examined in this study, some of which were broadly identified as important in honor-shame societies where several AQ terrorist threats emanate, can also be important across a number of societies and therefore terrorist groups. For example, these factors were identified as important in the use and nonuse of CBRN weapons throughout history and across societies. The importance of these factors across various cultures and time demonstrate that the findings of this study can be applied beyond AQ or Islamic terrorism. The two factors identified in this study, acceptability (Factor 1) and visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence are likely to play a role in the proclivity or aversion to CBRN for a variety of terrorist groups or individuals (ex:

ISIL, secular right or left wing terrorists, single-issue groups such as animal rights groups).

Understanding the importance of the acceptability (Factor 1) and visual impact (Factor 2) of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence can provide insight into a variety of terrorist threats beyond AQ and even CBRN weapons. Consideration of these factors and how they impact terrorist decision-making can provide useful insight into the nature of a variety of terrorist threats and opportunities to counter those threats.

## **APPENDIX ONE: HISTORIC WARFARE EXAMPLES**

### **Excerpts from the Literature Review on Historic Warfare Examples - Factor 1.**

#### **Acceptability of an attack, weapon, or act of violence**

Some excerpts obtained from the literature review related to the acceptability of an attack, weapon, or act of violence that led to the identification of this factor:

- There is a tradition of practice that forbids the use of CW and characterizes it as abnormal behavior among the society of states. It has a symbolic connection with a notion of civilized conduct (Price, 1995).
- Wounds in the back were never honorable. They were seen as cowardice or treachery (Mayor, 2008).
- Archers were not models of bravery since they shot from afar, avoiding direct confrontation (Mayor, 2008).
- Archers were disdained because they shot safely from afar, long range missiles implied unwillingness to face the enemy at close range. And arrows with poison seemed even more cowardly and villainous (Mayor, 2008).
- In the case of the air war, it took slightly longer for the technology to erode the restraints on killing civilians. It could be possible that this had something to do with chivalry and aviator's status as knights of the air (Potts & Hayden, 2010).

- Persians, Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and Japanese held it [bow and arrow] in high esteem. To them, it was an honorable weapon in the hands of high-class warriors. Frequently, indeed, they endowed it with a symbolic function equivalent to that of the sword in the West. In marked contrast to the West, the East has always considered the ambush not only perfectly respectable but much the most effective means of waging war. This led to an emphasis on traps of all kinds, from the feigned retreat that was the specialty of the Mongols to the excreta-smearred bamboo stakes that so angered the Americans in Vietnam (Van Creveld, 1991).
- The German use of chlorine gas provoked immediate widespread condemnation and indignation which, though fanned by the newspapers, was deep and abiding among the soldiers. War had been envisioned as a great game, where the young men of Europe would come into their own on the battlefield and the decadence of modern society would be purged. Such notions had, of course, been blasted out of the soldiers at the front by the more than one million dead at this point in the war, but gas was seen by many as simply too much. Certainly, it damaged German relations with the neutral powers (Coleman, 2005).
- The catapult, which was perceived as a device that would render valor superfluous in war (Van Creveld, 1991).
- [biochemical weapons could be used] to put an end to a long war (Mayor, 2008).
- Like arrows and ambushes, biochemical weapons also allowed one to surprise and destroy enemies from a position of safety without risking battle. Therefore, they elicited criticisms but were not always shunned (Mayor, 2008).

- There was no soldierly honor in victory using drugged wine (Mayor, 2008).
- In World War II, the Germans refrained from chemical warfare on the battlefield. Yet they did kill millions of Jews and others they deemed "subhumans" with gas. By believing their victims to be vermin, they could override compunctions about using poison weapons against them. Two centuries earlier, a similar deprivation of a people's humanity allowed a British general to encourage their extermination by disease. Sir Jeffrey Amherst considered his Indian foes savages and urged that blankets infected with smallpox be given to them "to extirpate this exorable race" (Cole, 1998).
- Some U.S. leaders were uncomfortable with atomic bomb- bombing of cities as a violation of perceived American values. General Ridgway wrote later that using nuclear weapons in situations short of retaliation or survival of the homeland was "the ultimate in immorality" (Tannenwald, 1999).

### **Excerpts from the Literature Review on Historic Warfare Examples - Factor 2:**

#### **Visual impact of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence**

Some excerpts obtained from the literature review related to the visual impact or perception of an attack, use of a weapon, or act of violence that led to the identification of this factor:

- Though display for its own sake has always been an important consideration, much of the effort that went into decoration of a weapon can be explained in some cases

to terrify the enemy by confronting him with monstrous devices ranging from dragons to the head of Medusa (Van Creveld, 1991).

- Wars are won by frightening the enemy. An enemy who can be made to run away does not require to be killed, so that this approach is actually more cost-effective than the more bloody one commonly used. Looked at from such a point of view, a custom that many would consider irrational, like naming weapons suddenly turns out to be rational after all (Van Creveld, 1991).
- However, even where the intention is to fight and not merely to deter, the best designs are often those that wreck the enemy's nerve. History in her treasure bag has many object lessons to this effect. Since man is quick to learn, obviously a device which does not prove its effectiveness will not be feared for very long. On the other hand, by the time its ineffectiveness is discovered the war may well be over. Hence a case might perhaps be made that, the shorter the conflict, the greater the advantage offered by "psychological" as opposed to "utilitarian" designs (Van Creveld, 1991).
- The swords that are so lovingly described in the "Chanson de Roland", like the ones worn in a later period by Japanese Samurai, not only carried names but were actually endowed with a kind of genealogy. Allegedly manufactured by a god or by a man in possession of godlike attributes, these swords were supposed to have a personality of their own, some being "joyous," others "grim," and others still "evil." Certain swords attained considerable fame. They were supposed to confer honor not only on their owners, who treasured them and praised their qualities in



poetry, but equally on those who were killed or wounded by them. Such a reputation, of course, was not without its psychological value in battle (Van Creveld, 1991).

- Creative psychological warfare was considered fair (Mayor, 2008).
- One very significant innate response might have been to react especially strongly to, and be wary of, any situation where more than one corpse was found together. As many raids in preliterate societies were conducted stealthily, it follows that finding one or more corpses would provide a compelling reason to be afraid of attack and extremely alert. Perhaps this is why in the contemporary world a train wreck or plane crash catches public attention much more than a similar, or greater, number of people dying in isolated incidents. Human beings do seem to react disproportionately to several deaths occurring at the same time ( Potts & Hayden, 2010).
- Biological weapons may lack the immediate gruesome effects of a chemical weapon or the sheer destructive power of the atomic bomb (Potts & Hayden, 2010).
- Poison arrow makers in Scythia and India used the most grotesque poisons and broadcasted the horrid recipes to potential enemies; as an important psychological aspect of biological warfare the very idea of facing archers with such poison was terrifying (Mayor, 2008).
- Unlike weapons that smashed or palpably penetrated their target, poisons acted invisibly, subtly, often gradually. To the prescientific mind, their actions seemed mysterious and incomprehensible. Could the connection between potions and

poisons be at the root of the age-old reticence to use poisons as weapons? To fight with poisons would, in effect, risk disturbing the spirit. For the rest of the tribe, using poison weapons could have meant dabbling in mysteries that displeased the gods. All they knew was that using poisons might tempt the wrath of the spirits. These attitudes were surely nurtured by culture, but a glance at toxicology suggests a biological influence as well. As medical historians frequently emphasize, human interest in finding antidotes and avoiding toxins "is rooted in prehistory" (Cole, 1998).

- Even the crudest chemical weapon will create fear and panic (Coleman, 2005).
- Even though conventional raids were already capable of inflicting comparable damage, Oppenheimer replied that the spectacular visual effects of an atomic explosion would provide incontrovertible evidence that an entirely new force was responsible (Maddox, 2004).
- Noise too is part of warfare. It frightens and disorients the enemy and signals the attacker's cohesion (Potts & Hayden, 2010).

## APPENDIX TWO: TERRORIST STATEMENTS REVIEWED

Terrorist Statement is defined as any means of first person communication by AQ or AQ-linked individual or terrorist group that provides insight into individual or terrorist group opinions and views on tactics, violence, or weapons. Statements by individuals that influenced contemporary AQ ideology are also included. Some examples include: verbal statements, letters, books, manifestos, oaths, rules, official media outlet statements, magazines written by or interviews with terrorist-linked individuals that provide insight into individual or terrorist group opinions and views.

**Table 1. List of Terrorist Statements Reviewed for Analysis**

This table is organized by terrorist group, followed by the individual that made the statement (“Author”), and the statement title
<b>AQ</b>
<b>Ayman al-Zawahiri</b>
A Response to Accusations Against Sheikh Albani
Ayman al Zawahiri: Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner
Exoneration
Freedom
In Lamentation of a Group of Heroes
Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi
Selected Questions and Answers from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri — Part 1
Selected Questions and Answers from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri — Part 2
The Open Meeting with Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri - Part One
The Power of Truth: Questions for Ayman Al-Zawahiri

Tactics
<b>Abd al-Rahman ibn Salem al-Shamari</b>
Beheadings
<b>Abdullah Azzam</b>
A Message to Every Youth
Defense of the Muslim lands
<b>Abu ‘Abullah Al-Kuwaiti</b>
Letter from Abu ‘Abullah Al-Kuwaiti. AFGP-2002-001120
<b>Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Athari Sultan ibn Bijad</b>
Abu Ghraib Prison, Iraq
<b>Abu Anas al-Maghribi</b>
Nuclear Weapons
<b>Abu Bakr Naji</b>
Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Ummah Will Pass
<b>Abu Ghaith</b>
On WMD
<b>Abu Huthayfa</b>
Letter to Sheikh Abu Abdullah. AFGP-2002-003251
<b>Abu Laith al-Libi</b>
Guerrilla Warfare
<b>Abu Muhammad al-Ablaj</b>
Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>Abu Mus'ab al-Suri</b>
A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto
Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's Critique of Hard Line Salafists in the Jihadist Current
Afghanistan, The Taliban, And The Battle For Islam Today
Architect of the New Al Qaeda
The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call
<b>Abu Shihab al-Qandahari</b>
Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi</b>
Deterrence
Strategy
<b>Abu Yahya al-Libi</b>
AIDS children
Interview
Moral codes
On America

On democracy
On human shields
On mercy
On moderation
Promotes jihad
<b>Abu Yahya al-Libi and Mahmud al-Hasan (ʿAtiyya)</b>
Letter by Mahmud al-Hasan (ʿAtiyya) and Abu Yahya al-Libi to Hakimullah Mahsud (amir of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan). SOCOM-2012-0000007
<b>Adam Gadahn</b>
A Call to Arms
Let's Continue Our Jihad and Sacrifice
Letter by Adam Gadahn . SOCOM-2012-0000004-HT
Text Transcript of Video Clip Interview With Azzam The American
The Arabs and Muslims: Between the Conferences of Desertion and the Individual Duty of Jihad
<b>Ahmed Ressam</b>
Espionage
<b>As-Sahab Media</b>
You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself – Part 1
You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself – Part 2
<b>Fawwaz bin Muhammad al-Nashami</b>
Beheadings
<b>Jammat al-Tawhid and Jihad</b>
Beheadings
<b>Mahfouz Walad al-Walid</b>
September 11, 2001
Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>Mu'askar Al-battar</b>
Al Battar Magazine; Issue 6 or 7
Al Battar Magazine; Issue 8
Al-Battar Magazine; Issue 9
Al-Battar Magazine; Issue 10
Espionage (issue unknown)
The Targets Inside Cities (Issue 7)
<b>Muhammad bin Ahmad as-Salim</b>
39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad
<b>Muhammad bin Shazzaf al-Shahri</b>
Muslims, killing of fellow

<b>Nasir bin Hamd al-Fahd</b>
A Treatise on The Legal Status of Using WMD Against Infidels
<b>Political Bureau of Al Qaeda</b>
Mombassa, Kenya Attack
Sulaiman Abu Ghaith
<b>Qa`idat Al-Jihad Organization (commonly referred to as al-Qa`ida)</b>
Letter to Officials in the United Arab Emirates and especially the two emirates of Abu-Dhabi and Dubai. AFGP-2002-603856
<b>Saeed al-Ghamdi</b>
September 11, 2001
<b>Saif al-Adl</b>
Guerrilla Warfare
Trip Report and the Situation in the Southern Region
<b>Shamil al-Baghdadi</b>
Method for Building the Personality of a Terrorist Mujahid
<b>Sheikh Omar bin Bakri Muhammad</b>
Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>Sulaiman Abu Ghaith</b>
September 11, 2001
Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>Unknown author most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or `Atiyya</b>
Letter addressed to Abu Basir (Nasir al-Wuhayshi, leader of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula) from an unidentified author, most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or `Atiyya. SOCOM-2012-0000016-HT
<b>Unknown author</b>
Al Battar Magazine Issue No 6 or 7
Al-Qa`eda bylaws
Al-Qa`ida Staff Count Public Appointments
Al-Qaeda: Manual
Espionage (1)
Espionage (2)
Guerrilla Warfare
Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders - Al-Qaeda: World Islamic Front Statement 1998
Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria, AFGP-2002-600080
Letter addressed to Usama bin Ladin from a loving brother whom you know and who knows you
Letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan
Senior shaykhs and other issues pertaining to the Arabian Peninsula. Two letters addressed to Abu `Abd-al-Rahman,' almost certainly `Atiyya `Abd al-Rahman
September 11, 2001

September 11: The Letter Left Behind.
The Five Letters to the African Corps. AFGP-2002-600053
Torture
Various Admin Documents and Questions, AFGP-2002-801138
<b>Usama bin Laden</b>
A Warning to the United States
Afghanistan – The Taliban Regime (1995-2001)
Afghanistan – U.S. Invasion/War (October 2001-2004)
AIDS
Al-Qaeda's Tactical Doctrine for the Long War
American People
American People, Messages to the
An Open Letter to Fellow Muslims in Pakistan
An Open Letter to King Fahd On the Occasion of the Recent Cabinet Reshuffle
Assassinations
Bin Laden on Himself
Bin Laden, Secret Messages
Bin Ladin Congratulates Pakistan on Nuclear Weapons
Bin Ladin Interviewed on Jihad Against US
Censorship, Western
Clash of Civilizations
Crusade
Death
Democracy
Drugs
Education
Enemies
Gambling
Goals
Guerrilla Warfare
Hating freedom
Human rights
Indonesia
Infidels
Interview in Ummat (Karachi, Pakistan)
Interview with Hamid Mir
Interview with John Miller of ABC
Interview with Nida'ul Islam

Interview with Saudi Dissident Bin Ladin
Interview with Tayseer Allouni
Islamic Awakening
Islamic rulings on warfare
Islamic World
Jealous of America
Jihad
Jihad Against the US
Kill Americans Everywhere
Killing of Civilians
Killing of Muslims
Killing of Women and Children
Letter authored by Usama bin Ladin to Shaykh Mahmud ( `Atiyya Abdul Rahman). SOCOM-2012-0000003-HT
Letter from Bin Ladin to ,Shaykh Mahmud' ( `Atiyya)
Letter to Mullah Mohammed `Omar from bin Laden
Letter to Pakistani Scholars from bin Laden
Letter to the American People
Martyrdom
Media, Western
Message from Osama bin Muhammad bin Laden to His Muslim Brothers in the Whole World and Especially in the Arabian Peninsula. Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques: Expel the Heretics from the Arabian Peninsula.
Message to Iraqis
Messages to the Iraqis and the U.S
Message to the Islamic Nation
Message to the Islamic Nation in General and to Our Musiim Brothers in Iraq in Particular
Message to U.S. Allies
Mujahideen
Muslim Unity
Muslims, killing of fellow (1)
Muslims, killing of fellow (2)
Nationalism
Negotiations
Nuclear Weapons
Offers to Accept a Truce
On Palestine
Pakistan Interviews Usama Bin Ladin



Pollution
Propaganda
Public Opinion
Reciprocity
Religious Intolerance
Secret Messages
Secularism
Self-Defense
Sermon for the Feast of the Sacrifice
Sex Trade
Speech to the Muslim Nation on the Zionist-Crusader War Against Islam
Strategy
Tactics
Terrorism
The Gaunt Tape
The Nineteen Martyrs' Video
The war against the US and the West
The West
Third World War
To the Muslims in Iraq in Particular and the Islamic Nation in General
To the Muslims of Saudi Arabia in Particular and to the Muslims in Other Countries in General
Traitors
Transcript of Peter Arnett Interview of Usama Bin Laden
Transcript Of Usama Bin Laden Video Tape
United States Soldiers, Message to
Usama Bin Ladin Denies 'Terrorism' Link
Usury
Victory
War crimes
Weapons of Mass Destruction (1)
Weapons of Mass Destruction (2)
WMD
Women
Youth
Zarqawi
<b>AQAP</b>
<b>Adil al-Abbab</b>

Inspire Magazine Version 4 - Q&A with Shaykh Adil al-Abbab
<b>Abu Basir</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 1 - Interview with Shaykh Abu Basir
<b>Abu Salih</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 4 - Open Source Jihad Gun School - Training with the AK
<b>Adam Gadahn</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 2 - Legitimate Demands. Barack's Dilemma
<b>Al Quds Company of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula</b>
Muslims, killing of fellow
<b>Anwar al-Awlaki</b>
44 Ways to Support Jihad
Inspire Magazine Version 2 - The New Mardin Declaration: An Attempt at Justifying the New World Order
Inspire Magazine Version 4 - The Ruling on Dispossessing the Disbelievers wealth in Dar al-Harb
<b>Qa'idah al-Jihad</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 6 - The Martyrdom of Shaykh Usama
<b>Samir Khan</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 4 - The Central Issue
<b>Shaykh Abu Sufyan</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 2 - Interview With Shaykh Abu Sufyan
<b>Shaykh Umar Hussain</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 1 - Guidance of Quran Series: The 6 Calls of Al-Anfal
<b>The Head of Foreign Operations</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 3 - The Objectives of Operation Hemorrhage
<b>Unknown author</b>
Abu Ghraib Prison, Iraq
Beheadings
Inspire Magazine Version 1 - Questions we all should be asking
Inspire Magazine Version 1 - The Operation Of 'Umar Al-Faruq Al-Nigiri In Response To The American Aggression On Yemen
<b>Usama bin Laden for AQAP</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 1 - The Way to Save the Earth
Inspire Magazine Version 7 - Don't let America become great in your eyes
<b>Various Authors</b>
Inspire Magazine Version 2 - Questions we should be asking
Inspire Magazine Version 3 - Letter from the Editor
Inspire Magazine Version 5
<b>Yahya Ibrahim</b>

Inspire Magazine Version 2 - Tips for Our Brothers in the United States of America
Inspire Magazine Version 3 - \$4,200
<b>AQI</b>
<b>Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi</b>
Zarqawi's Pledge of Allegiance to Al-Qaeda
Beheadings
Clarification Of Issues Raised By Sheikh Maqdisi During His Interview With Al-Jazeera Television
Creed and Methodology
Important commandments to the mujahidin and in reply to the defeatists, from the amir of Jama'at al- Tawhid Wal Jihad, Shaykh Abu-Mus'ab al-Zarqawi
Muslims, killing of fellow
The Return of Ibn Al-'Alqami's Grandchildren
Zarqawi interview - Dialogue With Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi
<b>Egyptian Islamic Jihad</b>
<b>The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group</b>
Characteristics of Jihad Magazine -1st issue
<b>JAT</b>
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Violent jihad is tolerated for those who have resources: JAT leader
<b>JI</b>
<b>Abu Bakar Ba'asyir</b>
Abu Bakar Bas'yir sermon
Ba'asyir denies links to suicide bombers
Bombing forbidden in Islam, Ba'asyir says
Teflon Terrorist Abu Bakar Bashir comes unstuck
The Emir: An Interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization
<b>Nasir Abbas</b>
Interview with a Former Terrorist: Nasir Abbas' Deradicalization Work in Indonesia
Interview with Nasir Abbasx - The jihadi who turned 'supergrass'
<b>Taliban</b>
<b>Taliban Military Commander</b>
Guerrilla Warfare
Prisoners
<b>Unknown author</b>
The Rules of Jihad established for Mujahideen by the Leadership of Afghanistan Islamic Emirates
<b>AQ Influences</b>
<b>Sayed Qutb</b>

Jihad in the Cause of God
<b>Syed Abul Ala Maududi</b>
Jihad in Islam
<b>Taqi-ud-Deen Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah</b>
The Religious and Moral Doctrine of jihad

### **APPENDIX THREE: KEY TERRORIST STATEMENTS**

The following are key terrorist statements used to inform the findings presented by this study. The following are either statements in their entirety or pertinent excerpts from larger statements. Not all the statements reviewed for this study are included here due to space constraints.

Sample of statements reviewed for this study:

#### **Public Opinion**

- “Q. In your personal view, what do you think of bombings in our homeland, namely the Bali, Marriott and Kuningan bombings?  
A. I call those who carried out these actions all mujahid. They all had a good intention.... So in terms of their objectives, they are right, and the target of their attacks was right also. But their calculations are debatable. My view is that we should do bombings in conflict areas not in peaceful areas. We have to target the place of the enemy, not countries where many Muslims live...That was one them. In my calculation, if there are bombings in peaceful areas, this will cause fitnah [discord] and other parties will be involved...” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)
- “Principle of escalating operations: establishes that the mujahids are continually advancing and the enemy is in retreat and that the fate of the enemy is defeat.

This encourages the masses and revives hope within them and facilitates permanent support for the movement and the automatic escalation of the movement. Therefore, when we plan our operations, we should begin with small operations and then (undertake) larger ones, and so forth—even if we are capable of undertaking the largest (operations) from the very beginning—just as the al-Qaeda organization arranged operations to ignite confrontation.” (Abu Bakr Naji)

- “However, if it sends all of its members on this secure (by the permission of God) operation for the purpose of massacring and terrorizing the enemy, when the people and the newspapers talk about what happened, the people and the enemy will think that the coming operations will be even more concentrated and have a commensurate numerical increase, which will raise the reputation of the mujahids in the media and dissuade the hearts from opposing them.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “... striking of petroleum plants will be carried out, especially pipelines where no humans will suffer from striking them or tankers which the infidels command and work on. Thus, striking plants and factories when there are no workers in them avoids harming Muslims and emphasizes that fact (to the public). Properly clarifying for the masses that they are in critical circumstances which compel us to do this and that stopping the petroleum sectors from working will not harm our people at all, God willing.” (Abu Bakr Naji)

- “However, an organization, which separates itself from its status quo and shies away from the positions of its people and their inclinations, will be standing on a loose ground hanging on fragile information that will soon collapse, and with it the project will collapse as well.” (Abu Huthayfa)
- “There is still an opportunity to publish the file of Somalia and the role of the men over there in the informational media and to invest it politically to serve the movement’s project whose one of its objectives is to fight the Americans. Publicizing those events will motivate and encourage the nation...The apparatus of information should have invested this military undertaking politically and quickly to arouse the nation and affirm the Movement’s credibility to the people. Additionally, this will help the Mujahidin break the barrier of fear and hesitation.” (Abu Huthayfa)
- “The informational apparatus should emphasize martyrdom operations, rely always on them and invest them in the Peninsula because they carry many meanings. These operations should be utilized to rally many Mujahidin to join the Movement. A martyrdom operation executed by men from the Peninsula has a great stimulating psychological effects on hundreds of Mujahidin from inside to practice this experiment and acquire martyrdom.” (Abu Huthayfa)
- “Regarding the priority of arenas in which we must strike the enemy, the list of priority arenas is as follows...Wherever you arouse Muslims the most and awaken the spirit of jihad and Resistance in them.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “A final remark, related to the issue of targeting goals in the heart of the hostile countries, America and the ‘Western allies, is that one should avoid targeting places of worship for any religion or faith, regardless whether they are Christian, Jewish, or other. One should also avoid harming civilians who are citizens of countries that have no relation with the conflict, even if they are non-Muslim. This must be done in order to maintain the reputation of the Resistance in the different spheres of public opinion.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “I also called for fighting the external enemy America as opposed to jihad against The local Arab rulers, because the people wouldn't understand why they were also the enemy because of the services rendered by the audacious Sunni ulama.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The reality is that the jihadi Resistance... only targets those who deserve to be deterred by terrorism, only those who should be liquidated, and only those who deserve punishment according to divine decrees and legal regulations on Earth. [The Resistance] even avoids many of those deserving this deterrence, in order to avoid negative effects [for Muslims] and promote their welfare.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The Mujahidin have to look closely and separately at every military operation they intend to undertake that may touch some Muslims... This is an essential point; Making a very precise and very realistic evaluation of the damage intended to result from striking a given target, and of the damage that might be caused to the Muslims who are affected by the operation, be it in the number of people



killed or in their understanding and support of the operation once it is perpetrated...” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “And finally, we mustn't allow our lawless enemies to provoke us with their evil, sadistic and murderous crimes into crossing the boundaries laid down by Allah and His Prophet or doing anything which may have negative repercussions on the image of the Jihad and reputation of the Mujahideen.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “Following the news of Jihad and spreading it...Following the news of Jihad and the mujahideen is important because: It keeps your attachment to Jihad alive; It strengthens your belongingness to the ummah; It encourages you to join Jihad when you see the heroic acts of the mujahideen. It kindles your desire for martyrdom when you see the courage of martyrs.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)
- “Our scholars should focus more on justice than on peace. A people who have their land occupied, their resources plundered by major Western corporations...such a people do not need to hear needless sermons on Islam being the religion of peace. They need to hear how Islam will bring them justice and retribution.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)
- “We suggest that Muslims avoid targeting citizens of countries where the public opinion is supportive of some of the Muslim causes...In the case of the United States, both the government and private citizens should be targeted.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)
- “... we will see that the strongest weapon which the mujahedeen enjoy - after the help and granting of success by God - is popular support from the Muslim masses

in Iraq, and the surrounding Muslim countries. So, we must maintain this support as best we can, and we should strive to increase it, on the condition that striving for that support does not lead to any concession in the laws of the Sharia...In the absence of this popular support, the Islamic mujahed movement would be crushed in the shadows, far from the masses...Therefore, the mujahed movement must avoid any action that the masses do not understand or approve, if there is no contravention of Sharia in such avoidance, and as long as there are other options to resort to.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “The jihad movement must come closer to the masses, defend their honor, fend off injustice, and lead them to the path of guidance and victory. It must step forward in the arena of sacrifice and excel to get its message across in a way that makes the right accessible to all seekers and makes access to the origin and facts of religion simple and free of the complexities...We must win the people’s confidence, respect, and affection. The people will not love us unless they felt that we love them, care about them, and are ready to defend them.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “We must not blame the nation for not responding to or not living up to the task. Instead, we must blame ourselves for failing to deliver the message, not showing compassion, and not making sacrifice.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “We talked previously about the failure of the mujahideen on the inside to propagate their vision, goals and slogans in a clear way easy enough for the people to comprehend and support. They did not have a planned communicable public relations campaign capable of mobilizing their base, backers or supporters. They only issued few ineffective communiqués. When the “Moslem Brotherhood” took control of the campaign in exile they abandoned all forms of media/publicity inside Syria and limited it to the outside; they waged a propaganda campaign laden with fabrications, lies and exaggerations –especially regarding the events in the city of Hamah- that failed to garner support or produce results. Their behavior was befitting of news reporters in search of high ratings rather than revolutionaries trying to win the hearts and minds of the masses both inside the country and out. This deficiency was evident to the observant people, and the worst thing about this harsh lesson is that the efforts and sacrifices of thousands of the faithful, and the blood of martyrs went in vain.” (Unknown author. From “Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria”)
- “It was very important to us to gain the Afghanis support because the people's support to the Mujahidin is as important as the water for fish; therefore, any movement has to have the people's support in order to survive...The enemy entered Iraq without any knowledge of the area or the Iraqi people, who have a strong tribal background...Many Iraqis joined the Mujahidin against the Americans until some mistakes happened when some of al-Anbar tribe’s children were attacked without a reason of self-defense...This attack resulted in the tribe

working against the Mujahidin. At this time, the Mujahidin learned their lesson, which is not to kill any of the tribe members.” (Unknown author; most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, otherwise known as Atiyya)

- “We should develop the speech of al-Qaida to be convincing, easy and clear. Additionally, it has to be sensitive to the people’s issues and suffering and to the general public...we need to pay attention to the words and meaning of our statements in order to avoid words that could be used for different meanings within the Islamic law...Some people do not like the word agents and consider it insulting...We need to stay away from words that will affect the people’s support to the Mujahidin.” (Unknown author most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or Atiyya)
- “[don't attack within Islamic countries] to avoid wasting our energy with these regimes at this stage; that, in addition to losing the sympathy of the Muslims towards us. This is when we lose the perception of the Muslims towards us, which is that we are the ones defending the Muslims and fighting their biggest enemy, the Crusader Zionist alliance – without killing those that the general public consider Muslims.” (Usama bin Laden)

## **Factor 1. Acceptability of an Attack, Weapon, or Act of Violence**

### *General Traits and Values*

- “Jihad is built on two main pillars. Patience which reveals bravery of the heart, and generosity, by which one spends ones wealth and spirit. The Prophet (saw) also underlined two of the most evil of faults: miserliness, and cowardice. These faults lead to the corruption of the soul and deterioration of the society.”  
(Abdullah Azzam)
- “Among the important lessons learned from our past experiences are:  
Sentimental dimension—defend and preserve the value system, morals, traditions, and customs inherited, such as honor and dignity.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “We must always remember that we are different than the Zionists and Crusaders with whom we are locked in combat: We are not outlaws. We are not gangsters. We are not hypocrites. We are not barbarians. We are not opportunists and mercenaries. We are not enemies of freedom and civilization.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “We call you to be a people of manners, principles, honor, and purity, to reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling and trading with interest. We call you to all of this that you may be freed from that which you have become caught up in...It is saddening to tell you that you are the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “They pass the traits of dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness and sacrifice from father to father. They are most delivering and steadfast at war.

They inherit these values from their ancestors, even from the Time of the Ignorance before Islam.” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Honor*

- “They [the Arab regimes] have turned their back on us and we have turned our back on them... We would have no honor if we did not avenge the blood of our brothers in Palestine, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and everywhere.” (Abu Gheith)
- “This is the judgment against those who fight Muslim society, corrupt the earth, and violate the possessions and honor of the Muslim people.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “We must begin this section with a definition of what a jihadi is. To start, I would say that a jihadi is one who exerts efforts to make Allah’s word higher than anything else. This implies fighting for Allah’s sake and sacrificing oneself and property for the victory of Allah’s religion and the defense of Muslims (their religion, blood, honor, properties, and their land.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “And one is compelled to ask himself: First: Is that which he wants to do forbidden or permissible? If he does not know, he should follow the saying of the Almighty, “Ask the believers (people who do know) if you do not know.” Refer to one who is confident in his knowledge of sharia or one who is confident in his religion (the believers], for this is a question of responsibility for blood, honor, and money.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “Sharia laws state that it is permissible to kill anyone who transgresses on Muslims, their religion, their honor, or their belongings, even if the person is Muslim.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “Among the important lessons learned from our past experiences are: Sentimental dimension—defend and preserve the value system, morals, traditions, and customs inherited, such as honor and dignity.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The prophet (prayers and peace of God be upon him) then made the sanctity of these matters equal: blood, meaning do not spill it unjustly; wealth: do not take it unjustly; and honor: do not violate it... There are many people who would be willing to be killed but not have their honor spoken about.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “In other words, everything our enemies are, we are not, and everything we are, they are not. We are people of courage, honor, decency, chivalry and ethics who selflessly sacrifice themselves for the noblest cause on earth, and that is why every Muslim and every Mujahid must continue to take the high road and protect the moral high ground which we have fought so long and hard to secure.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “The jihad movement must come closer to the masses, defend their honor, fend off injustice, and lead them to the path of guidance and victory.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “Those who love life and are afraid to fight against the enemies of God will most likely have no significant role [in the fight]; their cowardice and failure to join fight will result in loss of homes, honor, and money, the preservation of which

caused them to avoid Jihad in the first place.” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group)

- “The issue closes with quotations from Quran and Hadith, and then proceeds to instruct the militants that it is their responsibility to master the techniques described in the issue and their honor is dependent upon this.” (Unknown author; From Al Battar Magazine Issue No 6 or 7)
- “Allah...has made the Crusader enemy drink from the cup that they made us drink from for decades and decades. The heroes who offered themselves for the destruction of the strongholds of the enemy did not offer themselves in order to gain earthly possessions, or temporary fame, or a transitory desire. Rather, they offered their souls as a sacrifice for the religion of Allah Almighty, defending Muslims whom American hands had mistreated by various types of torture and forms of domination and subjugation in every place... the only motive these young men had was to defend the religion of Allah, their dignity and their honor.” (Unknown author: From The World According to Al Qaeda - September 11, 2001)
- “We call you to be a people of manners, principles, honor, and purity, to reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling and trading with interest. We call you to all of this that you may be freed from that which you have become caught up in...It is saddening to tell you that you are the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind.” (Usama bin Laden)



- “O Islamic nation! Stand up against oppression and tyranny, repression and aggression, humiliation and abasement. Bread is not dearer to us than our religion, and our property is not worthier than our honor, and death is not more difficult for us than life in humiliation and abasement!” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Honor Codes*

- “Our adoption of universal methods should be limited in accordance with the sharia goals that we are striving to attain. We should not transgress. When the mujahid movement benefits from books of others regarding the arts of war, such as guerrilla warfare, and from books on the arts and methods of wars and battle, one should use caution and observe that they put methods that can be used to achieve goals that resemble our sharia goals, in addition to goals that do not resemble our sharia goals.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “One should note that violence and coarseness must not transgress the limits of the Sharia and that one must pay heed to the benefit and harm (that results from) it, which the Sharia considers to be, in the rules of jihad.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “We have laws for warfare about what is permitted and what is not. And in these laws, it says that “When you are aggressed against, act back with aggression in the same manner”. So, a man cannot stop his aggression unless by striking back within what is permitted...They kill civilians indiscriminately. For our part ... to repel this aggression, you have to kill civilians indiscriminately. But we have mercy on our part. They kill women even when they are separate from others. We

do not kill women when they are separate from others. They violate the honor.

We do not.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “As for America...it has been at war with the Muslims...committing the worst of atrocities towards them, imprisoning their men and women, crossing seas and oceans to commit mass killings of their women, children, elders and weak, and kidnapping their best...and they have unleashed and given free rein to their barbaric soldiers to spill as much blood, kidnap as many men and women, desecrate as much honor, plunder as much wealth as they want...” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “... enemies have no morals at which they might stop in their war, and therefore, they don't have - in their attempt to attain victory - a single method to which they stick and don't overstep.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “And finally, we mustn't allow our lawless enemies to provoke us with their evil, sadistic and murderous crimes into crossing the boundaries laid down by Allah and His Prophet...” (Adam Gadahn )
- “This does not mean that the mujahideen respond in an indifferent way by which obtaining the traits of the butchering infidels or utilize their method in the fight, but the mujahideen have their own morals and sharia limitations and restrictions that aren't absent from them and which they don't avoid under any circumstance.” (As-Sahab Media )
- “The Mujahid Islamic movement must escalate its methods of strikes and tools of resisting the enemies to keep up with the tremendous increase in the number of its

enemies, the quality of their weapons, their destructive powers, their disregard for all taboos, and disrespect for the customs of wars and conflicts....The targets as well as the type and method of weapons used must be chosen to have an impact on the structure of the enemy and deter it enough to stop its brutality, arrogance and disregard for all taboos and customs..” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “Q: Lately, the al-Saud government has arrested one of our sisters. Also in Yemen the government has arrested two sisters...In your view what do these arrests signal? AS: This shows that the governments have entered into a hysterical state that has made them forget the basic morals of war. It also shows that these governments are on the brink of falling. The Mujahidin need to strike at the critical points of these governments and they would fall by the will of Allah.” (Shaykh Abu Sufyan)
- “They are a people whose president becomes more popular when he kills innocent people. They are a people who increase their support for their president when he commits some of the seven cardinal sins. They are a lowly people who do not understand the meaning of principles.” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Courage and Cowardice*

- “Jihad is built on two main pillars. Patience which reveals bravery of the heart, and generosity, by which one spends ones wealth and spirit. The Prophet (saw) also underlined two of the most evil of faults: miserliness, and cowardice. These

faults lead to the corruption of the soul and deterioration of the society.”

(Abdullah Azzam)

- “During the extended jihadist experience in Afghanistan (1984—92), the Yemeni mujahideen were the second largest group among the Arab youths who came to participate. That was also the case during the Second Term of the Arab Afghans’ jihad in Afghanistan (1996—2001). They were famous for their bravery, their equestrian skills, and their steadfastness to their Arab roots.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The Arab and Berber inhabitants are historically known for their strength, courage, and fighting skills.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “...Jihad here (Iraq) unfortunately (takes the form of) mines planted, rockets launched, and mortars shelling from afar. The Iraqi brothers still prefer safety and returning to the arms of their wives, where nothing frightens them. Sometimes the groups have boasted among themselves that not one of them has been killed or captured. We have told them in our many sessions with them that safety and victory are incompatible... that the [Islamic] nation cannot live without the aroma of martyrdom and the perfume of fragrant blood spilled on behalf of God.” (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi)
- “The Imam must be strong-hearted and severe so that he can fight the enemies and those who leave Islam, for cowardice may prevent him from doing this. Due to this trait which Allah hates, he will not fulfill the most important goal of leadership; he will refrain from fighting and be too weak to have patience in

battle. This cowardice will spread to others and become a widespread disease, leading the enemies to gain the upper hand over the Muslims. This cowardice and weak-heartedness may also cause him to refrain from carrying out the Hudood, laws of retribution, punishments for those who seek corruption on the land, and execution of those the religion has commanded, even if they be a large group. If a person is known to have this trait, it is not allowed... to pledge allegiance to such a person. If they regretfully do, then it is still not allowed for them to agree to his failure and cowardice. Rather, they must straighten him out and carry out these acts with them, for indeed his refraining from waging war when it is needed will lead to much harm for the Muslims in their bodies, wealth and honor.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “The fact is, the heroic Fort Hood operation opens up a host of new opportunities for discussion of the hypocrisy, hubris and less-than wholesome aspects of the Western Crusader culture . The Mujahid brother Nidal Hasan has shown us what one righteous Muslim with an assault rifle can do for his religion and brothers in faith, and has reminded us of how much pride and joy a single act of resistance and courage can instill in the hearts of Muslims everywhere...” (Adam Gadahn)
- “We must always remember that we are different than the Zionists and Crusaders with whom we are locked in combat: We are not cowards who wage wars from behind the controls of pilotless aircraft.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “Also in honor - In other words, everything our enemies are, we are not, and everything we are, they are not. We are people of courage...”(Adam Gadahn)

- “It became clear to us through our resistance and fighting against the American enemy that it mainly depends on psychological warfare. That’s because it possesses vast propaganda tools, and uses intensive air force bombing which demonstrates their points of weaknesses which are fear, cowardliness, and an absence of a fighting spirit in the American soldier.” (AQAP Inspire Magazine Version 7 quoting Usama bin Laden)
- “...those who love life and are afraid to fight against the enemies of God will most likely have no significant role [in the fight]; their cowardice and failure to join fight will result in loss of homes, honor, and money...” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group)
- “They pass the traits of dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness and sacrifice from father to father. They are most delivering and steadfast at war. They inherit these values from their ancestors, even from the Time of the Ignorance before Islam.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The American enemy depend on massive air strikes so as to conceal their most prominent point of weakness, which is the fear, cowardliness, and the absence of combat spirit among U.S. soldiers.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “They carried out the raid by means of enemy planes in a courageous and splendid operation, the like of which had never been known before by mankind.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The raid [Clinton administration missile attacks in response to Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania – August 1998] has also

proven that the American army is going downhill in its morale. Its members are too cowardly and too fearful to meet the young people of Islam face to face.”

(Usama bin Laden)

### *Strength and Military Prowess*

- “The human structure of the enemy is weak with regards to battle. He compensates for that by using gadgets, (but) it is not possible for him to depend on them forever.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “If we are not violent in our jihad and if softness seizes us, that will be a major factor in the loss of the element of strength, which is one of the pillars of the Umma of the Message. The Umma which possesses strength is the Umma which is able to protect the positions it has won and it is the Umma which boldly faces horrors and has the firmness of mountains. These are the good qualities which we have lost in this age... Among the differences and one of the reasons for the success of the Abbasids and the failure of the others is the Abbasids' violence and the others' softness and protection of the blood (of others).” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “The Arab and Berber inhabitants are historically known for their strength, courage, and fighting skills.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “America strove to assassinate or capture Usama bin Laden and to tame the Taliban so that they might transform into a weak government like the rest of the countries that claim they are Islamic, and America was prepared to use all manner of violence and dirty, covert operations to that end. America did not carry out

many of her plans due to the hesitation of her leaders to assume responsibility and the losses of life of their soldiers. This is an indication of the weakness of our enemy.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “He confronted them, his weapons against theirs with his, and his strength against theirs, and he accepted the challenge of those who came out with their fancy equipment, machinery, weapons, aircrafts and troops, all haughty and pompous. His determination did not weaken in front of them, nor was he sapped of strength. Rather, he stood and confronted them face to face like a firm mountain, and continued to engage them in a fierce battle, the likes of which he was already accustomed to a thousand others in its likes, after which he excused himself and fulfilled the trust, receiving bullets of treachery and infidelity, submitting his soul to its Creator.” (Qa'idah al-Jihad)
- “There were several attempts to arrest me or to assassinate me. This has been going on for more than seven years. With Allah's grace, none of these attempts succeeded. This is a proof in itself to Muslims and to the world that the U.S. is incapable and weaker than the picture it wants to draw in people's mind.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The U.S. government went there [Somalia] with great pride and stayed there for some time with a strong media presence wanting to frighten people that it is the greatest power on earth...After a little resistance, The American troops left after achieving nothing...We learned from those who fought there, that they were surprised to see the low spiritual morale of the American fighters in comparison



with the experience they had with the Russian fighters. The Americans ran away from those fighters who fought and killed them, while the latter were still there.”

(Usama bin Laden)

- “A whole people has been humiliated and persecuted. And the group that has been humiliated most is the Army, on which thousands of millions of dollars have been spent only to discover later that it needs those foreign forces.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youth to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations. These youth are commendable and praiseworthy.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “We have seen particularly during the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage cold wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after two explosions, and also after the two explosions in Aden they ran in less than 24 hours, this was also repeated in Somalia.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “We must rush to seek God Almighty’s forgiveness from sins, particularly the grave sins. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “Avoid the seven grave sins: polytheism, sorcery, killing, unless permitted by God, usury, taking the money of orphans, fleeing from combat, and slandering innocent faithful women.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The lions of God have a habit of combat. We shall reap you with mines and snipers...” (Usama bin Laden)

- “The battles that are taking place around the clock today in Afghanistan, especially against the Arab Mujahideen and the Taliban, have clearly revealed the extent of powerlessness of the U.S. government, the extent of U.S. weakness, and the fragility of the U.S. soldier. Despite a huge development in military technology, they could not do anything, except by relying on the renegades and the hypocrites.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “I tell Bush that appealing for help from the world around you and begging for mercenary soldiers from everywhere, even from the small countries, has shattered your pride, insulted your prestige, and exposed your powerlessness after you used to defend the world in its entirety. You are now like the one who used to defend people with his own sword, but now he looks for others to defend him.” (Usama bin Laden )
- “The youth were surprised at the low morale of the American soldiers and realized more than before that the American soldiers are paper tigers. After a few blows [in Somalia, 1993-1994], they ran in defeat and America forgot about all the hoopla and media propaganda...about being the world leader, and the leader of the New World Order. After a few blows, they forgot about this title and left, dragging their corpses and their shameful defeat and stopped using such titles.” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Long-Distance Weapons*

- “The human structure of the enemy is weak with regards to battle. He compensates for that by using gadgets, (but) it is not possible for him to depend on them forever.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “...Jihad here (Iraq) unfortunately (takes the form of) mines planted, rockets launched, and mortars shelling from afar. The Iraqi brothers still prefer safety and returning to the arms of their wives, where nothing frightens them. Sometimes the groups have boasted among themselves that not one of them has been killed or captured. We have told them in our many sessions with them that safety and victory are incompatible... that the [Islamic] nation cannot live without the aroma of martyrdom and the perfume of fragrant blood spilled on behalf of God.” (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi)
- “...fighting face to face, although it happens from time to time in sudden raids and in traps prepared by the Mujahidin when possible, has lost its strong impact because the occupying enemy and its supporters are very well protected inside their bases and headquarters.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “We must always remember that we are different than the Zionists and Crusaders with whom we are locked in combat: We are not cowards who wage wars from behind the controls of pilotless aircraft.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “The American enemy depend on massive air strikes so as to conceal their most prominent point of weakness, which is the fear, cowardliness, and the absence of combat spirit among U.S. soldiers.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “The raid [Clinton administration missile attacks in response to Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania – August 1898) has also proven that the American army is going downhill in its morale. Its members are too cowardly and too fearful to meet the young people of Islam face to face.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “It became clear to us through our resistance and fighting against the American enemy that it mainly depends on psychological warfare. That’s because it possesses vast propaganda tools, and uses intensive air force bombing which demonstrates their points of weaknesses which are fear, cowardliness, and an absence of a fighting spirit in the American soldier.” (Usama bin Laden quoted by AQAP in Inspire Magazine version 7)

*CBRN Weapons – Special Consideration*

- “The nascent Islamic forces in the consolidated region such as Central Asia and the like, must attempt to acquire weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, bacteriological) in exactly the same way as the aggressive oppressive world represented by the Jews and the West possesses these weapons. One has to threaten with them [these weapons] and deter the enemy exactly like they [the enemy] have been doing and which has become a military tradition... This is a strategic goal which is within reach, but only God knows.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “Secondly, in their countries, we have to start thinking about the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorism... ‘Why? Because between us and these people

there has to be a strategic balance. They are coming with their cruise [missile] Weapons, they strike against civilians, they allow themselves to use anything. They are going to use biological and chemical weapons against the terrorist bases in Afghanistan and elsewhere. This cannot be stopped without an equivalent deterrent operation. As was the case with the nuclear balance between Russia and America. I have nuclear arms and you have nuclear arms, so we keep the fight within the category of conventional arms. If you take away weapons of mass destruction, there is no parity... We still remain with the last war, and we lost it. We lost the war of the twentieth century. We have to win the war of the twenty-first century. So we need a regime for warfare for the twenty-first century, and weapons on the level of the twenty-first century, and tactics on the level of the twenty-first century.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “In war where there is an aggressor, his aggression must be repelled... The issue here is not what is permitted and what is not permitted or that this is barbaric and this is not barbaric. The first ones to put down laws of barbaric warfare in the modern world are the “World Order” [i.e. the West]. [, This happened] between themselves before [it happened] between us and them. London and Berlin adopted the bombings of civilians by dropping explosives on the cities and killing 42 million in the course of four years. ‘Then, they ended [the war] by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 220,000 killed. So it is they who established their laws of [barbaric] warfare.’ They kill civilians indiscriminately. For our part ... to repel this aggression, you have to kill civilians indiscriminately. But we have mercy on our

part. They kill women even when they are separate from others. We do not kill women when they are separate from others.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “Ibn al-Majishun said that someone who murders using fire or poison is not killed by the same means. This is because the prophet said, 'No one except God chastises with fire.' Poison is intestinal fire. But the great majority held the view that he is to be killed by the same means because of the general wording of the verse.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “What is it that prevents one state from attacking another? It is nothing but balance of power. After the Second World War, America emerged victorious after dropping two atomic bombs on Japan. Realizing the gravity of the situation, some scientists smuggled the secrets of the bomb to the Soviet Union. Had that not happened, American would have considered the Soviet Union and China fair targets. It is the same in the case of India and Pakistan. What is preventing India, the more powerful, wealthier, and more populous, from destroying Pakistan? It is the nuclear balance. For this reason, the wars between them remain within the scope of conventional wars and do not go beyond them. In our case, the Arabs are in a state of impotence in the face of Israel, which possesses nuclear weapons by means of which it imposes its will on its Arab neighbors...Based on the opinion of the writer of the document, as has already been mentioned and will be discussed below, the use of anything that destroys generally is forbidden. In other words, he does not think that any Arab state should possess nuclear weapons to balance the Israeli weapons, because he stresses that we must not commit the

crimes that our enemy is committing. Consequently, the Arabs must remain submissive in the face of Israel!” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “If such a weapon [chemical, biological, or nuclear] is at Al Qaeda’s disposal, then it is a deterrent weapon, and not for initiating an action. Let the Americans fear the worst possible scenario when they use any unconventional weapons. We are lying in wait for them.” (Mahfouz Walad al-Walid)
- “Know, generous brother, that the phrase “weapons of mass destruction” is inexact. By it they mean nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, and no others. If anyone should use any of these weapons and kill a thousand people, they would launch accusations and media wars against him, saying that he had used internationally banned weapons. If he had used high explosive bombs weighing seven tons apiece and killed three thousand or more because of them, he would have used Internationally permitted weapons.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)
- “Certainly, the infidels of our time have made these so-called weapons of mass destruction (deterrence weapons) only to frighten others.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)
- “The infidels might be in such a position that they cannot be resisted or repelled from Islamic territory and Muslims be spared their violence unless they are bombed with what are called weapons of mass destruction, as people with experience in jihad affirm. If people of authority engaged in jihad determine that the evil of the infidels can be repelled only by their means, they may be used. The weapons of mass destruction will kill any of the infidels on whom they fall,

regardless of whether they are fighters, women, or children. They will destroy and burn the land.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

- “Thus the situation in this regard is that if those engaged in jihad establish that the evil of the infidels can be repelled only by attacking them at night with weapons of mass destruction, they may be used even if they annihilate all the infidels.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)
- “The arguments of scholars... Consider their pronouncements: “There is nothing wrong with setting fire to the fortresses of the polytheists, flooding them with water, poisoning their water, or devastating and destroying their habitations,” and other expressions over which the opportunists choke... these arguments by scholars were intended to allow the weapons of mass destruction that existed in their times and that would kill the infidels with their children... the arguments of these scholars also prove the permissibility of so-called biological weapons. Some of them explicitly permit bombarding the infidels with snakes and scorpions and poisoning their water.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)
- “Anyone who looks at America’s acts of aggression against the Muslims and their lands over the recent decades will permit this [the use of WMD] based only on the section of Islamic law called ‘Repayment in Kind,’ without any need to indicate the other evidence. Some of the brothers have counted the number of Muslims killed with their [America’s] direct and indirect weapons, and this number has reached nearly 10 million... If a bomb were dropped on them [the Americans] that would annihilate 10 million and burn their lands to the same extent that they



have burned the Muslim lands—this is permissible, with no need to mention any other proof. Yet if we want to annihilate a greater number, we need further evidence.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

- “We need guidance from you on the issue of using chlorine gas technology. It was reported that the brothers in Iraq have used it, but this was implicitly denied in a statement issued by the Islamic State of Iraq. Also, the brothers...have the potential to use [chlorine gas] on the forces of the apostates...and have already considered using it. However, I informed them that matters as serious as this required centralized [coordination] and permission from the senior [al-Qa'ida] leadership, because the gas could be difficult to control and might harm some people, which could tarnish our image, alienate people from us, and so on. Like we say, "it's not our business," or, "we already have enough problems," God help us. They have put it on hold for now, but the best thing would be for you, brother 'Adnan, to examine this issue with your experts there and give us a clear pronouncement on that to tell the brothers!” (Unknown author: From Letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan)
- “Q: Some Western media claim that you are trying to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons. How much truth is there in such reports? UBL: I heard the speech of American President Bush yesterday. He was scaring the European countries that Osama wanted to attack with weapons of mass destruction. I wish to declare that if America uses chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we

may reply with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as a deterrent.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “I would say that acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. To seek to possess the weapons that could counter those of the infidels is a religious duty. If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then this is an obligation I carried out and I thank Allah for enabling us to do that. And if I seek to acquire these weapons I am carrying out a duty. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims. But how we use these weapons, if we possess them, is up to us.”  
(Usama bin Laden )

### *Masculinity*

- “Also, carrying weapons for reason of manhood, protection, heroism, or showing off is not worship of Allah and will not be recommended. It is of no use in the other life and if he gets killed, it is not a martyrdom.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “It is in fact a war on its judgments, destroying its principles and stripping its people of all values and morals. At the level of morals; disintegration, pornography, immorality, drinking and effeminacy are the creed and signs of development. On the contrary, anything other than that is considered stagnation, underdevelopment and extremism.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “In reference to the issue of abandoning weapons, this would never happen because, with education and iron, our religion will be victorious. Weapons are

part of our survivors and history. Men without weapons are incomplete, and any men who leave their weapons have no respect by others.” (Unknown most likely Usama bin Ladin and/or `Atiyya)

- “I gave no orders [for the attacks in East Africa], but I am very happy about what happened to the Americans there...What I know is that those who risked their lives to earn the pleasure of God...are the real men, the true personification of the word men. They managed to rid the Muslim community of disgrace. We highly respect them and hold them in the highest esteem, and pray to God... to accept them as martyrs and permit them to intercede on behalf of their kin.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Abu-Al-Hasan Al-Masri, who appeared on Al-Jazeera TV a couple of days ago and addressed the Americans saying: “If you are true men, come down here and face us.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The Jews and Christians have tempted us with the comforts of life and its cheap pleasures, and invaded us with their materialistic values before invading us with their armies, while we stood like women doing nothing because the love of death in the cause of God has deserted our hearts.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “They [American women soldier] want to deprive us of our manhood. We believe that we are men, Muslim men who must defend the greatest place in existence, the Holy Ka'aba. We want to have the honour of defending it. We do not want American women soldiers, including American, Jewish, and Christian women soldiers defending the grandchildren of [Muslim leaders] Sa'd, Al-Muthanna,

Abubakr and Omar. Had God not honoured us with Islam, our grandfathers in the pre-Islamic [jahiliyah] period would have rejected the arrival of these women and red infidels under such claim. This claim no longer deceives even children.”

(Usama bin Ladin)

### *Brutality and Suffering*

- “Q. How about using nuclear weapons by Muslims, is it justified?  
A. Yes, if necessary. But the Islamic Ummah should seek to minimize [the intensity of the fighting]. Allah has said in verse 8 chapter 60 that we should equip ourselves with weapon power—that is an order—but preferably to scare and not to kill our enemy. The main goal is to scare them. If they are scared they won’t bother us, and then we won’t bother them as well. But if they persist, we have to kill them. In this way, Prophet Muhammad sought to minimize the fighting.” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)
- “America is the one forcing us to target it. In fact they require us to wipe them out of the map completely. America is a cancer that needs to be removed.” ( Abu Basir)
- “Even the Friend (Abu Bakr) and Ali b. Abi Talib (may God be pleased with them) burned (people) with fire, even though it is odious, because they knew the effect of rough violence in times of need. They did not carry it out and the leaders (among the Companions) and their troops did not undertake it because they loved killing; they were certainly not coarse people.” (Abu Bakr Naji)

- “They are coming with their cruise [missile] Weapons, they strike against civilians, they allow themselves to use anything.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “We have laws for warfare about what is permitted and what is not. And in these laws, it says that “When you are aggressed against, act back with aggression in the same manner”. So, a man cannot stop his aggression unless by striking back within what is permitted...They kill civilians indiscriminately. For our part ... to repel this aggression, you have to kill civilians indiscriminately. But we have mercy on our part. They kill women even when they are separate from others. We do not kill women when they are separate from others. They violate the honor. We do not.” ( Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “In war where there is an aggressor, his aggression must be repelled...The issue here is not what is permitted and what is not permitted or that this is barbaric and this is not barbaric. The first ones to put down laws of barbaric warfare in the modern world are the “World Order” [i.e. the West]. [,This happened] between themselves before [it happened] between us and them. London and Berlin adopted the bombings of civilians by dropping explosives on the cities and killing 42 million in the course of four years. ‘Then, they ended [the war] by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 220,000 killed. So it is they who established their laws of [barbaric] warfare.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “As the jihad phenomena were devoid of competent scholars, fatal concepts infiltrated the jihad movement that led to disasters. Zealous revolutionaries led to the appearance of extremely ridged dogmas that allowed the ignorant within the

jihad movement to act without restraint and against the interest of the jihad.

Repairing the dogmatic damage is of utmost importance in the forthcoming era.”

(Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “During the Second Arab Afghani Term jihad under the Taliban, I realized that the jihadists of the third generation are particularly ignorant and suffer from a lack of education even though a stable environment was available under the Taliban ruling. Jihadists, during this 1996— 2001 period, concentrated on military training, neglecting other educational programs. The many young men from the general and average classes of Muslims were charged with zeal, loyalty, and emotions, but they suffered from clear lack of religious knowledge and compliance as well as the rules of Islamic dealing and ethics...Likewise, the lack of good morals led jihadists to act in a ganglike manner and not as proper jihadists. Also, most jihadists narrowed the Islamic religion to the concepts of jihad and forgot that there are other sides and aspects to Islam. They narrowed Islam to fighting and fighting to just discharging firearms, forgetting the requirements of patience, preparation and ethics. I and other veteran jihadists observed the new that a major suffering would return these good souls to the proper character, and this is what came with the September occurrences and what happened afterward.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “Limiting the educational programs to military sciences and the absence of the proper preparation programs, including those relating to juridical science and political guidance. The appearance of the strictness during the recent jihad

incidents, with the adherence to violence and radicalism even in the most trivial matters. Widespread arrogance, the disappearance of creativity. The deterioration of order, compassion, and lack of self-criticism.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “We noted before that Muslims don't kill anyone except those that want to kill them or those who assist the unbelievers and the enemies of Islam with money or influence. There is no need to kill women unless they have fought, nor children, nor the monks unless they mixed with the unbelievers. Torturing humans and the weak is something Islam does not need. The scholars’ opinions are at odds on this and are subject to different ideologies.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “To garner resolve and acknowledge the merit of the monotheists throughout the world and to bolster the nation's morale, we decided not to exchange this lout even if they paid his weight in gold. Although we believe it is permissible, we pledged to God not to demand ransom for any prisoner, no matter how influential he is. But we wanted to make the enemies of God learn that we have no leniency in our hearts toward them.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi)
- “This is a summary of how Banu Quraidhah were dealt with. Indeed one is taken aback by the severity of the punishment meted out to them, the exact judgment of Allah, the Master, from above the seven skies. From this, one becomes aware that this religion is one of mercy, yet one of slaughter; one of leniency, yet one of severity; one of softness, yet one of harshness; and one of gentleness, yet one of might. It does not introduce a sword in matters which require liberality, nor is it liberal when the matter requires a sword. It is not one-sided, subject to

humiliation, trials and play, with the excuse that it is a religion of mercy; nor does it transgress the limits and cross the boundaries.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “...so they killed all those who were of age, which totaled about four hundred, and in some narrations, between seven and eight hundred. Some even said that their number reached nine hundred. The judgment given by Sa'd bin Mu'adh, which was the exact judgment of Allah, in the case of Banu Quraidhah was extremely severe with huge consequences, and this was due to the severity of their action, the timing of their crime, and the fact that they were a hotbed for dangerous rebellion. The Muslims in Medina were facing the most serious of afflictions.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “...the scholars have made it a condition that the Imam of the Muslims be strong and bold in implementing the Truth and establishing it... This does not mean he should be an obstinate satanic tyrant with a merciless and hard heart. The best of matters is moderation, and the worst is its extremes... It is not suitable that someone take charge of affairs unless he has four traits: softness without weakness, strictness without roughness, withholding without being stingy, and tolerance without overdoing it.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “As for America... it has been at war with the Muslims... committing the worst of atrocities towards them, imprisoning their men and women, crossing seas and oceans to commit mass killings of their women, children, elders and weak, and kidnapping their best... and they have unleashed and given free rein to their barbaric soldiers to spill as much blood, kidnap as many men and women,



desecrate as much honor, plunder as much wealth as they want..." (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- "Because those killed are Muslims, and as long as that's the case, they're not victims deserving of sympathy, mercy or the continuous calls to stop the violent cycle of killing. And the same goes for Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia and other Muslim lands. This, then, is the West, and these are its values which it wants to offer us, and this is its democracy which it seeks to spread among us. So away with them and their civilization, values and "justice". And this crime is a living example of the disregard shown by the regimes of treason and treachery for the lives of their repressed, helpless peoples and their scorn for their dignity."

(Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- "And to return to your question about the methods our enemies use in their ideological war, I say: these enemies have no morals at which they might stop in their war, and therefore, they don't have - in their attempt to attain victory - a single method to which they stick and don't overstep. Thus, lying, fabrication, spreading rumors and committing the dirtiest and most despicable of acts are for them all methods completely inseparable from their war." (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- "We will not be exaggerating if we say that our current dying age has drowned in the depths of the dark sea of ignorance, a drowning that is unprecedented. Our society is skilled in breaking away from values, mercy, and spreading corruption... The meanings of mercy, leniency, and sympathy are absent from them... Attributes have been overcome by barbarianism, cruelty, and brutality, as

the principles of greed, selfishness, and self-interest have become the ruling principles in all dealings within the society and in all politics, during war and peace.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)

- “Imam Al-Nawawi said...the permissibility of hitting with the purpose of fighting the unbelievers and avoiding the Muslims as far as possible, because the evil that results from abstaining (from attacking the unbelievers) is much worse than that of venturing (an attack on them)...and safeguarding all the Muslims is closer to what is intended in religion, because we definitely know that what is intended in religion is minimizing the killing, as well as preventing it altogether as far as possible. If that is not possible, we could at least minimize it.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “So it becomes clear that there is a great need for research and prudence before carrying out any single operation so as to prevent or lessen the possibility of hurting Muslims. This is what is claimed and requested by shari'ah; as Al-Ghazali, may God have mercy on his soul, said: 'We know for sure that the objective of shari'ah is to reduce killing, as well as to stop it when it is possible; if we cannot stop it at least we can minimize it (Al-Mustasfa, 1:176).’” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “We must always remember that we are different than the Zionists and Crusaders with whom we are locked in combat: We are not outlaws. We are not gangsters. We are not hypocrites. We are not barbarians. We are not opportunists and mercenaries. We are not enemies of freedom and civilization.” (Adam Gadahn)

- “When one compares the already huge number of dead, wounded, displaced, and deprived Muslims, and other people for whose suffering you bear responsibility, with the relatively small number of American’s we have killed so far, it becomes crystal clear that we haven’t even begun to even the score. That’s why, next time, we might not show the restraint and self-control we have shown up until now...”  
(Adam Gadahn)
- “Explosions at the checkpoints and control points in a number of areas in an illegal way. These target the points at the peak hours with the presence of cars and pedestrians. They could have been targeted at other times, where the traffic is slow. There is another issue; the suicide bomber could be heading to carry an operation in another location, but he is intercepted at the point or trying to search his car or his body, then he would immediately explode himself not caring what could happen of killings and injuries to the people around him. He should have been supplied with a firearm to fight with until he died or he may have used it to get the people away from him before exploding the bomb in a random way. I do not know who ordered that, or gave a fatwa about its legality?” (Adam Gadahn)
- “And finally, we mustn't allow our lawless enemies to provoke us with their evil, sadistic and murderous crimes into crossing the boundaries laid down by Allah and His Prophet...” (Adam Gadahn )
- “The hatred of kuffar is a central element of our military creed. We need to realize that Allah will not grant us victory as long as we still have some love towards his enemies in our hearts. The spiritual condition of total loyalty towards Allah and

total animosity towards his enemies was a necessary precursor to the judgment of Allah between His prophets and their disbelieving nations. Never was victory attained by the Prophets of Allah and their people until their loyalty towards Allah was complete and their disassociation with the kuffar was complete.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)

- “...this does not mean that the mujahideen respond in an indifferent way by which obtaining the traits of the butchering infidels or utilize their method in the fight, but the mujahideen have their own morals and sharia limitations and restrictions that aren't absent from them and which they don't avoid under any circumstance.” (As-Sahab Media)
- “He who carries out an individual operation, whether in America, Britain, France of other countries that fight Muslims and attack them openly; he must feel that he is participating with his Mujahideen brothers in his Jihad... Even, one operation in the heart of the infidels home, carried out by one individual, such operation would be heavy and definite and [with good] choice of targets, in which its benefit toward Islam and Muslims are much more than tens of other military operations in the battlefields.” (As-Sahab Media)
- “Unfortunately I have heard many of our brother Ulema who gave priority to mercy and sympathy and forgot or pretended to forget the killing, destruction, and corruption that this infidel country has carried out in many Islamic countries without mercy.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “I would like to clarify to the brother questioner that we don’t kill innocents... Were we insane killers of innocents as the questioner claims, it would be possible for us to kill thousands of them in the crowded markets, but we are confronting the enemies of the Muslim Ummah and targeting them, and it may be the case that during this, an innocent might fall unintentionally or unavoidably, and the Mujahideen have warned repeatedly the Muslims in general that they are in a war with the senior criminals – the Americans and Jews and their allies and agents – and that they must keep away from the places where these enemies gather.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “The Mujahid Islamic movement must escalate its methods of strikes and tools of resisting the enemies to keep up with the tremendous increase in the number of its enemies, the quality of their weapons, their destructive powers, their disregard for all taboos, and disrespect for the customs of wars and conflicts. In this regard, we concentrate on the following: (1) The need to inflict the maximum casualties against the opponent, for this is the language understood by the West, no matter how much time and effort such operations take. (2) The need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the Mujahideen in terms of casualties.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “The Shari’ah permits Muslims to attack their enemies by night if they need to, although in such an attack one cannot distinguish noncombatant women and children from other persons who are combatants. All scholars quoted permit the

use of night warfare even if it means killing women and children. This Hadith contains proof of the permissibility of attacking by night and of raiding those who have been reached by the call [to Islam] without giving them prior notice. Al-Nawawi's words, ""if they are not intentionally targeted without necessity,"" mean that it is permissible to attack them by night when there is necessity.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “The treatment of the Americans was the treatment of an enemy to an enemy and this is natural but what I did not expect is to find the Americans to be a people without any principles, whether we are talking about moral principles or general human values. But also that is not unexpected from a nation that is leading the world into a moral decay that makes humans equal to animals. In fact animals have more values than some Americans.” (Shaykh Abu Sufyan)
- “We have said in the past, and continue to say, that we are treating the [American] prisoners according to Shari’a that demands we show mercy to prisoners regardless of their nationality or their actions during this conflict. We will not treat these prisoners as the Americans have treated our prisoners at Guantanamo Bay which Al Jazeera TV has clearly broadcast...” (Taliban Military Commander)
- “In fighting against the infidels, Muslims should use methods that harm the enemy the most regardless of the time period of the fight.” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group , Egyptian Islamic Jihad)

- “What major catastrophic event upon the Western world will its leaders need in order to start actively listening to Usamah bin Laden’s demands?” ( Unknown author ; From Inspire Magazine Version 1)
- “I’ll draw your attention again to a noble tradition related to assassinating the leaders of infidelity and inciters of sedition. The killing of a single man could possibly save much blood threatened in a major battle. So, contemplate, consider, and then act. Act according to the traditions of God’s Messenger.” (Unknown author; From The Five Letters to the African Corps)
- “The mention of the US reminds us before everything else of those innocent children who were dismembered, their heads and arms cut off in the recent explosion that took place in Qana (in Lebanon). This US government abandoned even humanitarian feelings by these hideous crimes. It transgressed all bounds and behaved in a way not witnessed before by any power or any imperialist power in the world.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Mentioning the name of Clinton or that of the American government provokes disgust and revulsion. This is because the name of the American government and the name of Clinton and Bush directly reflect in our minds the picture of children with their heads cut off before even reaching one year of age. It reflects the picture of children with their hands cut off, the picture of the children who died in Iraq, the picture of the hands of the Israelis with weapons destroying our children. The hearts of Muslims are filled with hatred towards the United States of America and the American president The President has a heart that knows no words. A

heart that kills hundreds of children definitely, knows no words.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “Yes! We are carrying on the mission of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge in massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is a defensive jihad. We want to defend our people and our land.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “It is an invitation that we extend to all the nations to embrace Islam, the religion that calls for justice, mercy and fraternity among all nations.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “What happened in Palestine and what is happening there today in terms of the deliberate murder of children is very ugly. This highest degree of injustice and aggression threatens all of humanity. Except in rare cases, history has never known anyone who killed children. This was the method of the Pharaoh. The head of injustice, infidelity, and aggression, namely, the Pharaoh, was known for slaying children. Almighty God explained that if a soul commits aggression and reaches the level of killing a soul without guilt, then this is extremely ugly. What is uglier than this is the killing of innocent children.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Jihad has become obligatory upon each and every Muslim... The time has come when all the Muslims of the world, especially the youth, should unite and... continue jihad till these forces are crushed to naught, all the anti-Islamic forces are wiped off the face of this Earth, and Islam takes over the whole world and all the other false religions.” (Usama bin Laden)



- “Preparations for major operations take a certain amount of time, unlike minor operations. If we wanted small actions, the matter would have easily been carried out immediately after the [August 1996] statement. [But] the nature of the battle calls for operations of a specific type that will make an impact on the enemy, and this calls for excellent preparations.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Although the natural instincts of people may become corrupt, and people may differ on many things, there are natural instincts which God preserves and thus never become corrupt, except in the case of those who go astray and go too far in injustice and aggression. One of the agreed-upon facts is that people cannot kill children, even if some injustice and aggression is committed against them.”  
(Usama bin Laden)

### *Death*

- “The consideration is: if I do this, will Islam benefit or lose? If I must die and without my dying Islam will not win, then my dying is allowed. If one can avoid dying that is better. But to die is also permitted. Because to die in jihad is noble.”  
(Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)
- “Q: Would it be possible for an act of martyrdom to be aborted if the same results can be assured by other actions? For example, a roadside bomb. A: For sure, if there are better ways to carry out an action and we don’t have to sacrifice our lives, those ways must be chosen. Because our strength can be used for other purposes.” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)

- “The problem Yemen faces is the same as that of every Arab and Muslim country, and it can be summarized very briefly as follows: the ignorance and inability of the scholars as well as of the entire population, their diversion from the path of righteousness, and their love of life on earth and their fear of death.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The martyr is given five things with the first drop of his blood...He is spared the torture of death and protected from the great fear.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi)
- “The reason why the enemies of Allah succeeded in defeating some Muslims and taking over their land is because they have lost their love for martyrdom...Our culture of martyrdom needs to be revived because the enemy of Allah fears nothing more than our love of death.” (Anwar al-Awlaki)
- “If you have to die ... “It is of incompetence to die as a coward” (As-Sahab Media)
- “Other people [participate in it] out of a desire to make things easy for themselves when death meets them, for the death of a martyr is easier than any other form of death. In fact, it is the best of all manners of dying.” (Taqi-ud-Deen Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah)
- “We will come to you with slaughter and have prepared men who love death as you love life, and with the permission of Allah we will come to you with something you cannot handle.” (Unknown author; From Inspire Magazine Version 1)
- “These youths love death as you love life.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “You have tried to prevent us from living with dignity, but you won’t be able to prevent us from dying with dignity...Dying under the shadows of the swords is the best that we wish for” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Our youth take note of the meaning of the poetic verse: “If death is a predetermined must, then it is a shame to die cowardly.” And the other poet saying: “Who do not die by the sword will die by other reason; many causes are there, but only one death.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “These youth know that if one is not to be killed one will die [anyway], and the most honorable death is to be killed in the way of God.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Let me die dignified in wars, an honorable death is better than my current life.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “We see that getting killed in the cause of God is a great honor wished for by our Prophet... Being killed for God’s cause is a great honor achieved by only those who are the elite of the nation. We love this kind of death for God’s cause as much as you like to live. We have nothing to fear for. It is something we wish for.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “A martyr will not feel the pain of death except like how you feel when you are pinched” [Saheeh al-Jame As-Sagheer].” (Usama bin Laden)

*Killing in a Good Manner*

- “That the Basic Rule in Killing is To Do It in a Good Manner. An authentic tradition in the Sahih from Shaddad ibn Aws, a Companion of the Prophet, says:

“God has enjoined benevolence on everything. If you kill, kill in a good manner. If you slaughter animals, slaughter in a good manner; let the slaughterer sharpen his blade and put his victim at ease.” Al-Nawawi said in his commentary on the Sahih of Muslim (13:107): “The Prophet’s words, ‘Kill in a good manner,’ include every animal slaughtered, every killing in retaliation or execution, and similar things. This hadith is one that sums up the foundations of Islam.” Ibn Rajab said in Jami’ al-ilium wa-al-I-Iikam: “Doing good with regard to such humans and animals as may lawfully be killed is to take the life as swiftly, easily, and desirably as possible, without inflicting excessive pain...” It has been established that whenever the Prophet sent out a raiding party, he said to them: “Do not mutilate, and do not kill a young child.” Both Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah transmit a hadith from Ibn Mas’ud, a Companion of the Prophet, that the Prophet said: “The most restrained people in killing are the people of faith.” Al-Bukhari transmits as part of a hadith from ‘Abdallah ibn Yazid, a Companion of the Prophet, that the Prophet said: “Mutilation has been forbidden.” The traditions concerning this are many. All indicate that the basic rule is to kill in a good manner any such as may lawfully be killed and not to be excessive. However, this basic rule has exceptions.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

- “Scholars have deduced from these and similar texts the rule that there is no obligation when there is inability; there is no prohibited thing when there is necessity. One kills in a good manner only when one can. If those engaged in

jihad cannot do so, for example when they are forced to bomb, destroy, bum, or flood, it is permissible.” (Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd)

### *Tradition*

- “Terrorism is a religious duty, and assassination is a Prophetic tradition’! God has given clear orders in His book to terrorize.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “So the most important of the jihadi actions is the liquidation of their leaders, by murder and assassination. This was confirmed in a number of separate events when Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings upon him, sent Mujahidun units as teams and special units, ‘commandoes’ of elite Companions.., to assassinate leaders of unbelief of his, peace and blessings upon him, time. These events are firmly proven. This is what God’s messenger, peace and blessings upon him, did. A Prophetic tradition which we are proud of follow, and imitate, and we regard those who condemn it as unbelievers.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The assassination of leaders of Unfaith among civilians and military personnel... is a confirmed tradition of God’s messenger, peace and blessings upon him. It is one of the most important arts of terrorism and one of its most beneficial and deterring operations and methods.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “We have made a covenant with God that we will revive the ancient principles and adhere to the tradition of the wise caliphs.” (Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi)
- “That the strong statements that were mentioned by the ancestors were said during days of dignity and control, and therefore it is not fitting to the era of

vulnerability. And I say: so are some of the rulings of the scholars concerning Jihad, as they were released when Islam was strong, mighty and defensible. So it cannot be implemented on the days of weakness like our present days. (I mean here what was mentioned by some –for example- favoring or stating the necessity of demolishing churches and burning the devious religious books and things like that that may not fit our today's Jihad. Because the nature of our fight differs from theirs, and we have different priorities, defending against the assailant for example, while the scholars were talking about the demanding Jihad, etc...)"

(Adam Gadahn)

- “This magazine stresses the importance for Jihad to follow the past good deeds of the early Muslims and be based on the strong beliefs of the early Muslims and the guidance of the Quran and its laws.” (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad)
- “I’ll draw your attention again to a noble tradition related to assassinating the leaders of infidelity and inciters of sedition. The killing of a single man could possibly save much blood threatened in a major battle. So, contemplate, consider, and then act. Act according to the traditions of God’s Messenger.” (Unknown author; From The Five Letters to the African Corps)
- “There is an important military rule that states that victory must be exploited. When the enemy abandons the battleground, he must not be allowed to flee. He must be pursued from one position to the next until rooted out. This is what the Muslims did at the dawn of Islam when they began the jihad against the Persians

and the Byzantines.” (Unknown author; From The Five Letters to the African Corps)

- “Not benefiting from the Islamic and international gang warfare experiences: History is full of trials, scientific experiments, and human experiences that evolved over time, wars and revolutions are no different --that is why the Koran and the teachings of the prophet urge us to seek education and learn from previous examples... This is one form of ignorance that characterizes a nation whose people neither read nor learns. Many affairs were managed impulsively and in accordance with tribal Bedouin methods. Myriad of rich experiences were readily available for those seeking knowledge yet nobody bothered, we had to walk this path to find out for ourselves and I wish we learn from this experience.”

(Unknown author; From Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria)

- “As to how to resist these enemy forces from outside, we must look back at the previous Crusader wars against our countries to learn lessons that will help us confront this onslaught, understand the most important causes of these attacks, and learn how they were repulsed and resisted.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “I remind myself as well as you of the actions of the pure and righteous, the first soldiers of Islam, the noble Companions, God be pleased with them, so that we might imitate them in spreading Islam and succeed in imitating them.” (Usama bin Laden)

## *Raids*

- “By the grace of God, the 11 September raid destroyed the superpower myth, the myth of an invulnerable continent guarded by two great oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific... The power and significance of the raid on the US enemy lay not only in the loss of life and property, but also in the political message that the raid sent to the freedom-loving downtrodden who yearn for freedom, dignity, and pride... it struck a sudden blow at the pagan god of the age—the United States—from an unexpected direction... But the blow struck at its heart and came from people the enemy saw as lacking ideas, will, or ability.” (Abu Ayman al-Hilali)
- “With this raid (9/11) al-Qa’ida established a model of a proud Islamic mentality. This outlook does not view anything as impossible. By embracing the principle of initiative and action over reaction, preparing the next move before finishing the current move, and avoiding reactions that might upset the plan.” (Abu `Ubayd al-Qurashi)
- “... fighting face to face, although it happens from time to time in sudden raids and in traps prepared by the Mujahidin when possible, has lost its strong impact because the occupying enemy and its supporters are very well protected inside their bases and headquarters.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “The blessed London raid is one of the raids that the Qaeda Al-Jihad organization had the honor of carrying out against the British Crusader arrogance, as well as the British Crusader aggression towards the Muslim nation for more than 100 years...” (Al-Qaida’s Committee in Northern Europe)



- “A question posed and responded to by al-Zawahiri “... isn’t it time for an operation to break the back of the Jews as he did in the Manhattan raid in America?” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “The latest raid on the Crusaders’ homes was the blessed raid on London, which was a slap in the face to British Crusader arrogance after the mujaheed lion of Islam, Sheikh Osama bin Laden, may Allah protect him, had offered the peoples of the West a truce...” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “The blessed raid (9/11) came to achieve this goal—to break the barrier of fear. It came to give Muslims tangible proof: This the United States that everyone fears has been trampled by the Mujahidin. . .A small group destroyed symbols meant to last for eternity, and they did so with an operation (hat surprised everyone. They made the terror that the United States inspires a thing of the past. . .” (Seif al-Din al-Ansari)
- “They carried out the raid by means of enemy planes in a courageous and splendid operation, the like of which had never been known before by mankind.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “These events, along with what has happened since the Manhattan raid... These events, along with what preceded them, have confirmed that the West is incapable of acknowledging others and their rights, much less respecting their beliefs and feelings, and that the West is still living with the complex of racial superiority, and views others with contempt and believes it is superior to others... We also remind you that after the blessed raid on New York.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “We raided you with wings of death...And the ruin never crossed your minds. On their backs rode knights of glory...Who saw that in embracing death is relief. So they embraced the towers in an embrace of fury...” (Usama bin Laden)

**Factor 2. Visual Impact of an Attack, Weapon, or Act of Violence**

- “Allah has said in verse 8 chapter 60 that we should equip ourself with weapon power—that is an order—but preferably to scare and not to kill our enemy. The main goal is to scare them.” (Abu Bakar Ba’asyir)
- “For example, there is a target that is easy to strike, like a building belonging to the enemy in which meetings are held and so forth...In this case, it is possible to use a quantity of explosives which not only destroys the building or even levels it to the earth; it makes the earth completely swallow it up. By doing so, the amount of the enemy’s fear is multiplied and good media goals are achieved, the most prominent of which is the enemy's inability to conceal its losses.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “The policy of violence must also be followed such that if the demands are not met, the hostages should be liquidated in a terrifying manner, which will send fear into the hearts of the enemy and his supporters.” (Abu Bakr Naji)
- “Q: Regarding the operation of brother Umar al-Faruq... even though the device did not explode, analysts considered that the message intended by the operation has reached its destination. What is the message behind the operation? And what are the fruits of the operation?”

A:...the operation of...is a strong blow to the...American economy and is a slap in the face of the American security apparatus. The fruits of the operation are many. Some of which: ... The fear which has spread throughout airports and security institutions has revealed to the American people that its security institutions are not to be counted upon; Delivering fear to the American people and creating a balance in fear and that security is not something that the government of Obama can control..."(Abu Basir)

- “Terrorizing the enemies is a religious duty, and assassinating their leaders is a prophetic tradition.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “Why this preparing and training for combat, the gathering of weapons, and making ready the steeds of war...? The verse itself has already explained it: ‘to strike terror’ means in order to strike terror, ‘with it’ means with what you have made ready for combat...‘When they witness your terror against the assailants, your resistance, and self-defense, they will ‘be terrorized’ and frightened, and deterred from attacking, without you even knowing about their determination to attack. But God knew it, and deterred the enemy through your preparation and through your terror against the assailant enemies of God.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “During the stage of attrition, and of confusing the enemy with terror, the weapons of the popular Resistance and urban jihadi guerrilla warfare are simple... revolver... machine gun... hand grenade... rocket launcher..., explosives..., these are simple weapons and the training on them is very simple.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “And if he is not seeking salvation but he terrorizes the enemy, that is good because this is the best of all spites and has benefits for Muslims.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “In general, the jihadist message is vainglorious, egotistical, and over bearing; it may even be uncompromising, threatening, impassionate, and rigid. It is lacking in sentiment and is nonappealing to the masses and their psychological spirit. Again, it was unilateral and elitist.” (Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)
- “The year 2009, the inaugural year of a new administration in Washington, ended in a truly miserable fashion for the Crusader West and its intelligence organs, who suffered a series of moral and material blows which culminated in the bloody deaths of at least 8 CIA operatives in a masterfully-planned and executed martyrdom operation inside their clandestine base in Afghanistan.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “As the blessed operations of September 11th showed, a little imagination and planning and a minimal budget can turn almost anything into a deadly, effective and convenient weapon which can take the enemy by surprise and deprive him of sleep for years on end.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “Many people do not read, and even if they read, they are more influenced by visuals.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “Then the attack on the Catholic Church in Baghdad took place, launched by the organization of the Islamic State of Iraq that we support, which is –if we like it or not– known to people as (al-Qa’ida in Iraq). This attack halted me, and I thought

twice about my two project messages. As actions are more effective than words, their act and the contacts they carried during the attack, and the statement they issued later, do not help to gain people's sympathy... But the attacks on the Christians in Iraq, like the Baghdad attack and what took place earlier in Mosul and others, does not help us to convey the message. Even if the ones we are talking to have some grudge against the mother church, they will not grasp in general the targeting of their public, women, children and men in their church during Mass.” (Adam Gadahn)

- “This is the only solution facing al-Qa'ida organization, otherwise its reputation will be damaged more and more as a result of the acts and statements of this group, which is labeled under our organization (the blessed with God's will). And among the repulsive issues -and certainly forbidden- the targeting of mosques with explosives and others- as what is happening in Afghanistan and Pakistan and sometimes in Iraq. We still need to clarify our justified issue to the Muslims.” (Adam Gadahn)
- “As for exposing our weak spots in front of our enemies to exploit it, these attacks are –I swear– a greater shame and more horrible weak points, and it has been exploited by the enemies to a great extent. It has been exploited to distort the picture of the pious and loyal Mujahidin. Now many regular people are looking at the Mujahidin as a group that does not hesitate to take people's money by falsehood, detonating mosques, spilling the bloods of scores of people in the way to kill one or two who were labeled as enemies. While they shy away from

listening to music or looking at a foreign woman – while those issues means very little to the common public, who see it as trivial issues. They are not, but no comparison to the sins that we are talking about.” (Adam Gadahn)

- “Among the things which the feelings of the Muslim populace who love and support you will never find palatable - also- are the scenes of slaughtering the hostages....And your response, while true, might be: Why shouldn't we sow terror in the hearts of the Crusaders and their helpers? All of these questions and more might be asked, and you are justified. However this does not change the reality at all, which is that the general opinion of our supporter does not comprehend that...And we would spare the people from the effect of questions about the usefulness of our actions in the hearts and minds of the general opinion that is essentially sympathetic to us...And we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)
- “To all the brothers who inquired on explosives and how to get them, we say: Manufacturing explosives is not as hard as the enemies of God are projecting it to be. They are doing so, in order to keep the young generation from using this effective and scary device against them.” (Mu’askar Al-battar)
- “I am afraid that if they continue using techniques such as this, they will spoil [things and] alienate the people, who could be won over by enemy after enemy. That would give our enemies and rivals an opportunity to exploit [the people], and they would wage a ruthless campaign of lies and malicious slander to

distort.” (Unknown author; From “Letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan”)

- “We need guidance from you on the issue of using chlorine gas technology...because the gas could be difficult to control and might harm some people, which could tarnish our image, alienate people from us, and so on.” (Unknown author; From “Letter to a legal scholar by the name of Hafiz Sultan”)
- “Terrorizing the American occupiers is a religious and logical obligation.” (Usama bin Laden )
- “Whereas, terrorizing oppressors and criminals and thieves and robbers is necessary for the safety of people and for the protection of their property. There is no doubt in this. Every state and every civilization and culture has to resort to terrorism under certain circumstances for the purpose of abolishing tyranny and corruption.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Terrorism can be commendable, and it can be reprehensible. Terrifying an innocent person and terrorizing him is objectionable and unjust, also unjustly terrorizing people is not right.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “Become diligent in carrying out martyrdom operations; these operations, praise be to God, have become a great source of terror for the enemy... These are the most important questions.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The other aspect involves the impact on the nation's impression towards the Mujahidin and being sympathetic towards them. The operations that bear extreme negative impact on the partisans of the Jihad include targeting the apostates in

mosques or nearby – such as the assassination attempt of Dustum during the holiday worship location, and the assassination of General Muhammad Yusuf in one of the Pakistani mosques. It is extremely sad for an individual to fall into the same mistake more than once.” (Usama bin Laden)

- “You have access to welding equipment, the operation of “The ultimate mowing machine” would be another simple and effective operation. The advantages of this one: This method has not been used before; It would cause chaos and trauma among the public. The “terrorizing” element here is great. With blades welded to the truck and slashing out at the enemies of Allah at high speed, you can imagine the scene after such an operation!; It is a simple operation with great results.”

(Yahya Ibrahim)

- “From the start our objective was economic. Bringing down a cargo plane would only kill a pilot and co-pilot. It is true that blowing up the planes in the sky would add to the element of fear and shock but that would have been an additional advantage to the operation and not a determining factor of its success.”

(Yahya Ibrahim)

## **Other Factors**

### *Impact on Environment*

- “Many ask if there is a limit to combat. God has answered this: “The punishment of those who wage war against God and His messenger is execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from



the land. That is their disgrace in this world and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter.” This is the judgment against those who fight Muslim society, corrupt the earth, and violate the possessions and honor of the Muslim people.”  
(Abu Mus'ab al-Suri)

- “We will not be exaggerating if we say that our current dying age has drowned in the depths of the dark sea of ignorance...Our society is skilled in breaking away from values, mercy, and spreading corruption. All that Ja'far Ibn-Abu-Talib, may God be content with him, mentioned about evil has reached its pinnacle in our age and been surpassed by the innovations in crime, sin, and ways to corrupt the earth, in ways that our ignorant predecessors could not have imagined. This has caused societies and people to suffer hardship and instability. They have strayed far from their origins and fatally constricted their hearts. The ways of animal life are in total control...Attributes have been overcome by barbarianism, cruelty, and brutality, as the principles of greed, selfishness, and self-interest have become the ruling principles in all dealings within the society and in all politics, during war and peace.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “This is a message to the whole world about those who cause climate change and its dangers – intentionally or unintentionally – and what we must do. In front of the world are the records which show the huge numbers of victims of climate change, some of whom died of hunger and others of whom died of drowning. Kyoto Protocol and have agreed to reduce emissions of harmful gases. However, Bush Junior – and prior to him, Congress – rejected this agreement in order to

please the major corporations. They, therefore, are the real culprits behind the assault on the global climate, and this isn't the first of their crimes against humanity. The corruption of the climate stems from the corruption of hearts and deeds...So if the peoples of the world were to stop consuming American goods, this last link would become even weaker, leading in turn to a decrease in harmful gases." (Usama bin Laden)

- "The miserable situation of the social services and the infrastructure, especially the water service and supply, the basic requirement of life." (Usama bin Laden)
- "You [U.S.] have destroyed nature with you industrial waste and gases more than any other nation in history. Despite this, you refuse to sign the Kyoto agreement so that you can secure the profit of your greedy companies and industries." (Usama bin Laden)
- "This is a chance to explain our motives for continuing the war. The wise people would tell you to give people their rights in order to be able to focus on other vital issues such as global warming. They have the option to stop the war, but we do not have any option, except to defend our nation. This is a conflict between the biggest cultures in the world at a time when the climate is changing rapidly." (Usama bin Laden)
- "Regarding the talk about a network of pipelines and wells in the Gulf...the reality is that water is getting drained by agriculture and most countries are getting their water from a few water desalinization stations on the Gulf. Whenever a war starts in the region and some oil tankers gets attacked, the oil will get in the

water and pollute it. Also if the stations themselves get attacked, 20 million Muslims will be at risk of dying out of thirst.” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Disease and Starvation*

- “As part of the series of crimes which the Crusader West presents from time to time as civilized gifts...All have heard of that heinous crime for which we haven't found an appropriate description in the dictionary, due to its extreme ugliness and lowliness; that ugly crime which five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor committed by injecting more than 400 Libyan children with the AIDS virus in a Benghazi hospital, injections which carried latent hatred and criminality; that crime which indicated a complete abandonment of all human values and revealed hearts in which hatred is embodied in its ugliest form.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “So hatred has appeared in its most hideous state, in which murder is committed in the most despicable of ways, for this event to become a prominent title which introduces us to the values, civilization and real face of the West...the nurses turned into cold-blooded, evil-spirited murderers with hate- filled hearts...the deadly weapon in this crime was an injection which should have contained medicine and healing, but instead introduced into the bodies of innocent children the lethal poison which would cause them constant pain and a slow death.” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “Q: How do you reconcile the values of your medical training—to help people and prolong their lives—with the fact that you killed Anwar al-Sadat and that you

shape the minds of bombers and suicide commandos?” A: During my medical studies, I learned that life is Allah’s miracle and his gift. Thus, one must be careful to obey him. I have learned from surgery about how to save the body by amputating failing organs and removing cancers, and how to cure illness-inducing bacteria. Medicine, when practiced as a sacrifice to Allah and to help the oppressed, will grant the soul happiness and joy, which will never be experienced by those who have twisted it into a tool for greed, robbing others and exploiting their pain for their own benefit.” (Ayman al-Zawahiri)

- “No, this war...was waged in its most hideous form against children [injecting with AIDS] who carry innocence and purity their hearts and souls. This, in brief, is the form the crime took, even though words are truly incapable of properly describing it. Has the world witnessed hatred stronger than their hatred? Have you heard of a deed uglier and more atrocious than their deed? Has anyone seen savagery on a par with their savagery? And did anyone ever imagine that their criminality would descend to such lowliness?” (Abu Yahya al-Libi)
- “Ibn Tavnthvah was asked regarding ... a shortage of money for feeding the hungry as well as for the Jihad which would be hindered without it, so he said: “We put preference on the Jihad even if the hungry die, just as in the issue of human shields (in which the disbelievers are to be attacked despite the fact that they are using Muslim human shields, and that those Muslims might unintentionally be killed as a result of this attack), and this issue is more deserving of (us preferring to continue the Jihad despite the deaths of some

Muslims). This is because in the case of the human shields, we are killing them by our actions, while in this case (of preventing them from the ZakTh), they are dying by an act of Allah.” (Muhammad bin Ahmad as-Salim)

- “A reaction might take place as a result of US government's hitting Muslim civilians and executing more than 600 thousand Muslim children in Iraq by preventing food and medicine from reaching them. So, the US is responsible for any reaction, because it extended its war against troops to civilians.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “The US does not consider it terrorism when hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers in Iraq died for lack of food or medicine.” (Usama bin Laden)
- “What does it mean when ... Iraq is placed under embargo for several years, during which over a million children died, shocking and distressing all who visited Iraq, including the Westerners themselves?” (Usama bin Laden)
- “You [U.S.] have been described in history as a nation that spreads diseases that were unknown to man in the past. Go ahead and boast to the nations of man that you brought them AIDS as a Satanic American Invention.” (Usama bin Laden)

### *Magic and Myth*

- “This is only the beginning. Then comes Saudi’s romantic relationship with America that includes military aid to fight Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula and in return the Crusaders are given military bases to launch wars against the Muslims around the world that go beyond the boundaries of their own laws in

killing and weapon deployments; their protection of Israel from the Muslims; their childish interfaith dialogues that shamelessly calls for a new religion; the scholars they promote who justify anything that the government does; their use of magic and communication with vile jinn's to locate positions of the Mujahidin..."

(Samir Khan)

- "Astrology, magic, and witchcraft are types of knowledge that do not have any benefits. They rather harm a person materially and religiously. God Almighty disparaged such knowledge in the Quran... Religious scholars explained the evil of magic and witchcraft at length. They disagree about judging witches as infidels, but most of them agree that witches should be put to death. This should be enough of a deterrent for rational people." (The Religious Committee of the Jihad Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad)
- "We must rush to seek God Almighty's forgiveness from sins, particularly the grave sins. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Avoid the seven grave sins: polytheism, sorcery, killing, unless permitted by God, usury, taking the money of orphans, fleeing from combat, and slandering innocent faithful women." (Usama bin Laden)

## APPENDIX FOUR: DEFINITIONS

***Al-Qa'ida (AQ):*** The leadership that financed and directed the September 11, 2001 attacks and the groups affiliates and adherents, Islamic terrorists that that share AQ doctrine, follow AQ instructions, and/or carry out violent attacks inspired by AQ.

***AQ Affiliates:*** Groups that have aligned with al-Qa'ida, including those in regions such as the Middle East, East Africa, the Maghreb and Sahel regions of northwest Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

***AQ Adherents:*** Those who have formed collaborative relationships with, act on behalf of, or are otherwise inspired to take action in furtherance of the goals of the AQ organization and ideology.

### CBRN/WMD

- ***CBRN weapon:*** Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material used for any large or small-scale act of violence.
- ***CBRN Modality:*** The specific type of CBRN weapon – chemical (C) or biological (B) or radiological (R) or nuclear (N). Identified here as “C,B,R, or N”
- ***WMD:*** Weapon of mass destruction or disruption using CBRN materials that causes mass casualties and/or destruction with the potential for unlimited or continuing destructive capability beyond that which is typically encountered with conventional attacks.

***Culture:*** A set of basic values and beliefs, shared symbols and meanings, social practices, attitudes, behaviors, and morals associated with a specific group and the context that explains human behavior, preferences, the meaning of actions, and conflict.

***Strategic Counterterrorism Communications:*** Communications activities targeted against terrorism to dissuade or deter terrorist activities or support for terrorist activities.

***Taboo:*** A ban or an inhibition born of a social custom and/or deep-seated revulsion (Wellen, 2011).

***Terrorism:*** A violent act carried out by any individual or subnational group to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy or conduct of a government by intimidation or coercion in furtherance of political religious, or ideological objectives.

***Terrorist(s):*** An individual or group who commits an act or acts of violence or threatens violence in pursuit of political, religious, or ideological objectives.

***Terrorist constituents:*** Active (to include providing finances, resources, intelligence, housing, safe haven, and food) and passive (to include populations that look favorably on the group and populations co-located with a terrorist group) supporters of terrorist groups and the general population the group or individual considers its audience.



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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Megan Ward received her Bachelors of Science degree in Biology from the College of William and Mary in 2000 and went on to receive her Masters of Arts degree in Biology from the College of William and Mary in 2004. After finishing her Masters of Arts, she worked as a Biosecurity Analyst while attending George Mason University for her Doctor of Philosophy in Biodefense.