

How the Next President Can Win the War on Terrorism

Dr. Robert Pape

15 September 2008

Dr. Pape: Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to be here, really for two reasons. As you'll see, I believe that air power can play a central role in a crucial strategy against terrorism that I think the next President, whoever that next President is, should seriously consider. But the other reason I like to come is because in the early 1990s I spent three years teaching for the U.S. Air Force. There's a big warm spot in my heart for the U.S. Air Force for essentially allowing me to cut my teeth in debates at the school's Advanced Air Power Studies with very very very smart Air Force officers. I've always enjoyed my years there, and I'd like to just say I look forward to the question period here. I hope you'll come up and ask me the tough questions I know you're capable of after I finish my talk.

Suicide terrorism has been raging around the world, but there's great confusion about why. Since many of the attacks, including 9/11, have been perpetrated by Muslim suicide terrorists, many have presumed that Islamic Fundamentalism must be the obvious central cause. This presumption has fueled the belief that future 9/11s can be avoided only by wholesale transformation of Muslim societies, which was a core reason for broad public support for our invasion of Iraq. However, this presumed connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism is misleading and may be encouraging domestic and foreign policies likely to worsen our situation.

Next slide, please.

Over the last few years I've compiled the first complete database of every suicide terrorist attack around the world since 1980. I define suicide terrorist attack in the classic sense you would expect when I use that term, of an attacker killing himself or herself during the course of a mission to kill others.

When I completed the first version of this database as an academic article in 2003, I knew at that point no academic or think tank had such a database. What I didn't know is that no government had a worldwide database of suicide attacks at that point.

I was quickly contacted by DTRA, the Department of Defense. Then I learned that yes, our government like the British government, had been keeping ordinary terrorism statistics, global statistics, going back decades. We do it in Monterey, California at the Naval Post Graduate School. This is a database that started in the mid 1970s. But we didn't begin to track

suicide terrorism until around 9/11. As a result, they were quite eager to get ahold of my database which I gave them. And in return, they were one of the key funders of the update and expansion of the database, and in fact have funded the database several times. I'd also like to thank the Carnegie Corporation in New York, Argon National Laboratories, and the University of Chicago itself, because this generous funding has made it possible for me to become the Director of the Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism, which collects information on suicide attacks around the world. Not just in English, but in the key native languages associated with the phenomenon.

Next slide, please.

This survey examines all the available open source documents from the suicide terrorist groups themselves, the target countries under fire. We of course use computerized databases such as open source and Lexus to track newspapers, but we've also sent people to conduct international research, essentially to go to buy things on black markets in Cairo, Beirut, and elsewhere.

Today I'm going to summarize most of what you're going to see as charts, but I want to emphasize that this is not just simply a list of lists. The team of researchers I have that are fluent in these key native languages are able to often get some very important primary source information. You'll see today, for example, in a few minutes, martyr videos. We've collected probably the largest collection of martyr videos in the world. So as I explain to you 9/11, al-Qaida's motives, you're going to see for yourselves six of the most notorious al-Qaida suicide attackers, including four from 9/11, tell you in their own words why they flew the planes into the buildings.

I also just want to give you one other example before I get there. It may come as a bit of a surprise, but many of the suicide terrorist groups are quite proud of their activities in their local community. I hope that even from this distance many of you can see this glossy yearbook like album. This is produced by the Tamil Tigers. They're a suicide terrorist group from Sri Lanka. This is produced in Jafna which is in the Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka, and it's dedicated to their Black Tigers. This is not glorification of body parts, but as I hope some of you can see, these are the picture, the names, the birth places, the ages and other socioeconomic data about the Black Tigers.

Now they're not publishing this and then sending a copy to Langley, so it's very helpful to actually be able to go and be able to get the information that's circulating in the local communities, especially if you're trying to find out identities about who the suicide attackers are. Of course we have such things for Islamic groups as well.

What does the data show?

Next slide, please.

First, the data shows that suicide terrorism and ordinary terrorism are moving in opposite directions. From the mid 1980s to just after 9/11 terrorist incidents of all types were declining and declining rapidly. At the same time, suicide terrorism, which at first was just this little bit of terrorism, has been climbing at an alarming rate per year with three attacks around the world per year on average in the 1980s, to nearly 50 in 2000, and as you'll see when we get to the 2007 and 2008 update, we're up nearly 10-fold from that mark. These facts help to explain why there was such a failure of imagination before 9/11.

Since all terrorism was falling like a rock and we weren't tracking suicide terrorism, it was hard to see that the threat that made it possible to kill 3000 people on 9/11 was actually growing.

The next slide, please.

The data also shows, and what I like to do when I talk about the data is show it to you in two parts. First I want to show you the first 24 years of suicide terrorism, 1980 to the end of 2003. Think about it as the pre-Iraq database. Then I want to show you the data since Iraq, that is 2004 to the present.

If we look at the first period you'll see quite clearly that the data shows that suicide terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism is not as closely associated as many people think. Overall during the first period there were 315 completed suicide terrorist attacks around the world, and the world leader is not an Islamic group at all. They're the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. A Marxist group, a secular group, a Hindu group. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka have done more suicide attacks than Hamas or Islamic Jihad, and that's true to this day.

Further, at least 30 percent of all Muslim suicide attacks were by purely secular groups such as the PKK in Turkey which is a Marxist, read anti-religious suicide terrorist group.

Overall, at least 50 percent of all suicide attacks were not associated with Islamic Fundamentalism.

Next slide, please.

To explain suicide terrorism my work analyzes the phenomenon at three levels. It seeks to explain why suicide terrorism makes

sense for terrorist organizations, the strategic logic; why it gains mass support, the social logic; and what motives drive individuals to do it, the individual logic. Each level of analysis is important, because suicide terrorism is conducted by non-state actors who lack the coercive apparatus of a state to compel either the local society or many individuals to support their operations.

If you ever looked at my book and my research in general you would see that I devote essentially equal weight to each of these three levels.

Today in my talk I'm going to focus on the strategic logic, partly due to time and partly because that's the logic that unifies the others. But during the Q&A I'm certainly glad to talk more about the social and the strategic logic.

Next slide, please.

Instead of religion, what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks since 1980 have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal to compel a democratic state to withdraw combat forces. I don't mean advisors with side arms, I mean tanks, fighter aircraft and armor units from territory the terrorists consider to be their homeland or prize greatly. From Lebanon to the West Bank to Sri Lanka to Kashmir to Chechnya, every suicide terrorist campaign since 1980 has been waged by terrorist groups whose main goal has been to establish or maintain self-determination for territory the terrorists prize.

Religion is rarely the root cause, although religion is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of a broader strategic objective.

Three general patterns in the data support my conclusions.

Next slide, please.

The first concerns the timing of suicide terrorist attacks. Suicide terrorism rarely occurs as an isolated, random or scattered phenomenon as it would if it were merely the product of religious fanaticism or any other ideology independent of circumstance. Instead, the attacks tend to occur in clusters which look very much like campaigns. Specifically, 301 of those 315 attacks occur in coherent, organized, strategic campaigns that terrorist groups design for mainly political purposes. Only five percent are random or isolated.

Now to be clear, I'm not claiming that I can account for every suicide terrorist attack that has occurred since 1980, but I am claiming that the patterns I'm about to show you today do

account for somewhere around 95 percent of all the suicide terrorism around the world that we've experienced in the last three decades.

This table shows you all the campaigns during that period. Five are ongoing as of now. I'll talk more about those in a minute.

Next slide, please.

This table reorganizes the campaigns by the dispute that produced them. As you can see, suicide terrorist campaigns are directed at gaining control of territory the terrorists prize. This has been the central objective of every suicide terrorist campaign since 1980.

Let me talk about the very first one in this regard. Hezbollah, the famous suicide terrorist group in Lebanon. In June 1982 Hezbollah did not exist. In June 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon with 78,000 combat soldiers, 3,000 tanks and armored vehicles. One month later, Hezbollah was born.

Then over the course of the next year Hezbollah simply experimented with what we now call suicide terrorist attacks. The very fourth suicide attack was in October 1983, the famous suicide truck bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut that killed 241 of our Marines. The same day, by the way, they also hit the French barracks killing 58 French soldiers.

Just a few months later Ronald Reagan, surely no pacifist, decided as a result of that attack to withdraw all American combat forces from Lebanon. The French followed the same day. And in fact then the Israelis over the next few years withdraw first in '86 to a security buffer zone in southern Lebanon, a six mile stretch. Then in 2000, all Israeli combat soldiers left Lebanon.

The key point when they left is that Hezbollah suicide attackers did not follow the Americans to New York, the French to Paris, or even the Israelis to Tel Aviv. Since Israel left Lebanon in 2000, there has not been a single suicide attack by Hezbollah - not even in the summer of 2006 during that couple of week dust-up between Israel and Hezbollah. That is not a pattern, either the onset of Hezbollah suicide attacks or their ending, that can be explained by Islamic Fundamentalism because nobody thinks Hezbollah stopped being a Fundamentalist group.

I'm not saying that foreign military occupation or the threat of foreign military occupation is a sufficient condition for suicide terrorism, but military presence or control of

territory the terrorists prize does appear to be virtually a necessary condition.

The third pattern concerns target selection. If suicide terrorism is a calculated, coercive strategy, one might expect that this strategy would be applied to target states especially vulnerable to coercive punishment. And rightly or wrongly, democracies are widely viewed as soft, especially vulnerable to coercive punishment. And the target society of every suicide terrorist campaign has been a democracy.

Let me take the PKK, that Kurdish suicide terrorist group from Turkey in this regard. During the 1980s and '90s as I'm sure some of the folks in this room know, the Turks were at least moderately brutal toward their Kurds. But just a few miles away in the 1980s in Iraq, Saddam Hussein was far more brutal to Iraq's Kurds. He was exterminating them at 20,000 a clip. Neither the PKK nor any other terrorist group ever thought to use suicide terrorism against Saddam. Now that we know more about the logic it helps to explain why. Who would ever think killing hundreds or even thousands of Iraqi civilians would have changed Saddam's mind about anything?

So the bottom line is that the timing, the goals, and the societies targeted by suicide terrorism suggest that it is a coherent strategy designed to cause democratic states to withdraw military forces from territory the terrorist prize.

Next slide, please.

Al-Qaida fits the pattern. Since al-Qaida's suicide attacks began in 1995, al-Qaida's core strategic logic has been to compel American and Western combat forces to leave the Arabian Peninsula, a logic that al-Qaida has been pursuing with increasing vigor since 9/11.

This slide that you see shows you all the al-Qaida suicide attacks since they began in 1995, and you can see I've now run out of room to put them all on one slide. But if you would just mentally add the London 2005 suicide bombings at the bottom, you can easily see that since 9/11 al-Qaida has carried out well over suicide and other terrorist attacks, killing well over 700 people. That's more attacks and more victims than all the years before 9/11 combined.

Although many of us would have hoped our counter-terrorism efforts would have weakened the group, by the measure that counts, the ability of al-Qaida to carry out attacks that can kill us, al-Qaida is stronger today than before 9/11.

Now there are multiple causes driving the threat, I don't mean to deny that, but the main force driving the threat is simply the presence of American and Western combat forces on the Arabian Peninsula, and not merely Islamic Fundamentalism or any other ideology independent of circumstances.

Next slide, please.

Perhaps the best way to tell you what motivates al-Qaida suicide attackers is to show you where they come from. This research is the first to collect the complete set of the 71 individuals from 1995 to 2004 who actually killed themselves to carry out attacks for Osama. Of those 71 we know the names, nationality and other socioeconomic data of 67. Not quite all of them, but almost all of them.

As you can see on the table, the largest number, 34, come from Saudi Arabia. The majority, overwhelmingly, come from the Arabian Peninsula where the United States first began to station combat forces in 1990.

It's important to underscore, even to an expert audience, that 1990 was a watershed year in our military deployment to the Arabian Peninsula. Yes, before 1990 the U.S. had some advisors, a few hundred advisors on the Arabian Peninsula, mostly Marines with some pistols standing in front of embassies, but no tanks, fighter aircraft or armored units going all the way back to World War II. 1990 was a watershed year in our military deployment. It's not that we meant to go and stay, it's just that we just never went home. And of course al-Qaida attacks start five years later.

Notice where the al-Qaida suicide attackers are not coming from. Iran. Surely an Islamic Fundamentalist population with three times the size of the population of Saudi Arabia. No al-Qaida suicide attackers.

Sudan. Sudan is an Islamic Fundamentalist country with a brand of Islamic Fundamentalism so congenial to Osama he chose to live there for three years in the 1990s. No al-Qaida suicide attackers.

Pakistan. Pakistan is the largest Islamic Fundamentalist population on the planet, over 160 million people. Two.

Well, if Islamic Fundamentalism is what was driving this threat, we should have been seeing suicide attackers hopping out of Iran, hopping out of Sudan, and hopping out of Pakistan during this period, and that's not the pattern that we observed.

Now I'm not saying that Osama has no transnational support, but it's crucial to see that the presence of Western combat forces on the Arabian Peninsula is Osama's best mobilization appeal.

Next slide please.

Since we have the complete set of al-Qaida suicide attackers we can go further to assess the effect of America's military policy. With only one exception, al-Qaida suicide terrorist from 1995 to 2004 were all nationals of various Sunni majority countries. Hence we can compare the rate at which an al-Qaida suicide terrorist emerges from a Sunni country with and without American combat presence. As you can see, al-Qaida suicide terrorists are over ten times more likely to come from a Sunni country with American combat forces than a Sunni country without American combat forces.

Now this does not mean that we should blame ourselves for the deaths of our civilians on 9/11. Suicide terrorism is murder, and there's nothing our combat forces did when they were stationed on the Arabian Peninsula in the '90s that would justify the murder of our civilians.

As I mentioned, I spent three years teaching for the U.S. Air Force in the 1990s. I knew many of the pilots who went to the Arabian Peninsula on those little dinky air bases, some of which, as many of you know, were just one and a mile quarter by one and a mile quarter. And you weren't allowed to take your families, of course. And you weren't much allowed to get off the base. The big happy past time was simply running laps around the perimeter.

But that should not cause us to overlook that what recruits suicide attackers for Osama better than anything else, al-Qaida's best mobilization appeal, is the presence of American and Western combat forces on the Arabian Peninsula.

Moreover, I'm not trying to tell you that all al-Qaida suicide attackers come from Sunni countries where we stationed combat forces. Two-thirds do, one-third do not. One-third are transnational in nature. But if we look at the one-third that are transnational in nature, we can see that the presence of American and Western combat forces in Muslim countries, especially on the Arabian Peninsula, is a powerful motivating factor.

Rather than just have me tell you about that, what I'd like to do is show you a short video where you'll see six of al-Qaida suicide attackers tell you why they did it. You'll see two are 77 bombers and four are from the 9/11 hijackers. The 77 bombers

are British and they're going to be speaking in English. The 9/11 hijackers will be speaking in Arabic and we have translated and subtitled those for you.

Sir, could you please bring up the first video.

[Video shown].

You've just watched six of the most notorious al-Qaida suicide terrorists. Their martyr videos weren't released until months, sometimes even years after their attacks, but as you can see, America and Western foreign presence on territory they prize - Yes, they're religious, but that presence plays a powerful role in their arguments. There are, of course recruitment tools at this point and they believe this is going to help recruit still more to follow in their footsteps.

Next slide, please.

What has al-Qaida been up to since 9/11? Well, a closer look at al-Qaida suicide attacks help us to see how al-Qaida's strategic logic has been evolving. This chart shows you a good hunk of them. As you can see, yes, the attacks are varying across a broad geographic range; and yes, they're occurring in many Muslim countries. But notice the striking consistency in the victims of the attacks. They are consistently Western civilians. And not just any Western civilians, but consistently Western civilians from countries that have stationed combat forces side by side with the United States in Afghanistan, and if you let your eye go down, especially Iraq. That is since 9/11 al-Qaida has had a clear strategic focus, stripping the United States of its military allies, especially in Iraq. We know this not only from the pattern of al-Qaida suicide attacks, but because we have an important al-Qaida strategy document.

In the fall of 2003 al-Qaida published a 42 page document on radical web sites that was found in December of '03 by Norwegian intelligence. It's actually still sitting on the Norwegian security web site.

The Norwegians gave it to us. They gave it to our Office of Terrorism in the White House, and Office of Terrorism in OSD. I know, because I've talked to the heads of both of those offices, and we chose to put this document aside at the time.

We're not doing that so much any more, and once I tell you more about it, you'll see why.

This document starts out by saying that with Iraq al-Qaida should not seek to attack the American homeland in the short term, but instead should focus on hitting America's military

allies. Then it goes on at the length of 42 pages, and this is in the fall of '03, to assess whether they should hit Spain, Britain or Poland. They conclude that they should hit Spain in Madrid, just before the March 2004 election because that would be the attack most likely to knock Spanish forces out of Iraq and put pressure on the British in Iraq. Since we didn't pay this document much mind at the time, I'd like to just read a few sentences.

"Therefore we say that in order to force the Spanish government to withdraw from Iraq, the resistance should be dealt painful blows. It is necessary to make utmost use of the upcoming general election in Spain of March of next year. We think that the Spanish government could not tolerate more than two, maximum three blows after which it will have to withdraw as a result of popular pressure. If its troops still remain in Iraq after these blows, then the victory of the Socialist party is almost secured and the withdrawal of Spanish forces will be on its electoral program. Lastly, we are emphasizing that a withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq would put huge pressure on the British in Iraq."

Those attacks happened just as they called for, knocking Spanish forces out just as they were hoping, and the London attacks were simply al-Qaida's next step in executing this strategic logic. In fact if you were to ask Osama whether he thinks he's ahead or behind in the war on terrorism, I'm sorry to say that by the key indicators he probably cares about, that is political effects of his strategy, he probably think he's well ahead and the facts would actually tend to be on his side.

So what does this mean? Does this mean we should be happy that al-Qaida is going after our allies and not after us directly? Well no, for a couple of reasons. The most important of which is that al-Qaida has already moved fairly far down that particular trajectory. They probably don't think they have many more allies to strip us of, certainly not in Iraq. And in fact Osama's last three statements have all stressed that up until the last year and a half they have focused on hitting our military allies, and now American-related targets are coming back on their radar screen.

I go to give many many talks to the FBI and so I can tell you about some of the plots that we've disrupted. If you want to know more about the Fort Dix plot, for instance, that will be fine. But rather than talk to you about chatter or plots, I'd like to just show you how al-Qaida is trying to recruit home-grown suicide attackers to kill us. I want to show you a video by Adam Gaddan.

Adam Gaddan is probably the poster child for recruiting home-grown suicide attackers to kill us. Adam Gaddan is an American. He's 31 years old. He was born in Riverside, California. Since 1998 he's been living with Osama in Afghanistan or now the tribal regions of Pakistan. His name is Adam. His father was Jewish. When the family was young the family converted to Christianity. When Adam was a teenager he converted to Islam. As I said, he has been living with Osama since '98 and as you can see, he is Osama's best tool to recruit home-grown suicide attackers.

What I'd like to do is ask our AV people to show the next video please, so you can see how Adam thinks he can mobilize --

[Video shown].

No 72 virgins. Almost no discussion of Islam as a religion. From beginning to end this is a plea, an empathetic plea to respond to the plight of a kindred population under a foreign military occupation.

He gives us no credit for trying to police ourselves. I'm sure as you were listening to his recounting of events you could see like a good politician, in fact a little too good of a politician, he's good at spinning the facts, he's good at exaggerating, but underneath it I'm sure you also see that he's not making up the facts out of whole cloth. Those facts at the baseline are actually true. That's why the information war, simply trying to win this with information alone, without looking at deeper root causes has had so little effect.

It's terribly important to see the enemy for who the enemy is. Otherwise our policies could simply miss the mark or be counter-productive.

I'd like to go to the next slide, please.

I'd like to talk a little bit more about what we've learned in the last four years since Iraq, or what's happened to the world. First, we've just completed, actually, our suicide terrorist global update for the first half of 2008, just a few weeks ago actually. So the data you're about to see today is for 2004 all the way through June 30, 2008. And as you can see, probably no surprise, Iraq is the largest of the campaigns. Some of you may be surprised to see just how large Afghanistan has already gotten, and Afghanistan is now competing, not quite head to head with Iraq, but it's competing much more than you might think on a monthly basis.

The campaigns by al-Qaida, the Tamil Tigers and a number of the other suicide terrorist campaigns have been continuing. Has

suicide terrorism changed in the last five years? The answer is yes, but it's a disturbing answer for Americans.

In the first 24 years of suicide terrorism you'd be hard pressed to count even five percent of the suicide terrorist attacks around the world as anti-American. Since our invasion of Iraq, 89 percent of all the suicide terrorism around the world, the onset of it is directly related to the onset of American military presence. That's even if we don't count Pakistan.

Notice how I kind of put a little separation there with Pakistan and the rest of the world. I'm not even counting any of the Pakistan suicide attacks as for the pattern I'm describing for you. In fact I think probably about three-quarters of them should. I'd be glad to explain that to you in the question and answer period, why I would do that, but for simplicity's sake, let's not count any of those attacks as for this argument. Even so, 89 percent of the attacks are directly related to America's combat presence and 91 percent to foreign military presence overall.

How would these patterns, what would it take for these patterns to be wrong? We would have to have missed not just five suicide attacks around the world during this period. We would have to have missed not just 50, but keep in mind we now have 1500 suicide attacks around the world we've been able to track since 1980. For this pattern to be wrong we would have had to have missed hundreds of suicide attacks around the world, especially in the last couple of years, not in the countries shown on this chart. That is they'd have to be occurring in say South Africa or Colombia. I don't think I can tell you that we've got every single one of the suicide attacks around the world, although I don't think we've missed even ten. We have a pretty good team of researchers and we double verify and I spend a lot of hours trying to make sure about this. But nonetheless, I don't think it's possible that we have missed hundreds of suicide attacks around the world in countries not on this chart. This is strong confirmation of the strategic logic of suicide terrorism.

Next slide, please.

Let's talk about Iraq just for a few moments. Iraq is a prime example of the strategic logic of suicide terrorism. Before our invasion, in March 2003, Iraq never experienced a suicide attack in its history. Since our invasion, suicide terrorism has been raging, and if you look, it's growing steadily, and in 2008 - that's the first six months of 2008 -- yes, as a proportion the suicide attacks are down 40 percent but they're not down anywhere near as much as all civil violence in Iraq is down. The reason is because the causes of the suicide

terrorism in Iraq, which is anti-American, and the cause of the civil violence in Iraq which is three-sided civil war, are not the same. The civil violence in Iraq is a product of three sides, each of which is trying to kill the other two. Suicide terrorism in Iraq is all Sunni. There is not a single Shia suicide terrorist attacker that has struck in Iraq to this day. Not a single Iranian as well.

Think about that for a moment. If suicide terrorism is supposed to be religious, the Shia are 60 percent of Iraq. There are hundreds of thousands of Islamic Fundamentalist Shia and not a single suicide terrorist attack in Iraq by the Shia. The suicide terrorism in Iraq is mainly a response of the Sunnis to America's military presence, not simply a three-sided civil war.

What's happened to the decline? Why has suicide terrorism declined at all? And can we say something about that?

To really give you a full explanation of this I wish I had still more time to talk a bit about the social logic of suicide terrorism because the social logic, it does matter whether or not the local community supports the terrorist operations. There's a lot more to say about that, but let me just stop with that principle and then show you some data for how the social support of terrorism and violence in Iraq has changed among the Sunni community. I think you'll be able to see that we now have some excellent data - can we have the next slide please - some excellent polling data that can help us to see what has and has not changed with suicide terrorism in Iraq.

If we just look at the Sunni support for the presence of American ground forces it's easy to see that the surge has not made them love us. In fact before the surge started, only a couple of percent of the Sunnis supported our military presence. Yes, it's gone up a little bit, a couple of percent, but it's right back down. The fact is the surge has had almost no effect in increasing support for American troops in Iraq among the Sunnis. It also hasn't changed, by the way, for the others as well. They were higher, but it hasn't changed.

Next slide please.

What about Sunni support for killing American troops? Well yes, it's true. It's down. It's down from a high of the mid 90s to 62 percent, but the key point is not the fall from 90 to 60 percent, it's that well over a majority of Iraqis, Iraqi Sunnis would still sooner kill Americans than not.

Next slide please.

The main change from the opinion poll data, the Iraqi Sunnis tell us, the main change that's occurred is increased Sunni support for local security forces. This is almost surely a result of our paying and arming the Iraqi awakening who are local Sunnis, 100,000, 80,000 to 100,000 terrorist insurgents who used to be killing us, that we're now paying not to kill us. And as we have created the awakening, that does appear to have increased confidence in security among the Sunni population. And this, I don't mean to say is the only reason by any stretch for why security has improved, but I think it is probably the most likely reason that security has improved in Iraq.

Can we have the next slide, please?

Who are the Iraqi suicide attackers? We can only confidently code, and when I say confidently I use a two-source verification rule. Every bit of data that you've seen today has a minimum of two independent sources of data behind it. No anonymous internet chatroom. This is built on corroborated data. When I send the information to DTRA and the Defense Department it usually comes with kind of a small carload, so to speak, of three ring binders that we actually print out the hard copy, don't just rely on Excel spreadsheets.

But what can we code? What do we see in the patterns of the data?

If you look at the group, there are two main groups that have become suicide terrorists in Iraq, Iraqi Sunnis and Saudis. The next largest are from Syria. That is the overwhelming majority are coming either from Iraq or the immediately adjacent border communities, some of which are on our hit list to go after next. This data, by the way, squares with the documents that we found in Anbar Province about a year ago this month, September 2007, and it also squares with the findings of other scholars who have looked at this data. That is the pattern that we're seeing is not a global jihad. It's not that - you have to remember, there are 1.4 billion Muslims in the world. Only 55 million of which live on the Arabian Peninsula. This is not a global jihad sloshing around the world and then finding Iraq. This is a pattern of regional opposition to American and Western presence on the Arabian Peninsula.

Next slide, please.

I want to say a few words about Afghanistan. Afghanistan is also a prime example of the strategic logic of suicide terrorism because before our eminent invasion in fall 2001 there was not a since suicide attack in Afghanistan's history.

It's an interesting pattern, because if you notice, for the first few years of our military presence there we have no, or almost no suicide terrorism in Afghanistan, but since 2005 suicide terrorism has been skyrocketing in Afghanistan. Why? What's causing that?

I actually think we can reasonably answer that question with just a few bits of data. First - next slide please - the force levels in Iraq. Partly the reason suicide terrorism has gone up is an escalation of NATO ground force which rose from 15,000 - this is total, U.S. and NATO together - 15,000 ground forces in 2002 and 2003 to just over 40,000 ground troops today. But that's not the most important reason.

Second slide, please.

Probably the key reason for the escalation of suicide terrorism in Afghanistan has been the changing geographic deployment of those ground forces inside of Afghanistan.

You see what happened is that until October 2003 the UN did not give us permission to go out of Kabul. So until October 2003 yes, we had ground forces or troops in the country, but almost all of which was right near Kabul, basically controlling Kabul and not much more.

Then what happened is we went through a staged plan to expand our control of territory, and as you can see, we sort of first moved north, now we start to move to the southern and then the eastern provinces in 2005, 2006, onward. It's the southern and eastern provinces that are the Pashtun areas. That is the kindred population that supports the kindred population, kindred to the Taliban. So as our physical presence in the country has come to sit on the Pashtun homelands, that has tightly related to the growth of suicide terrorism in Afghanistan. This pattern should cause a lot of pause because right now there's growing consensus by both political parties that what we should do is increase troops into Afghanistan. I think this should cause us to doubt whether certainly the kind of troop levels we're talking about, 10,000 to 20,000 troops. After all, we have right now 42,000 troops in Afghanistan and the most ambitious plan so far is to increase that by 20,000. I think that given the pattern that I'm showing you, it's likely this will simply create the worst of both worlds. Enough military force to continue to see suicide terrorism and anti-American inspired suicide terrorism to rise, but not enough force to actually deny Osama bin Laden a sanctuary in this part of the world.

I think it's terribly important in Afghanistan that we need to make a real decision. Are we going to allow Osama a sanctuary or not? If we don't really make a serious decision about that

I'm afraid the hedging strategy of well, let's just put a few more forces in, a few more forces in, is probably not a very good plan because Osama is using his sanctuary to plan attacks to kill us, and our presence there is increasing the level of suicide terrorism that he has to work with.

Last slide, please.

I'm afraid this is not an especially happy talk. I'm telling you the war on terrorism is heading south. I'm telling you that since 9/11 a key reason the war on terrorism is heading south is that we've been waging it according to a faulty premise. The premise that suicide terrorism is mainly a product of Islamic Fundamentalism. If that premise were true, then it would make some sense in extremists to conquer Muslim countries to wring the Islamic Fundamentalism out of it. However, as we're seeing in the data, suicide terrorism is mainly a response to foreign military occupation, which is why since 9/11 suicide terrorism and anti-American suicide terrorism has been rising.

On 9/11 there were 12,000 U.S. combat soldiers stationed on the Arabian Peninsula - 5,000 in Saudi, 7,000 in other countries on the rim. Today, well over 150,000 and as those force levels have gone up, suicide terrorism has gone up side by side.

So what does this mean we should do? Partly the answer of course has to do with our values. One doesn't make a policy decision simply on the basis of data. For me, this does not mean that we should simply cut and run, that is pull all our ground forces and walk away from the Arabian Peninsula in the space of about a year or so. We have important obligations on the Arabian Peninsula, chief among them being stability and access to oil, and the fact that we haven't thought of an alternative to this plan, notice that as time is going on there's more and more pressure to simply cut and run, to simply leave.

We now have the Malaki government starting to beat the tom drums that we should be out in 2010. Okay, the next administration hasn't come in yet so the negotiations have kind of pushed back to maybe 2011, but notice what's happening. The failure to think of an alternative strategy to our current plan is causing others to simply want to end the relationship and simply have a divorce. This is not a good situation.

Nor do I think, by the way, that we should simply stay and die. The longer our ground forces stay on the Arabian Peninsula the greater the risk of the next 9/11, Bali bombing, or worse. Instead, I think the next President of the United States should develop a new military strategy for our relationship with the Arabian Peninsula. Not simply talk about withdrawals and timetables. We need a new military strategy so that we don't end

up having a change that leads to simply walking away as we did with Vietnam.

The strategy I advocate is called off-shore balancing which relies on air forces and naval forces, not on-shore ground forces, to secure our vital interests in the region. Off-shore balancing is a strategy that's actually not so terribly new. It's kind of an updated version of the strategy the United States pursued for decades in the '70s and '80s on the Arabian Peninsula to secure its interests.

In the '70s and '80s the United States successfully secured its interests in oil during a major war between Iran and Iraq without stationing a single combat soldier on the Arabian Peninsula. Instead, we relied on an alliance with Iraq and Saudi Arabia. We could do that again. We stationed numerous aircraft carriers off the coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and air power is more formidable today than it was 30 years ago, and we have much more capability to use peripheral bases than we did 30 years ago for land-based air power. And we maintained a system of basing infrastructure on the Peninsula, bases without troops, so that we could rapidly deploy ground forces there in a crisis.

Off-shore balancing worked splendidly to reverse Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait in 1990, and off-shore balancing is again our best strategy to secure our vital interests in stability and oil in the region, to prevent the rise of a new generation of suicide terrorists to kill us, and it's a policy that we can maintain not just for a year or two, or talk about 2010 versus 2011, but it's a strategy that we can pursue for decades which is what we're going to need, under the most optimistic scenario, for energy independence. And by the way, this is a strategy that air power plays the central role, which is why it's so important that the Air Force thinks seriously about this particular strategy.

For the past ten years our enemies have been dying to win, but with the right strategy for the war on terrorism, the next President can lead America to victory.

Thank you very much. I look forward to taking your questions.

[Applause].

Moderator: We're down to one or two minutes, so rather than take questions, Dr. Pape has agreed to take some personal questions down here, but I would be remiss if, as the moderator, if at least I didn't make a comment.

As you can see, this presentation is why we asked Dr. Pape to come back. I wish we had time to put me or somebody a lot smarter than me on the other side of the issue and talk about how the Polish President's actions in World War II didn't cause Hitler to attack, and [Sigman Ri] didn't cause Kim Il Sung to attack, and that we tried off-shore basing in Afghanistan before 9/11 and that didn't work, et cetera, et cetera. But I won't make any of those comments.

Dr. Pape: You do get the last word, though.

Moderator: I do, and that's the great thing about being up here.

But I do want to thank Dr. Pape for a provocative presentation. On behalf of AFA I'd like to present him with a book signed by our Chairman of the Board about the Honor Guard at the United States Air Force Memorial and thank you, sir, for coming and giving us a great talk.

Dr. Pape: Glad to do it, General. Thank you so much.

I'm glad to stay and answer some questions. I'm also glad if anyone wants to challenge anything I said. Really, it doesn't bother me at all, and I usually learn a tremendous amount. I apologize for not noticing that I was running out of time. I'll be glad to stick around.

#