1

Terrorism: A Terrible Force Unleashed on the World

It is a horrific sight. September 11, 2001. CNN Live is showing amateur video of an airliner slicing into one of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, the commercial heart of New York City. The broadcast was replayed around the globe. Before people could begin to make sense of what they were seeing—like most, my first thought had been that it was some kind of terrible air disaster—we heard the shocked voice of a commentator shouting, "A second plane has hit the other tower!" The world witnessed flames erupting and flowing across the building's facade. As one tower became gray from smoke and soot, the first crumbled to the ground. Thousands of people in the towers that morning perished.

Simultaneously, yet another plane slammed into the Pentagon, in Arlington, Virginia, and a fourth plane hijacked by terrorists crashed in Pennsylvania without reaching its target—probably the White House or the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

It was the most significant terrorist act in history. In the immediate aftermath of the tragedies, most if not all clear-thinking people were naturally seized by grief and compassion for the Americans as they coped with their losses, and they felt

only rage toward the monsters who had perpetrated this horror. Yet the painful emotional shock has begun to heal, and now the time has come for thoughtful reflection. Careful analysis is crucial, for the events of September 11 have begun to proliferate. The signature form of mass-casualty suicide terrorism has surfaced elsewhere, such as in Bali, Indonesia, where a criminal act claimed two hundred lives. Another link in this chain was perpetrated when terrorists took eight hundred hostages in Moscow on October 25, 2002, and prepared to execute them. A Russian special forces unit brilliantly thwarted the attempt, but more than one hundred people still lost their lives.

From Regicide to Mass Acts of Terrorism

Many equate any violent act that is inappropriate or "out of place" with terrorism. In reality, terrorism is a specific form of political activity that seeks to achieve its ends by assassinating political figures or targeting a civilian population. It has occurred since ancient times. But this book will focus on terrorism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an aid to understanding contemporary terrorism in its most virulent form, as witnessed by all on September 11, 2001.

Terrorism in its modern form developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, often as an outgrowth of utopian anarchist or nationalist movements. The targets of these terrorist acts were government officials or heads of state. In Russia during this period, Vera Zasulich shot St. Petersburg's governor general, Dmitry Trepov (1876); Sophia Perovskaya and Andrei Zhelyabov formed the group responsible for the death of Tsar Alexander II (1881); and Ivan Kalyaev, a Socialist Revolutionary, threw a bomb at the carriage carrying Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, governor general of Moscow, in 1905. World War I began as a result of the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914. King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and French foreign minister Louis Barthou were both assassinated in 1934 in Marseilles.

Political assassinations continued during the second half of the twentieth century: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963; Spanish prime minister Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco was killed in 1973 by Basque separatists; Lord Louis Mountbatten by the Irish Republican

Army in 1979; Egyptian president Anwar Sadat by Islamist conspirators; Indian prime minister Indira Ghandi by Sikh separatists in 1984; and Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin by Jewish extremists in 1995. Over time, however, terrorists have moved away from targeting individual leaders in favor of striking at masses of the civilian populace. The release of sarin gas in the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo terrorist network in 1995 is one such example.

In the second half of the twentieth century, terrorism took on two further characteristics. First, it became primarily a tool of religious and political groups with separatist or extremist agendas. As such, it was widely used by leftist extremist organizations like the Red Brigades, for example, who used terror tactics against "the powerful of this world" in their quest to overthrow capitalism. Initially, terrorism was largely a national matter. The Basque separatists of Spain (ETA) or Egypt's religious extremists, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, had ties to similar organizations abroad, but their terrorist strikes were largely confined to their own countries. Aum Shinrikyo, though its network spread across many countries, nonetheless carried out its terrorist acts at home in Japan. This has also begun to change. Contemporary terrorism has acquired such a broad international reach that it has become a global concern.

All of these developments can be observed in the rise and development of Russia's own homegrown terrorist movements grouped around Chechen separatists. Chechen terrorist violence was directed toward civilian populations in central and southern Russia—Moscow, St. Petersburg, Budennovsk, Cherkassk, Pervomaisk, Armavir, Vladikavkaz, Mineral'nye Vody, and other cities—and has claimed the lives of several hundred innocent civilians, including children, women, and the elderly. Just as the situation in Chechnya had begun to stabilize—no small achievement—Chechen rebels took their terrorism outside the region and started to strike at those Chechens who actively supported the Russian Federation.

Chechen separatists have extensive ties to terrorist organizations abroad. They have learned by example how to mobilize and distribute extensive terrorist resources through an international network from one country to another: many Chechen field commanders received training at camps in Afghanistan; Arab "volunteers" take part in terrorist acts in

Russia; and Chechen fighters have been, and apparently still are, found in the ranks of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization.

The Rise of "Independent" Terrorism

In some cases, international terrorism arose and grew in tandem with particular states and state structures. Iran during the period immediately after the shah's overthrow was typical: the official policy of the nascent Islamic republic was to forcibly export its revolution abroad.

By the end of the twentieth century, however, with the end of the cold war, terrorism had begun to shed its connection to state or government structures. Certain terrorist groups continued to enjoy a degree of state support, but overall this support sharply declined. The decline has largely been the result of policies carried out by the leading international players—Russia, Europe, and the United States—as they emerged from the cold war and began to work together to end state sponsorship of terrorism. The United States relied mainly on political pressure, sanctions, and even the use of force. Russia espoused a more balanced approach consisting primarily of political measures, and many countries, including European Union (EU) member states, have taken the same approach.

Such efforts have borne fruit. Libya, which during the 1980s was considered to be one of the leading state sponsors of terrorism, is no longer providing financial support and training facilities to terrorist groups. As director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS), I was sent to Tripoli to help facilitate this change in Libyan policy. I had fruitful discussions with Libyan leaders, and I know how effective my European colleagues were in this area as well. In the mid- to late 1990s, Muammar Qaddafi broke off relations with the Italian Red Brigades and with the IRA. He expelled the Abu Nidal terrorist organization and severed relations with two extremist Palestinian groups: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Libya also expelled individuals suspected of terrorism and who had worked to overthrow or undermine regimes in Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan.

The United States also played a significant role in Libya's change. In return for Libya's extradition of two Libyan citizens accused in the 1989

Lockerbie Pan Am bombing (which claimed 270 lives, including 189 Americans), the United States agreed to let Libya choose the procedure and venue of the trial. The trial was conducted not in the United States or Great Britain, as the United States had first insisted, but in The Hague at the end of January 2001. In turn, such constructive efforts led Libya to support the U.S. antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan and encouraged Qaddafi to pay compensation to the families of those who perished in the Lockerbie bombing.

During the 1990s several positive changes also took place in Iran. The sympathies of the Iranian people began to shift away from the religious center in Qum and toward Mohammad Khatami, a more moderate spiritual leader known for his restraint. Khatami had spoken out against supporting extremism in society, religion, and foreign policy. He was in favor of reform and freedom of the press. That change had come to Iran was made clear when Khatami won the presidential election by a wide margin and when the 2000 Majlis elections brought reform-minded leaders into the parliamentary majority. Primarily because of the shift in popular opinion, Iran has ceased to use forceful means to spread its religion-based model of state and society to other countries in the region.

Russia and the EU also played a constructive role with respect to Iran by maintaining policies supporting positive domestic development in Iran and reducing Iran's isolation from the rest of the world.

Changes in the attitudes of leading U.S. politicians toward Iran took place during the final years of the Clinton administration. I sensed this during the many discussions I had on Iran with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. In a March 2000 speech, she underscored the importance of the new positive relations between the United States and Iran and called for an open, clean-slate dialogue between the two countries. At this point the United States' European allies were already engaged in active "critical dialogue" with Iran.

Albright's call was not taken up by the Bush administration. Nevertheless, Bush's policies had sustained a positive note, despite the complexity of Iran's domestic politics. Thus Iran—even though no one seemed to notice—supported the U.S. action in Afghanistan from the very beginning and contributed to U.S. military success in those areas of Afghanistan where it had influence.

Despite these positive trends, the United States became more sharply critical of Iran. Rather abruptly, the Bush administration identified Iran as one of the next possible targets for U.S. antiterrorist action after Afghanistan. This had a counterproductive effect: the moderate and radical-traditionalist factions in Iran began to come closer together. In response to Israeli armed military action in the Palestinian Authority, Hezbollah, supported by Tehran, immediately stepped up its artillery attacks on Israeli-controlled northern Galilee from Lebanon.

But the general trend in the early years of the twenty-first century has been for terrorist groups to become less closely tied to governments. The events of September 11 clearly demonstrated a new, more dangerous kind of international terrorism: criminal acts committed by a self-sufficient group, unaffiliated with any kind of national government, that result in the loss of thousands of innocent lives. This type of terrorist group burst onto the international scene as an entirely new kind of actor.

Until now, the course of international affairs had been dictated by the actions of states—alliances and wars, cooperation and confrontation. In other words, the international climate was a result of the relations between individual states or groups of states and the rise and fall of their alliances. The contemporary international system was defined by state actors and the official international organizations that they created. Now this model is obsolete.

If the organization that had committed this act of terrorism against the United States had been affiliated with any government at all in the Near East, Middle East, Africa, or Southeast Asia, at least one of the leading intelligence agencies in the world—Russia's FIS, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Britain's MI6, Germany's Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND, Federal Intelligence Service), or their counterparts in France, China, India, or another country—would have known about the connection. It is difficult to imagine any Middle Eastern country whose governmental workings are so thoroughly shielded from foreign intelligence services that the latter would have no inside sources of information at all. I cannot imagine that any intelligence service in the world would not have passed on to the Americans information it might have had regarding any potential catastrophic terrorist act on American soil.

I make this statement on the basis of years of personal experience as head of the Russian FIS.

Moreover, the state connection would have been uncovered because it is clear that preparations for the criminal acts committed on September 11 took place over a long period. According to David Sedney, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Kabul, the terrorists began to gather forces in the United States two years earlier. They began to build up financial resources, and the individual hijackers trained to pilot commercial passenger aircraft. Not just anyone is granted access to such training, and not just anyone is competent to complete it. If nothing else, falsified documentation had to be created that would not raise suspicions—a specialized and painstaking process. Individuals with good documentation were able to travel freely and unnoticed from country to country.

The support of many individuals was required to plan and execute this operation. Several airline terminals were infiltrated, and baggage security checkpoints were breached. At least four airliners were simultaneously hijacked with their passengers; additional hijackings may have been planned. The hijackers evaded radar tracking and made synchronized strikes against predetermined targets. This entire effort took place with no appreciable leak of information. A criminal organization of this magnitude must certainly be quite powerful, well networked, financially secure, and autonomous.

The FBI and other U.S. intelligence agencies are investigating alleged members of this organization, which the United States determined to be led by Osama bin Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire who was living in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban regime. The United States will almost certainly make public some information learned from the investigation, including details obtained by questioning members of bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist group. After their arrest during the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan, suspected al Qaeda members were held in isolation at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. I trust that information obtained from these individuals will not be used to create a trumped-up case against any "rogue" state, but will instead corroborate the autonomous nature of this criminal organization.

The intelligence community was hit with an avalanche of criticism in connection with the September 11 terrorist attacks. That the U.S. intelligence agencies bore the brunt of this seems wrong to me. The infiltration of an organization as isolated, as self-contained, and as highly disciplined as al Qaeda is an extremely difficult feat.

Yet U.S. intelligence agencies did undoubtedly have a general idea about bin Laden and his activities. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 2, 1999, CIA director George Tenet stated: "There is not the slightest doubt that Osama bin Laden, his worldwide allies, and his sympathizers are planning further attacks against us. . . . Bin Laden's organization has contacts virtually worldwide, including in the United States—and he has stated unequivocally, Mr. Chairman, that all Americans are targets." Naturally, with information of this nature, the CIA and the FBI should have conducted a thorough investigation of bin Laden's organization.

This effort had to have taken place. The American press reported—and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice confirmed—that on August 6, one month before the tragedy, President Bush was given a CIA report mentioning that bin Laden's people were planning some type of attack on the United States using airplanes. But the report contained no specific information and therefore was not accorded the attention it perhaps should have received. Angered by charges of incompetence, U.S. intelligence made another leak to the press: that in July 2001, an FBI agent in Arizona reported that potential hijackers might be training at U.S. flight schools, and that this information had been passed to those in authority. At the time, this information was disregarded as well. I do not believe that the CIA or the FBI provided incomplete information out of fear for their informants. Most likely they simply had no detailed information.

This example should serve as a warning to the global intelligence community. Obviously, today's new circumstances dictate that we step up cooperative investigation of certain countries and that we increase information sharing, including establishing a collective database of terrorist organizations and their members. But even this is not enough. Joint efforts in areas of *mutual interest*—the war against terrorism is one such area, certainly—must include collective analysis and interpretation

of information gathered. We must seek and establish ways to carry out this cooperative analysis. This is one of the lessons learned from September 11.

When I was head of Russia's FIS (1991–95), we did have some success establishing contacts with the NATO intelligence community.[1] During the cold war this would have been unthinkable, but in the early to mid-1990s, these contacts were beneficial to all. Now a new stage has been reached. In areas as sensitive to us all as terrorism, perhaps it is time to conduct joint operations. Obviously, few intelligence services will be willing to reveal their sources. This should not be allowed to hinder the creation of a shared database, the swift analysis of sensitive information, or the possibility of joint or parallel coordinated operations.

None of this in any way diminishes the importance of national intelligence services. National intelligence agencies will continue to operate, but they should steer away from methods universally deemed no longer appropriate for today's world.

Osama bin Laden

The course of Osama bin Laden's life and the development of his terrorist network have been shaped by many trends and events in the second half of the twentieth century. After the collapse of colonialism, the center of radicalism in the Muslim world shifted from the anticolonial liberation movements to militant Islam. During the cold war the United States and the Soviet Union attracted to themselves, sometimes recklessly, as many different movements and organizations as possible. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan created conditions that brought the United States closer to some of the most reactionary Muslim groups. Sometimes, these groups coalesced and began operation as a result of direct American involvement. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the end of the cold war changed this situation. Radical, militant Muslim groups began to change their orientation and came to see the United States as their primary adversary. The vacuum that developed in the immediate post–cold war period, with the ending of institutionalized, global competition between the superpowers, allowed militant Islamists to build their power base.

Osama bin Laden was born on June 28, 1957, in Saudi Arabia, one of more than fifty children fathered by an extremely successful businessman, Mohammed Awad bin Laden, who founded the Saudi bin Laden Group in 1931. This company gradually grew and diversified, becoming powerful in the oil and chemical industries, in banking, in telecommunications, and in satellite communications. As of 2000, the Group comprised some sixty affiliate and daughter companies in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

In January 2003, while participating in an international economic forum in Jeddah, I was invited to tour the headquarters of this company, one of Saudi Arabia's most powerful and influential. My colleagues and I were warmly received and taken around by the company's president—Osama bin Laden's brother. When I asked if he was still in contact with Osama, he answered categorically that he was not, adding, "Every family has its bad apple."

Be that as it may, the only son of Mohammed's tenth wife, Osama bin Laden inherited $250 million upon his father's death in addition to receiving—in accordance with strict Saudi custom—a portion of his family's construction interests. In twenty years he was able to double or triple this fortune. Thus Osama bin Laden had the means and wherewithal to create and launch entire organizations without any need for state sponsorship.

Oddly enough, American intelligence participated in establishing bin Laden and his organization. There is reason to believe that the United States first approached bin Laden after he had finished his studies in economics and management at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, when he devoted himself to the cause of jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Bin Laden attracted attention because he created the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK or Services Office), the precursor to al Qaeda, which maintained centers in various countries, including two in the United States (in Detroit and Brooklyn), to recruit soldiers to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The MAK recruited and sent to Afghanistan thousands of mercenaries, and it organized training camps there and in Pakistan. In organizing action against the Soviets, bin Laden cooperated closely with the CIA's Cyclone operation, which contributed as much as $500 million a year to Afghan rebels. According to some

sources, it was bin Laden's idea to arm the Afghani mujahidin with Stinger missiles. The United States had begun to deliver the missiles to Afghanistan, where they were used against Soviet aircraft and helicopters.

In general during the cold war, most military operations launched or supported in third countries to counter the Americans or the Soviets were unstable. Such groups often broke free from their initial sponsors and sometimes even turned against them. Even in regional conflicts, this same rule held fast. After all, Hamas was originally created by the Mossad, the Israeli secret service, to weaken the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the occupied West Bank. Over time, however, the Israelis lost control of this group.

The same occurred with the al Qaeda group formed by bin Laden in 1987 on the basis of the MAK. At first, its actions were limited to within Afghanistan. But after the Soviet withdrawal that same year, al Qaeda became highly anti-American and began to attract not just Arabs, but Sunni Muslims in general. In February 1998, al Qaeda publicly called on all Muslims everywhere to kill American citizens—both military and civilian—and those who supported them.

Al Qaeda quickly gained terrorist experience. Its range has extended to Yemen, Somalia, and the United States. In August 1998 two bombs exploded simultaneously at U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, killing more than two hundred people and wounding approximately four thousand. Bin Laden openly applauded these acts but in neither case claimed that al Qaeda was responsible. In this respect, bin Laden and his group differ from other terrorists, who immediately claim responsibility for such acts to demonstrate to the world how powerful they are. Apparently, al Qaeda's self-sufficiency and financial independence make it possible for the group to keep a low profile.

This also enables al Qaeda to avoid dependence on state sponsors. Much has been written, for example, about the ties of bin Laden and al Qaeda to Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden coordinated operations from Riyadh while the Soviets were in Afghanistan, but after he turned against the United States, his interests and those of the Saudis coincided very little. Anxious about U.S. reaction, the Saudis deported bin Laden (he had returned there after the Soviets left Afghanistan) and subsequently stripped him of Saudi citizenship. Bin Laden was also forced to leave

Sudan, where he had gone from Saudi Arabia: Khartoum did not want any problems on his account either.

Apparently, bin Laden did not have ties with Iraq either. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, bin Laden offered the Saudi leadership to send thousands of his soldiers to fight against Saddam Hussein. These soldiers had been "unemployed" since the Soviet troops left Afghanistan.

Neither would Iran have become a partner to bin Laden, since the al Qaeda leader supported the Sunni Taliban in their fight against the primarily Shiite Northern Alliance in Afgahnistan. Shiite Iran was fighting against the Taliban.

The Taliban was the only group with which bin Laden was on good terms. But the Taliban was more of a movement than anything approaching a governmental regime, and he had to work to establish a relationship even with it. Bin Laden had given his eldest daughter in marriage to Mullah Mohammed Omar, the Taliban leader, and had publicly given other signs of being close to the Taliban. In reality, however, he controlled his own operations and facilities in Afghanistan—he was a completely autonomous entity who remained in his fortified system of caves and underground tunnels—dug during the Soviet war—right up until the United States began its military action in Afghanistan. Bin Laden and the Taliban also shared in an illegal drug trade that increased al Qaeda's financial resources, and bin Laden helped launder Taliban money using, among others, the Chechen mafia, where there were also complications. After 1998, American intelligence services were in active contact with the Taliban on issues related to the cessation of their drug trafficking. At the same time, al Qaeda was expanding its drug business.

The fact that al Qaeda had not been assimilated into the Taliban movement and, moreover, that there were Talibs who opposed it, was borne out by Mullah Mohammed Khaksar, a former Taliban intelligence chief.[2] According to Khaksar, he even offered to help the United States remove the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, in 1999 because he "believed that under Mullah Omar the Taliban had become a puppet, first of Pakistani intelligence and then of Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda." Khaksar said the offer was made in Peshawar to U.S. diplomats Gregory Marchese and J. Peter McIllwain. No response was received.

It would not be out of place to point out that the Taliban extremist Islamic movement, which seized power in Kabul to control the entire country, was also formed with help from the United States. As Russian foreign minister, I met with Pakistan's former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who made no secret of the fact that the Taliban were brought into existence by Pakistani military intelligence with the help of the American CIA. So it is possible that Khaksar's acquaintance with American diplomats had been a long one.

Regardless of the details, it is clear that the Taliban openly welcomed bin Laden and his al Qaeda network to Afghanistan, primarily because they shared the same ideology: adherence to the ideas of radical, militant Islam. Al Qaeda's autonomy did not hinder but, rather, helped expand the organization's sphere of influence. In taking up the flag of militant Islam, bin Laden proclaimed his goal to be the establishment of a "true Islamic state that rules according to *sharia* and unites all Muslims throughout the world." According to his *bayan*—the proclamations he periodically makes—Islam is not practiced by separate groups of people. There is a single Muslim nation. Bin Laden uses these principles to rationalize his aid to extremists in Algeria and Egypt and his financial support of Palestinian terrorist groups.

Current evidence indicates that bin Laden lent substantial support to Albanian separatists in Kosovo, in particular to the anti-Serbian Kosovo Liberation Army, which the U.S. State Department first correctly identified as terrorists but which they later supported for geopolitical reasons. The ideological underpinning of this support was bin Laden's goal to create an extremist Islamic state in the center of Europe, comprising Albania, Kosovo, the Sanjak, and parts of Bosnia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. The fact that the Balkans were a major route for moving drugs from Afghanistan into western Europe was also of major significance to bin Laden.

In the latter half of the 1990s, a highly developed terrorist infrastructure came into being in Afghanistan, made up of training camps and command posts that directed militant groups in Egypt, Algeria, India, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and several other countries. The network had satellite communications, a printing operation, and large caches of

modern weapons and ammunition. Moreover, this movement was drawing recruits from all over the Muslim world. Yossef Bodansky, an American expert on international terrorism, wrote, "In the Badr 1 and Badr 2 camps . . . more and more volunteers are showing up from Central Asia and the Caucasus."[3]

There is also much evidence connecting bin Laden and al Qaeda with Chechen rebels. Both Arab and non-Arab members of these groups underwent training in Afghanistan. It was there that bin Laden, according to some, met the Jordanian Omar Ibn al Khattab, who later became one of Chechnya's most powerful warlords. Khattab later introduced bin Laden to another Chechen separatist leader, Shamil Basaev.

A Terrifying Prospect

So, there is convincing evidence that autonomous, self-sufficient organizations are at work in the global arena, and that they advocate mass terror as a means of achieving their goals. We have focused until now on only one of them: al Qaeda. But there is no guarantee that al Qaeda is unique. Moreover, such organizations are low-profile and tend not to take credit for the terrorist acts they commit. Rather, the large scale of their terrorist acts and the number of victims they claim are most important to them.

When the only players in international politics were nation-states, trends and events were significantly more predictable and thus more easily controlled. After World War II, the United States and the USSR headed opposing ideological systems, and each possessed a nuclear arsenal that could destroy the other. They kept each other in check. States that attached themselves to one or the other of these ideological systems found themselves under the control of the superpowers. Those who were not part of this system also behaved with restraint, taking extra care to make sure that their conflicts did not expand outside regional boundaries. During this period, terrorism did not pose a serious *international* threat.

And now, in this changed world? How can even the most militarily powerful nations ensure the safety and security of their citizens?

The situation is complicated by the fact that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—chemical, biological, and radiological—are hardly inaccessible to these autonomous terrorist groups. Bin Laden's al Qaeda is but one of a long list of terrorist organizations. According to CIA director George Tenet, "Bin Laden's organization is just one of about a dozen terrorist groups that have expressed an interest in or have sought chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) agents. Bin Laden, for example, has called the acquisition of these weapons a 'religious duty' and noted that 'how we use them is up to us.'"

As we enter the twenty-first century, the world is ever more vulnerable to the use of WMD in cultivating terror. First, nonallegiance to any government body allows terrorist organizations to sail into "uncharted waters" with incredible freedom to maneuver. Second, the ability of terrorists to finance themselves has grown. Third, the spread of terror using WMD is greatly aided by the process of globalization, which has made information freely available and removed countless barriers and limitations that previously existed. Last, technological developments have made smaller and much more compact nuclear devices possible and are making it easier to produce chemical and biological weapons. All these factors make weapons of mass destruction much more accessible to terrorists.

Does bin Laden's organization already possess weapons of mass destruction? The U.S. State Department's official list of charges against Osama bin Laden states that al Qaeda has tried to acquire nuclear weapons or their components since 1993. During the U.S. military action in Afghanistan, U.S. intelligence agents found technical documentation for nuclear warheads in an al Qaeda building in Kabul. They also uncovered evidence that two Pakistani physicists had been in Afghanistan during the Taliban's rule.

There is reason to believe that al Qaeda has come very close to possessing radiological weapons. U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft stated that Abdullah al-Muhajir (also known as Jose Padilla) was on an al Qaeda reconnaissance mission for a planned attack on Washington using a radioactive dirty bomb. Arrested on May 8, 2002, after flying into Chicago's O'Hare airport from Pakistan, al-Muhajir also allegedly

planned to release toxic substances in large U.S. hotels.[4] Based on the interrogation of Abu Zubaydah, a top al Qaeda leader captured in Pakistan, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters in April 2002 that the network was trying to build a radiological bomb.

By all accounts, it would seem the world is now quite close to seeing the use of some kind of nuclear device by terrorists. And there are hundreds of targets in every large country that possesses nuclear material: nuclear weapons stockpiles or transport caravans, nuclear power stations, nuclear fuel laboratories. The destruction of any of these would be a nuclear disaster of catastrophic proportions. At the beginning of 2002, forty-three nations had nuclear power stations or nuclear reactors capable of producing nuclear material. More than one hundred nations are stockpiling reserves of radioactive material. There is no convincing reason to believe that all this nuclear material is well managed or protected.

Finally, international terrorism is particularly dangerous in light of the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more nations that are involved in regional conflicts. When the United States began its action in Afghanistan, for example, a strong movement supporting the Taliban rose up in neighboring Pakistan. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis marched in Islamabad, Karachi, and other cities demanding that the "pro-American" government be ousted.

At the same time, the Pakistani government saw fit to remove several highly placed but unreliable officers from duty. I think many justifiably feared that an overthrow of the Pakistani government by pro-Taliban groups—which include some in the Pakistani army—would give the Taliban access to nuclear weapons. In this case it was a false alarm. But what about the next time?

As Russian foreign minister, I met President Bill Clinton in September 1996 in New York. Speaking about the great importance of cooperation between Russia and the United States, the president identified the most critical political problem for the next twenty-five years as the Indian-Pakistani conflict and the threat that it would progress toward the use of nuclear weapons. I admit I was somewhat surprised by his choice; I do not think that possession of nuclear weapons by both those nations necessarily means the weapons will be used in a conflict. Both sides also honestly hope to avoid a tragedy of this magnitude through careful and

deliberate diplomacy in their conflict and through broad international efforts. But it would be another matter entirely if nuclear weapons were to fall into the hands of an independent terrorist organization.

In the war on international terrorism, it is extremely important to take decisive and direct action supporting the nonproliferation of WMD. Despite valuable progress—in particular the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the majority of the world's nations—the global community remains passive. It is far from clear what specific action can be taken to block nations, especially those engaged in regional conflicts, from joining the nuclear club. But the September 11 tragedy demands that we give the issue our full attention. I see this as one of the primary tasks for Russian diplomacy and Russian special services—especially since the two undeclared nuclear nations and many of the threshold nuclear nations lie at Russia's door.

While Russian-American relations have entered a new phase of greater mutual trust, the United States must cease unjustifiably accusing us of poorly managing our nuclear material and of working with other countries to build nuclear power plants that are supposedly used to produce nuclear weapons. Instead of such rhetoric—which does little to stop the spread of nuclear weapons—we would like to see close cooperation toward the antiterrorism objectives we share.

Each time I met with Strobe Talbott, Madeleine Albright, or Al Gore as head of the Russian government, or, before that, as foreign minister, they would invariably rake me over the coals for our nuclear power plant construction in Bushehr, Iran. They would present me with the same list of Russian firms and companies that were supposedly supplying Iran with technology that could be used to produce nuclear weapons. We knew about their list because it had been given to us earlier by the Israeli government. We would explain that the construction in Bushehr was being carried out under the strict oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); that many of the companies on their list were no longer to be found at the addresses they showed; that we were delivering the same kind of light water reactors that the United States was getting ready to give North Korea; or that for Iran to have nuclear weapons was clearly not in Russia's interest—first and foremost for purely geographical reasons.

Today, of course, demarches like these should be a thing of the past. Just like any other nation, Russia bears sole responsibility for any violations of international obligations currently in force. Our simple rule of thumb is that there should be no such violations.

The multitude of existing documents—UN Security Council resolutions and various conventions and declarations adopted by the UN General Assembly and its special bodies, by the Council of Europe, by the Organization of American States, by the League of Arab States, by many national parliaments, and by a number of international conferences—falls short. We must develop a comprehensive document, a charter, for the war on terrorism. One prominent expert on international law, G. I. Morozov, correctly asserts that terrorism must not be viewed as a political crime. It is by its very nature a criminal act. Morozov insists that national laws on statutes of limitations, or on the right of nonextradition, do not apply to terrorist crimes.[5] Any charter on terrorism must make issues like this clear.

That such a charter will sooner or later be signed seems a certainty. We do not need to specify exact contents—a task requiring international consultation and negotiation—to be able to anticipate several of the measures it would provide for.

Nations that sign the charter would make a binding agreement not to permit within their borders any group or organization that advocates terrorism to achieve its goals, regardless of how noble or desirable those goals might seem. Any signatory to the charter would undertake strict financial oversight of terrorist groups, as well as measures to prohibit the transport of weapons, ammunition, or troops by them. The charter could include any number of additional requirements or provisions for nations who agree to take an uncompromising line against terrorism.

I would like to emphasize that it is the responsibility of all states that sign the charter to turn over terrorists that seek a haven within their borders, at the request of any other signatory and with sufficient and appropriate documented evidence. Extradition of accused terrorists is essential in the war on terrorism: criminals should not be able to count on shelter from any state. No matter where they are, they should find no quarter. At present there are many states that do not share extradition agreements, a situation that often interferes with efforts to bring criminals to justice.

Changing extradition laws and legislation on a national level is a long and arduous process. These obstacles would melt away with a charter on terrorism.

The global community must agree to reevaluate many previously accepted beliefs about ensuring nations' own security and that of their allies. They must take part in establishing and maintaining regional and global stability. Essential to this is that we find reliable means of combating international terrorism in all its new forms. The war on terrorism will not be effective unless all forces for good in the world join together in this common goal—and this includes the world's one billion Muslims.