

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
FALK AUDITORIUM

THE EXILE: THE STUNNING INSIDE STORY OF
OSAMA BIN LADEN AND AL QAEDA IN FLIGHT

Washington, D.C.

Monday, June 5, 2017

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Moderator:

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Featured Speaker:

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Author and Investigative Journalist

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. RIEDEL: Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to The Brookings Institution and welcome to another in our series of events of the Brookings Intelligence project. It is a great pleasure for me this morning to spend an hour and a half with you and with Cathy Scott-Clark, co-author of what I think is one of the most important books that will come out this year, "The Exile". I'll explain why I think that in just a minute.

I want to begin by asking you to please mute your cell phones, so we don't have competition as to who has the best cell phone. I'd also ask you to bear with the program. We're going to proceed in the following manner: I will have a conversation with Cathy for about 45 minutes or so, until about 9:45, and then we will open it up to questions from you. When we go to questions from the audience, could you please identify yourself and your affiliation just so we know the background to the questioner.

Recent events, tragic events, in London and in Manchester, have underscored the importance of the world getting a better understanding of where the global jihad came from and how it has evolved. One of the biggest lacunas in understanding the development of the global jihad has been what happened to Osama bin Laden in the decade between September 11th, and May 2011, when he was finally brought to justice in Abbottabad in Pakistan.

This very dark period has been a subject of much mystery in the years since he was found in Abbottabad. "The Exile: The Stunning Inside Story of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Flight" fills this lacuna and tells us what was going on. It's a really remarkable story and it's a remarkable example of investigative journalism at its very, very best.

Cathy Scott-Clark and Adrian Levy are two of the finest investigative journalists anywhere in the world. I'm a very big fan of their works. They've produced a number of really important books, including the most important book about Dr. A.Q. Khan, the great nuclear pirate of our times; and an even more stunning book called "The Siege", about 26/11, the Lashkar-e-Taiba attack on the city of Mumbai, and in particular, on the Taj Hotel.

In this book they take us inside the period of time that Osama bin Laden is hiding after September 11th until he's finally found. They also look at his family, his wives and his children, and where

they were hiding and the interconnections between them. It's a complicated story. I think it's safe to say there are a lot of zigs and zags. We don't move in a simple straight line, especially the family. But it's a very important and compelling story for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it helps us understand better how the Pakistani and Iranian deep states, as their often called, facilitated hiding Osama bin Laden and his family, and particularly the role that Iran played in all of this, I think, is very important, new, and quite timely given where relations between the West and Iran seem to be moving.

The story, as I said, has many, many components. I'd like to start questions with a very simple component, though, which is sourcing. The book is remarkably well sourced, as you can see if you look in the footnotes. How did you get all these people to talk and who were the people who played the role in giving you the information you're looking for?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: The first step, I think, was I was working in Pakistan a lot in 2011 and '12. I was there when he was killed. And my immediate thought was what about the family and the children who remained in Pakistan for months and months afterwards? I really wanted to hear what they had to say about the years on the run with him, the years in Abbottabad, whether they agreed with what he'd done, whether they agreed with 9/11. I mean, who were these people?

So I started with them and I thought how do you get Osama's family to talk to you? And I was lucky in that they were held the ISI, the Pakistani intelligence, for almost a year afterwards.

And the brother of Amal, who's the youngest wife, came from Yemen to try and get his sister out and her five children. And he didn't have a clue how to work the system in Pakistan. He only spoke Arabic. He didn't have any money. He'd spent -- the family clumped together all their finances to get him the ticket to Islamabad. And so I gave him some assistance in terms of directing him kind of this is how the court system works. And in return, when he finally got them freed, he then introduced me to his sister and her kids. And then we kind of went from there onwards, but it took a long time. I mean, five years altogether to get full confidence of certain members of the family, and there are certain members of the family I haven't talked to.

And then once that was kind of established, there was a book to be written because we could actually get access to people who had seen it from the inside, which was the full intention was to see al-Qaida from the inside. We obviously couldn't just stick with the kind of domestic affairs. We

wanted to look at how the organization had worked and how it had come together with the 9/11 plot and whether or not that was a unified decision to go for that target and what happened to the organization afterwards.

So I sat down with Adrian and we kind of drew up a list of, okay, within the movement itself, within the active officers of al-Qaida, who's still alive? Who's not in Guantanamo or in detention elsewhere? And who in theory could we talk to? And we gradually went through that quite short list of people. And one meeting led to another meeting, so going to Mauritania to meet Osama's former spiritual advisor kind of gave us some, I guess, brownie points with other people, who then said, well, if he meets you, then we'll meet you.

So then I met people in Jordan, like Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, who is a huge jihad theologian.

And so, yes, it was a very slow, gradual process of creeping forwards and gaining confidence. That's probably the wrong word, but gaining trust.

MR. RIEDEL: And just as you got to that point, surprise, surprise, the U.S. Government actually divulged some of the documents that it's found in Abbottabad.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes, yes.

MR. RIEDEL: And I think --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Which really helped. Really helped.

MR. RIEDEL: As far as I can tell, you and Adrian are the first people to really go through especially the largest tranche of documents and connect the dots in that.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yeah, I mean, we obviously don't claim any of that as our original material. I mean, it was out there for people to read. But I remember printing everything out and there was just a huge stack of papers. And initially, it was quite difficult to understand some of the -- I mean, it was translated into English, but difficult to understand the language and difficult to work out sort of relationships between particularly family members. But having been given information by the family, then the letters began to make more sense and you could just start to piece together who was coming from where and who was the son that was mentioned here. And the letters were hugely important and still remain so because there's more than a million documents that have not been released.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: And will now not be released, which I find incredible.

MR. RIEDEL: We know from the accounts of the SEALS that they only got a small percentage of the documents in Abbottabad. They had to leave most of them behind.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yeah.

MR. RIEDEL: So until the ISI opens up its files, which I don't anticipate is going to happen in my lifetime, there will be a huge amount of secrecy about this.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: But there's still a million documents that are here --

MR. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: -- that are not going to be released, which I find, frankly, unbelievable.

MR. RIEDEL: Let's turn to bin Laden himself. Here is the most wanted man in human history, the target of the biggest manhunt ever, with almost every intelligence service in the world trying to capture him or kill him or find him or do something. And for 10 years, he successfully evades it.

One of the things that struck me about the book is that you have upended the picture that we were given when he was found. The picture we were given was that this was "the lion in winter," the man who sat there watching old videos of himself in a kind of pathetic way, cut off from the world. But in the book we discover he was actually a very, very busy person. For example, one of the early things you say is in 2002, I guess, he was in Karachi and met with Richard Reid, the famous "Shoe Bomber," and dispatched him on his way.

How would you characterize bin Laden's level of activity and his involvement in al-Qaida in this decade or so?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I think in the early years after 9/11, he particularly and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was the real architect of this operation, were so buoyed up by the success and astounded by what they had achieved -- it sounds a terrible thing to say, but I don't think any of them believed that they would pull this off -- that they felt they were untouchable.

And Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, from people who know him, I mean, obviously I haven't interviewed him, but was a figure who believed he could control the world. He could do anything he

wanted and nobody would ever touch him. And I do believe he felt like that until the moment that he was picked up in Rawalpindi in March 2003. And he encouraged Osama bin Laden to feel the same way. I mean, we've done this, we can do anything. We can go anywhere we want. We have total protection in Pakistan. I have my sources, my family, my networks in Karachi and elsewhere.

And this was a huge kind of consternation to other members of al-Qaida, like Saif al-Adel, who was the head of the military council, who by this stage was in Iran. He was so worried about the risks that these two were taking in traveling around and meeting and plotting and crazy stuff, flying planes into Heathrow Airport -- which, thankfully, didn't happen -- that he wrote a letter to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed -- which, again, is not our material; I mean, this is already out there -- saying, look, you've got to stop rushing and encouraging the Sheikh. He's unhinged and his mind is not kind of in the right place at the moment, so, please, just back off because we don't want our legacy to be one where we're seen as having no control over what we're doing.

So, I mean, obviously later on, Osama's movements were curtailed by his physical living situation, but, I mean, his mind and his activities and his desires and his intentions were all still there.

MR. RIEDEL: You mentioned that they had a network of people and you identify some of them in the book, like Fazlur Rehman Khalil, Hamid Gul, and the head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hafiz Saeed. How did that work? How much did those people know where he was, I mean, physically versus knew how to contact him maybe through connections?

And then, of course, the common thread of those three people is they all have a connection one way or another to the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI. How did this process work as you look back on it?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, I think it started with Hamid Gul, who was the former director-general of the ISI, who I interviewed many times from 1995 onwards. In the early days, I had no idea that he had a kind of -- after 9/11, I didn't initially know that he had an ongoing bin Laden connection, but, I mean, they had known each other since the Soviet war in the '80s and they had a mutual admiration. And he would quite happily talk about it in his interviews, as I imagine all journalists know that went to see him, that he was a great fan, and I think it worked both ways.

And so when Osama needed assistance after he moved -- well, before Abbottabad, but

around the Abbottabad time when they were setting up the house and they were building and working out a cloak of invisibility, he offered his assistance then. And he talked a little bit about it, not a great deal, but evidence that he knew how to contact Osama and knew exactly where he was.

I mean, you just look again at the letters that General Pasha, who was the head of the ISI in 2010 and '11, wanted to reach out to al-Qaida and talk about some kind of peace deal because there were so many attacks in Pakistan at that time. And he went through Hamid Gul and said, look, you can be our emissary. And Fazlur Rehman Khalil also went along and he talked.

I met him, as well, on several occasions, Fazlur Rehman Khalil. He talked about Osama and we had a long dispute at one stage about whether Hamza bin Laden, the son, had been in the house just before Osama was killed. In fact, Fazlur Rehman Khalil got very upset and said, look, you don't know what you're talking about. I know exactly where he was and this was that, and kind of the pride factor helped get the information out.

MR. RIEDEL: Right. Of course, you know, for outsiders looking at Pakistan, which as you know better than almost anyone else, is a complicated house of mirrors, to put it mildly.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: And a great country.

MR. RIEDEL: And a great country. How could someone like Hamid Gul know or Khalil knew or even better Hafiz Saeed know and the Pakistani intelligence service doesn't know or appears not to know?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, everyone describes the ISI, the Pakistan Intelligence Service, as this kind of like cohesive sort of thing, and it's not at all. I mean, it's a huge organization with, as anyone who knows a lot about Pakistan, with signed up officers and unofficial officers and people on the street who do bits and pieces, and not everybody has the same level of knowledge and people do not share information either.

I mean, I remain utterly convinced having met General Pasha several times that he had no idea that Osama was there in Abbottabad. And if you look at the fallout after, after the killing, and the way that the army and the ISI reacted by just shutting everything down, I mean, they were as shocked as everybody else.

MR. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: In terms of how do you keep secrets within an organization like that? It's very, very easy. Nobody tells anybody what's really going on.

MR. RIEDEL: I want to connect the dot back to your previous book, *The Siege*. As you establish in here, that Osama bin Laden went to some kind of planning seminar for the attack, how much do you think Osama bin Laden was actually involved in the planning of 26-11, the attack on Mumbai?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: That's a very difficult question. That was a Lashkar-e-Taiba plot and a plot that had been discussed at certain levels within the ISI at different times as an idea, but not something that was actually going to be done. I don't believe he was involved personally in the decision-making process. He went out, not what people have said before, he went out on several occasions from Abbottabad to meet people and to show his face and have a bit of sort of mutual adulation. And I believe that that meeting was one of those occasions, so he would have been aware that this plot was happening, but I don't believe he personally would have wanted much to do with it because it's not his focus.

MR. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: India was not his focus. It's the West. It's America. It's the two holy mosques and the fight against Palestine. It's Israel, America.

MR. RIEDEL: One of the other things that is fascinating in the book is the tension that develops over time between bin Laden and his immediate hosts, the Kuwaitis, the two Pakistanis who'd lived in Kuwait and become known as "the Kuwaitis," who are taking these enormous risks; in the end, risks that will cost them their lives. And he's not cooperating. Instead of keeping a low profile, he's trying to bring in his wives, his kids, you know, everybody he's related to. And finally, they say enough is enough.

Give us a little flavor of kind of the end of the story of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad and what was going on in that hideout.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, from the wives' perspectives, I mean, they were never involved in the kind of men's meetings. They were always sort of kept separate, but they felt a palpable sense of kind of tension between the companions, as they called them, who lived downstairs and in the annex outside, and Osama, who just would never give anything away in terms of kind of making a step

forward or back to accommodate them.

I mean, they'd been stuck with him since Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who introduced them, because he knew them from Kuwait and they grew up together. He introduced Ibrahim, the younger brother, who's the main companion to start with in 2002 was when they first came up with the plan for him to live together with Osama and one wife and one baby. And then he had to bring his brother in because the family was growing all the time and it was just too much to deal with and he couldn't do it on his own. And then Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was caught, so their boss was now no longer there to guide them.

So by I think towards the end of 2010, the two brothers kept going to Osama and saying, look, we've dedicated our lives to you, but we're just tired, we're sick, we need a way out. You promised us that we would be able to retire and go and live in Saudi Arabia. You would give us the money so we could buy ourselves kind of retirement homes. And that time is now coming because we just can't cope anymore.

And they had a series of meetings, some of which are documented in the letters, where Osama agreed to move out after the 10th anniversary of 9/11. And he was really happy that he'd got this kind of extension until September 2011. And his wives wrote about it, as well, and said, oh, we were living under such kind of tense security and tension in the house, and now this has been abated because we've got this extra sort of nine months.

And, of course, if he hadn't negotiated and he had moved out when they'd asked him to, he wouldn't have been there.

MR. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: So he actually, in a way, sort of signed his own death warrant.

MR. RIEDEL: The family, you have September 11th. Bin Laden goes east into Pakistan, but a lot of the family and a lot of the other companions, especially some of them are senior, head off into Iran and they spend the better part of the next decade in Iran. And as the book charts their course, it seems like they go from being under arrest in some pretty abysmal circumstances to being the toast of the town and kind of Iran's royal couple behind the scenes.

What is the course of this Iranian relationship with them and the family's relationship with

Iran? And why were the Iranians playing this game with the bin Laden family?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, I guess you'd rather have, A, your enemy as your friend that have a common enemy in America and Israel; B, you'd rather have them kind of wait and see them rather than them attacking you, which had happened in the past from Afghanistan with al-Qaida attacks on Iran. And there had been previous collaborations. I mean, the Mauritanian spiritual advisor who I met and spent a lot of time with had gone on Osama's say-so to Tehran in 1995, with Saif al-Adel, to negotiate some kind of mutual deal to get al-Qaida fighters trained by Hezbollah in the Bekaa Valley. Whether or not that actually happened in the end, we can't prove it, he wouldn't say, but those connections were already there. And I guess Iran saw an opportunity at that time to assist and take some power, take some control that these people could be useful at some stage in the future.

And, in fact, one of the most shocking elements I found of this story was the fact that after welcoming the family and several very significant Shura members to Tehran, the Iranian government, the civilian government, then contacted the U.S. Government here in Washington and said, look, we've got these people if you want them in return for diplomatic kind of easing of sanctions and restoring relations. And that offer was turned down in 2003, so the world would be a very different place if that had been taken up.

MR. RIEDEL: Right. Just after the "axis of evil" speech and all that.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes. The discussion had preceded the "axis of evil" speech and then it kind of shut down at that point because obviously Tehran was very, very upset. But it was restarted again in 2003, and then formally turned down later that year.

MR. RIEDEL: The central figure in the Iranian government in all of this process of dealing with the bin Laden family is Qasem Soleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, a man who has taken on almost mythic proportions for his role in Lebanon and Syria and Iraq. Why was it his portfolio? And what does this say about the deep state in Iran and its power in influencing Iranian behavior?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, it was his portfolio because as head of the Quds Force he's in charge of clandestine foreign operations, anything that can assist or otherwise the state of Iran. So to have Osama bin Laden's nearest and dearest under lock and key or at least sort of within four walls,

within the main training facility at the Quds Force in Tehran, is much better than not knowing what al-Qaida are up to. And to then have several key members of the Shura also held in the same compound, initially separately, but eventually they were all together, means you can then negotiate with al-Qaida to mutual benefit.

And so by 2003, when the Shura was not still in Pakistan, so not the Zawahiri group -- al-Qaida Central -- but Saif al-Adel and Abu Mohammed al-Masri and Abu Khayr al-Masri, quite a lot of Egyptians, they were, by that stage, in the position to plan and execute attacks remotely from Tehran, like the Riyadh compound bombings. And the relationship, as you say, was very up and down between these people and the Quds Force and Major General Qasem Soleimani.

But they were able to reestablish a funding pipeline through Iran, which still exists today. So these days the money comes from Kuwait and Qatar, I guess Syria and Iraq. A lot of it used to go to Pakistan, but those networks and infrastructures were established during that decade. So, I mean, it's a very, very crucial period, I think, that's always been overlooked and misunderstood.

MR. RIEDEL: The highlight, at least for me, of this relationship, which I want you to describe a little bit, is that the Soleimani brings Osama bin Laden's sons to attend a speech by Ayatollah Khamenei, which they're kind of --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Round the back.

MR. RIEDEL: Right, if it was the equivalent of Falk, they would have been in the room over there. Did Khamenei know? Or I guess we don't know whether -- what he knows.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I can't answer, I don't know.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I haven't interviewed him.

MR. RIEDEL: But it's kind of a remarkable moment.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes.

MR. RIEDEL: Here are these sons of bin Laden attending a speech by the Supreme Leader as a guest.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes. I think -- and it was done to make up for a period of huge instability that had preceded it because there had been clamp down on the freedom -- I mean, the family

and the Shura were not free to kind of wander around Tehran. They were held within four walls within this huge military compound.

But they'd have a very bad period preceding this where one of the -- not a Shura member. A Kuwaiti guy called Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, who's now in prison in America, he had found out that his wife -- he had been able to make a couple of phone calls home. And he'd found out that his wife back in Kuwait had divorced him and gone off with his best friend and his seven children with her were now living with their grandparents. And so he went on hunger strike because he was completely distraught about this because most other people in the compound had their families with them and he was on his own. And they had a riot and burnt some cars and everything had gone very badly wrong. So I guess Soleimani's idea was to try and give them a treat, restore relations.

MR. RIEDEL: This is a --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: It's a long time to keep people locked up.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: You have to negotiate and give and take.

MR. RIEDEL: And how does it all come to -- I mean, in the end, I'm not sure that all of them, but the vast majority of the al-Qaida entourage leaves Iran. How does it come to an end? Why did the Iranians finally let these people go?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, it was -- I mean, I don't think they have finally let them go. I think they still connect and I think work together is probably too strong a word, but there is still mutual benefits to be had in Syria and Iraq between the Quds Force and Soleimani and Saif al-Adel. He's now back there playing a very active role along with his deputies and assistants, apart from the one who was killed. Abu al Khayr al-Masri was killed in Idlib in February this year.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: But, I mean, they're now back in the fight and assisting with Jilani, the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham group.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: So that is an ongoing relationship. I mean, different people left at different times. I guess the family, initially people escaped, though it was quite soon after the going to the

Grand Mosque incident, where they went to listen to the Supreme Leader. Operations disintegrated again to the point where the family group almost escaped from the compound and they got as far as the main gate, and the women sat down behind the main gate and started chanting to people in the streets, saying we're being held against our will, get us out type thing. And it was very touch-and-go whether the escorts who were looking after the family would actually get things back under control.

But soon after this, when relations were very bad in 2008, Saad bin Laden, one of Osama's sons, escaped and he made it to Pakistan and was then killed in a drone strike by accident. In the wrong place at the wrong time. And then his younger sister, 16-year-old sister, Iman, escaped by going -- the women sometimes were allowed to go out on shopping trips with Iranian escorts, female escorts. So they were going on a special Eid shopping trip to a fancy supermarket in the middle of the city and she kind of picked some clothes up off the shelves and changed into a kind of Iranian westernized outfit out of (inaudible) and picked up a baby doll and wrapped it up and walked out. And they didn't even realize that she was gone until 10 minutes later and suddenly they got all the women back together and, hang on, someone's missing.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: So people left at different times. And once these escapes had started happening, they began a process, the Iranian began a process of negotiated releases, which was assisted by al-Qaida kidnapping several Iranian diplomats in Pakistan and Yemen. So the family went first, but at different times. So Osama's eldest wife, Khairiah, she went in 2010 and rejoined her husband.

Everybody in the family believes that she was tracked, she had some kind of tracking device, which Osama writes about in his letters as she's coming. Go and check the dentist, go and check your teeth, go and check under your skin. They were very worried about her coming and I do believe that the evidence suggests that she was tracked and her reunion with Osama was a critical factor in the reaching of -- in the linking him to Abbottabad, to finding him in Abbottabad.

So people escaped at different times. People were released at different times.

MR. RIEDEL: You mentioned already --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: The relationship continues, though.

MR. RIEDEL: Right. You mentioned already one very important figure, Hamza, who is

now --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Touted.

MR. RIEDEL: -- touted, groomed to be the next leader of al-Qaida. What's his glide path before 2011, 2012?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, he was a kid. I mean, he was -- I've not met him, obviously. He's on the run and probably in Karachi, but according to his brothers he was the only who kind of really wanted to kind of join his father in his activities.

And one of his older brothers, Omar, told me the story of when they were living in Kandahar one time and Osama came along, pinned up a sheet in the little mosque in the airport (phonetic) village where they lived, it was kind of like sign up here if you want to be a suicide bomber. He kind of looked at his sons, sort of any of you going to put your names down? And Hamza, apparently, according to Omar, put his name down and none of the others did.

But, I mean, he was a kid and he'd spent up until 2001, when he was 13, he had always lived within the kind of al-Qaida desert, sort of kingdom of al-Qaida, living in Afghanistan. And then he went with his family to Pakistan and then went to Iran where he was held for 10 years. When he was released in 2010, along with his mother, who's Khairiah, one of Osama's deputies wrote and said to Osama you're expecting too much of him. He spent his whole life in incarceration. He has studied and is very religious and he's very ambitious and he wants to kind of fight and to join the jihad, but he's had no experience at all.

And there was quite a tussle between the deputy and Osama as to sort of how far they could push Hamza. And that process of kind of pushing him as the heir and the figurehead and the handsome, resembling his father character has continued to this day.

So other family members, who I still talk to now, they're very worried that he -- we shouldn't be sympathetic, but they're very worried that he is just a -- as his sister said, they're not his words that he speaks on the videos. Those are Zawahiri's words. He's just a puppet.

MR. RIEDEL: Being used.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Being used, but to great effect because obviously people are going around and doing heinous acts on al-Qaida's say-so.

MR. RIEDEL: Was he in the hideout in Abbottabad when the SEALS came that's been alleged?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: No. He'd been. He'd been there very briefly two or three days beforehand, so he had been reunited with his father. But he'd then been told to go off down to Karachi. And his father's deputy had kind of convinced Osama by this stage that he wasn't ready and that he should go and study for some time, and go and meet with other Shura members and get some real experience before he started doing anything.

MR. RIEDEL: I'm going to go to the audience in just another question or two. I want to bring up one other finger, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian founder of al-Qaida in Iraq and, by derivation in way, the spiritual founder of the Islamic State; the man the Islamic State holds up as. He has a similar journey of going from Afghanistan through Iran and to Iraq. And then his communications link back to al-Qaida Central also go through Iran. Is it an overstatement to say that the Iranians helped to create al-Qaida in Iraq and, therefore, have some responsibility, whatever word, for the Islamic State?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes, I do believe that. And part of the reason that that happened was because after Iran offered to hand all these people over to America or another Western country or whoever, and they were turned down, they thought, right, well, now we're going to do what we want with them. We're going to use them. We're going to cause problems for America.

So the war in Iraq was just starting, which is part of the reason that this deal was not done because it was the wrong country. It was Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida, not Tehran and al-Qaida. So the Iranian government, yeah, assisted Zarqawi in many, many different ways and Saif al-Adel. I mean, they were part of the same group and then Zarqawi went off to Northern Iraq to Kurdish territory and started plotting from there attacks against American forces in Iraq, and all of it funded. And he crossed back over to go to Pakistan on certain occasions. It's all very well documented.

I think one of the things -- and this isn't my story, it's a story from a CIA analyst -- that's most shocking is that shortly before the famous Colin Powell speech to the United Nations about weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein connections, the CIA had established that there was this guy called Zarqawi in Northern Iraq.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: And they used his discovery, rather than to kind of take him out, which was the recommendation, they used his discovery to put together the link between him and Saddam, and the link was not there. I mean, he was already plotting against Saddam.

So does that answer your question?

MR. RIEDEL: Yes. I mean, part of the alleged link with Saddam was that Zarqawi had been injured and had either lost a leg or had --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: No, that's not true.

MR. RIEDEL: And when he was finally brought to justice one of the first things that he was checked on by the American team that arrived at the bomb was his legs. And his legs had survived a, I don't know, 5,000-pound bomb and it was pretty clear that he'd never undergone leg surgery. So that whole connection turned out to be a true failure.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yeah. I mean, there was an eyewitness that we interviewed. The Mauritanian was with him when that incident happened. They were in the Taliban media office in Kandahar in December, November/December 2001, when a bomb dropped. In fact, the Mauritanian had just left and Abu Zubaydah and Zarqawi and various other people were in the building, got flattened, but they all came out alive. Injured, but not severely.

MR. RIEDEL: As I said in the beginning, as it says itself, it's the stunning inside story. Much of this detail never been revealed before.

And I'd like to open it up to questions now. Please raise your hand. We have a microphone that will come around and identify yourself and please let's keep it to questions, not to statements. Don't be bashful. Right here in the front.

I have to warn you, I am extremely nearsighted, so people in the back you're in trouble.

(Laughter)

MR. CHECCO: Thank you. Larry Checco, Checco Communications.

This is not off-topic, but I'm just curious, I have little experience with Muslim countries, but what's it like for a woman to have to go into a situation with men, as powerful as these men were or are, and get them to talk to you?

I mean, it's my understanding, and I've seen it, that they don't even look women in the

eye. So I'm interested in learning how you were able to bridge that gap.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I mean, that was something I was also concerned. I've worked a lot in Pakistan, but, I mean, that's not the same kind of country as talking to sort of Arabs from al-Qaida. And I was concerned about that at the beginning that, A, you get underestimated because you're just a woman; and B, what is said in public for the home audience and what you actually do in private when you meet someone is completely different.

So we had pictures together and I shook hands with people. I mean, I was very surprised. I wasn't expecting that at all. We had meals together. I mean, officially, some of these people, like Maqdisi, wouldn't even sort of enter a room with another woman, but as long as I was there to listen to his message and act as his mouthpiece, which is what he intended, then he was happy to sit down with me on the same couch.

MS. BALINSKY: My name is Doris Balinsky (phonetic). I'm retired. I'm just interested in the topic.

From what you say, it seems al-Qaida's still pretty powerful. The media seems to give the impression al-Qaida's on the way down and Islamic State is more powerful at the moment. Could you discuss that, please?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I think al-Qaida will always be powerful as an idea and a much more cohesive idea than Islamic State, a much more sophisticated idea than Islamic State. And as long as they have people backing them and promoting their cause who have a kind of proper theological background and are respected internationally, like the clerics in Jordan, then they're like the granddaddies and Islamic State are like kind of the kids on the block. I mean, this is probably far too trite a way to describe it, but they will always -- and because of the 9/11 attacks, I mean, in their eyes that was the greatest stunt, a terrible word to use, but the greatest thing that had ever been achieved. So they'll always have the kudos and respect which I don't think comes in the same way from plowing a van into a group of people going out on a Saturday night in London on London Bridge.

They're running a business. This for them is business. You meet these clerics, I'm not going to name particular people now, but, I mean, it's all about PR. It's all about kind of what can I associate myself with. Can I put myself out there? And the guys who have been doing it longer are

better at the PR and they know what they can get away with and what they can say and what they don't need to say in order to get hoiked off to Manhattan and put on trial. They're in a different league from the ISIS, Islamic State guys in Raqqa.

MR. RIEDEL: I would just -- I agree with all that. I would add one other thing. Bin Laden and Zawahiri were always careful what they promised, not to promise what they couldn't deliver. Baghdadi has promised what he can't deliver that, A, he's the caliph; B, the caliphate is returning; and C, the end of time is about to come.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: All of which is ridiculous.

MR. RIEDEL: Right, all of which is ridiculous. And I think Zawahiri has been smart enough to know give them enough rope, they will end up being failures, and then people will naturally gravitate back to the people who told you the right answer.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes, absolutely.

MR. RIEDEL: Sir.

MR. ROSE: Herb Rose. I'm wondering if you or anyone else has been able to determine why the U.S. Government turned down the offer of the Iranians in 2003?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I believe it was because war in Iraq was already well advanced as an idea. It hadn't yet been launched, but to go off to Iran was going after the wrong message at that time because Saddam Hussein was the focus, was the target. And the government at that time had made such an effort to connect him to al-Qaida that for Iran to hand over Osama bin Laden's family and a good chunk of the al-Qaida military council and ruling Shura outside of the military council would have not been on message.

MR. RIEDEL: Over here, the gentleman in the blue.

MR. SHERMA: Hi, I'm Veray Sherma (phonetic). There are stories that there was a Pakistani woman who was very keenly involved in tracking Osama. Is that true?

MR. RIEDEL: A Pakistani woman involved in tracking bin Laden?

MR. SHERMA: Through CIA or whatever the group that was tracking.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I don't know about that at all, I'm afraid.

MR. SHERMA: Even in the movie they showed, but she is a composite, so.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: No, I don't know. I'm afraid I don't know at all about that.

MR. RIEDEL: I would advise anyone -- you referred to the movie, I think it's *Zero Dark Thirty* or something like that. It may be a good movie. It has nothing to do with what actually happened.

(Laughter)

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: If you have any information can we talk about it afterwards?

(Laughter)

MR. SHERMA: (inaudible) another book.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Okay.

MR. RIEDEL: Over here.

SPEAKER: Hello. I am Tamoya (phonetic) from Japan. And I'm going to start reading your book just today, so please forgive me asking about this question. It may be relating to the former question about the movie, but I'm not talking about that film.

You know, there have been so many arguments so far about al-Qaida and bin Laden. So just like if you could tell me like what aspects are particularly new in your book? I mean, (inaudible) or what points would you say are particularly different from the past studies? Thank you.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I think my main aim was to listen to Arab voices and tell the story of al-Qaida as much as possible from al-Qaida people and to tell the story of Osama bin Laden's last 10 years from the perspective of the people who were with him, not from here or London or whatever. I wanted to hear their voices, their accounts because life is complicated and people do things for different reasons.

And going back to what I said right at the beginning, I was initially fascinated to know what it would have been like living with him. Did his wives agree with him? Did they all go around cheering when the attacks happened? Did they support him? Did they want to be suicide bombers? I mean, these were the questions because there was a total absence of answers from those people. It was a vacant space, so that was the aim of the book. And I guess people will have to judge whether we've succeeded or not.

MR. RAPENSKY: Hi. I'm Jack Rapensky (phonetic), unaffiliated. The people you talked to, how do they think of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed? And is he just kind of -- did they talk about him in the

past tense or what will happen when we ever decide what we're going to do with him? What impact might that have on al-Qaida?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Well, he's a fascinating, Machiavellian character because he was never in al-Qaida and he was a freelance troublemaker who came up with some crazy plots. I mean, he had been bugging bin Laden for years about the idea that had initially been put together by his nephew, Ramzi Yousef, when he bombed the World Trade Center in 1993. And Ramzi came up with the planes idea and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed thought this is a fantastic sort of way to affect maximum casualties.

Initially, when he went to see Osama in 1996 to talk about it in Tora Bora, Osama had no money and no people, no nothing. He liked the idea, but just said, I'm sorry, I can't do this now. And then after they attacked different targets, the *USS Cole* and also the African embassy bombings in 1998, money started flowing in. So Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was back up to Tora Bora and then to Kandahar saying, right, so should we go for this now? This will give you the biggest spectacular you could -- beyond your wildest imagination.

I mean, obviously, he'll never be released. I had a really interesting insight about him from James Mitchell, who everyone describes as sort of the architect of the CIA torture program, but that's not quite straight.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: But, I mean, he describes him, and he spent more time with him than anyone else since he was captured, interrogating him and waterboarding him, and he describes him as an evil Yoda. He's a very small guy, unbelievably hairy, and still intensely kind of energetic and determined that his way is the right way. And apparently, now his idea is that we will consume ourselves, we will destroy ourselves, and that -- oh, I shouldn't say -- and the Muslim world can just wait and watch us kind of fall on our own swords, and the damage has already been done. So I think he's a very, very devious and deeply evil individual.

MR. RIEDEL: To editorialize just for a minute, and the great tragedy here is he probably will never be put on a public stage --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Right, which is terrible.

MR. RIEDEL: -- right, where his evil would come through. We spend an inordinate

amount of time, both in Washington and London, talking about countering violent extremism, but one of the best ways to counter violent extremism would be to put some of the violent extremists on trial where they had to account for their actions and where they will expose themselves. I'm confident that had he been tried eight years ago, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed would have undermined his cause.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: But he would have loved that opportunity and he would love that opportunity to get up on a stage and expound about why he did this. I mean, I would slightly disagree with you on that because I think these people want an audience. They want to put their story out there. And given an audience, I'm sure he would do a pretty good job of convincing not you or me or anybody here, but there'd be lots of people who would be just, wow, this guy's got it all right.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, I think it's a pretty hypothetical question. (Laughter)

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes.

MR. RIEDEL: So we'll never know the answer to that. In the back, sir.

MR. SHULENBURGER: Hi. David Shulenburg (phonetic). Do you have a notion what's in the documents that were taken at Abbottabad that have not been released?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I haven't seen them, so I would be speculating, but I would imagine it will be more of what we have seen, which is a combination of family letters and a lot about strategy, future strategy, future attacks, future development of the al-Qaida affiliates in Yemen and other countries. I think it would be hugely important for those documents to be opened up not necessarily to public scrutiny, but to proper scrutiny. I mean, I understand from people who have seen the few, you included, that nobody has read a lot of this material. It's literally in boxes.

And given that al-Qaida is still very much a relevant force, whether or not it's having a bit of a lull at the moment, it will be there for the foreseeable future for all of us, I think it's really important to study the strategy and future plans of its original leader because Zawahiri is continuing, in his own vein, but he is continuing with that plan, using the son as his kind of adjunct and handsome young figurehead. But, I mean, why lock it all away?

But no, I don't know in detail. I think you could probably answer that question better than I.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, I don't know in detail either, but I think they would reveal several

things: a lot more about the connections between bin Laden, the Kuwaiti brothers, and their various facilitators in Pakistan. I don't think you will find the phone number of the Chief of Army Staff or something like that. I think the administration's been honest, there is no smoking gun. There wasn't somewhere in the hideout a secure telephone that you picked it up and General Kayani answered at the other end. I think that's not there. But I think a lot more of the texture of relations with Hamid Gul, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and things like would be there.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: And plans, future plans.

MR. RIEDEL: When the documents were received in the United States in the summer of 2011, the intelligence community did what it should do, which is as quickly as possible search them to see if there was ongoing plans that needed to be disrupted or information about the location of individuals that you wanted to go after. And I think anyone who looks at the pattern of drone attacks in the summer of 2011 has to say, hmm, there's an awful interesting spike here of confirmed kills. Where did all of this information suddenly come from? And I think the answer is there.

The problem is that in the intelligence community, once that quick and dirty exploitation is done, there's no follow-up to do the kinds of things that Cathy was talking about, which is study how does the organization work? What is the ethos of the organization? And what can we learn long term about how this organization operates so that we can deal with it not just today, but 10 or 20 years from now. That kind of long-term analysis is not prized in the American intelligence community. Much more important is the immediate what can you do for me tonight kind of thing.

That's why turning it over to an institution that would allow scholars to come in and look at it would, in the long term be a very big benefit to the whole business of countering violent extremism. We would know more about how violent extremism works.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: And why wouldn't you do that?

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: The material is there. It's sitting somewhere in Virginia. Why box it up and lock it away? It's crazy.

MR. RIEDEL: And whatever is in there after six years, you're not going to find the address of somebody you want to go after. You can be pretty sure by now that anyone whose address is

in there, long ago moved someplace else, so there's very little damage that would be done.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes, but as Mike Flynn, who was head of DIA at the time, as he argued, we need to plot our future strategy and we need to understand our enemy. And he had a huge legal fight to try and get more access to the documentation which he ultimately lost. But that's one point in which I agree with him, why would you not study the strategy of your enemy when you're gifted all of this material? Why would you just lock it away?

MR. RIEDEL: Exactly. More questions? Over here, this gentleman? Either one.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Yeah, I'm (inaudible). I used to work with Catholic University. I'm from Afghanistan, so we're familiar with the politics in Afghanistan and Iran. What I'm wondering about, because before that I was thinking that the Iranian government occasionally, and in case, are ready to work with al-Qaida, but not as a substantial and very ideological work because Shia and Wahabi and all of them make problem.

Also, if you look at the cases like Yemen, and even in some part of (inaudible) and Syria, there is a conflict. But what I get right now from you, it brings to me this idea that maybe you think there is a more substantial coalition and cooperation between al-Qaida and Iran, or still it's only the cooperation on particular cases and occasionally on some particular occasions? Thank you.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I think it's obviously -- ideologically the country and the organization could not be more opposed, but they have common interests. And, as I said earlier on, it's better to know where your enemy is and to get them to work with you against the greater enemy than being in conflict and not knowing what each other is doing.

But it was a fraught relationship from the people who were in Iran from al-Qaida, who I interviewed. It went up and down all the time and there was complete mutual distrust on both sides for the whole time that they were there, but common ground is found, I guess, in strange situations.

MR. UZARAN: This is Suleiman Uzaran (phonetic). I am a research scholar at George Mason, and I am studying on issues of al-Qaida and ISIS for a long time. These terrorist organizations, if they continue to inflict pain and carry out terrorist attacks, they also continue to attract new recruits. And that's why we see attacks in London and other places. Maybe some of these attacks were not really coordinated by ISIS, but claiming responsibility to help ISIS and now we are seeing a kind of repositioning

of countries in the Middle East into different paths, you know, Saudi Arabia, Egypt versus Qatar and Iran maybe.

What is your opinion about the future of al-Qaida in these developments? What will be the next step for al-Qaida in terms of emergence of al-Qaida again in the region as a group, as he indicated, or are they going to extend another rope to another organization?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I don't think al-Qaida Central, for want of a better word, is going to carry out a kind of coordinated home-based mass attack. I think those days are gone.

Right at the beginning of al-Qaida, when Osama bin Laden formed it with Abdullah Azzam, his idea was to create an idea, a base, a movement that would inspire people. They then got sidetracked and actually committed attacks by themselves, which caused a lot of argument within the Shura because a lot of the Shura members said we shouldn't be doing these attacks. We should be the inspiration behind attacks for other people to commit.

And I think we've now moved on to, as we can see in the U.K. just in the last week, to people being inspired by a movement. And I think that al-Qaida's future role, sadly, is to inspire people who are disaffected. And there's a lot to be disaffected about, as well.

Coming from London, everybody talks about what's happened in the last few days over the attack, but no one talks about why these people -- why these guys decided to get a van and plow into people on a Saturday night on London Bridge. It's because of the wars in the Middle East. It's because of the hundreds of thousands of people who have died, become refugees. It's because of the internalizing of European countries against refugees, because of travel bans, and the world is becoming a very compartmentalized place.

And I think part of the reason we wanted to write this book was to say, look, we just can't sit outside this and kind of go you're wrong, this is terrible. You need to understand where people are coming from. And I think al-Qaida's role is to inspire people who see the world from a different perspective from a Muslim, Middle Eastern, Palestinian perspective, which is not the perspective we see it from here. Does that kind of answer your question?

MR. RIEDEL: The lady in white on this side?

MS. AFZAL: Hi, I'm Madiha Afzal. I'm at the University of Maryland and also a

nonresident fellow here at Brookings, and I have a couple of questions. I'll try to be brief. The first one has to do with Carlotta Gall's book in which she actually says that a source told her that there was an ISI desk to handle Osama and you said that there were certainly elements within that, but did you receive any corroboration of a specific desk?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Nope. Nope, but I'm not critiquing or criticizing what she was told.

MS. AFZAL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: But the information I was given is that it was much more loose and it was much more organized by senior former ISI officers. There's not a desk in Amparo in ISIL headquarters that's got Osama bin Laden written on it.

MS. AFZAL: Okay.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: It doesn't work like that, but she, I'm sure, has impeccable sources.

MS. AFZAL: Thanks. And just very quickly, if you could talk a little bit about the relationship between al-Qaida in those waning years before Osama bin Laden died, and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and Mullah Omar, and what was the relationship was between them at that point?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I think with the TTP the relationship was very fraught and there was a lot of discussion with the Pakistan Taliban. There's a lot of discussion in letters between Osama and his number two in the tribal areas, Atiyah al-Rahman, who was working closely with the TTP, but very upset that they were very -- not lawless, they were just very disorganized and attacking a lot of targets in Pakistan, civilian targets, Shia targets, Ahmadi targets, whatever, which al-Qaida was not happy about.

So there was a lot of discussion about how to get the TTP under control because Osama and Atiyah and other people within al-Qaida Central felt that the TTP was taking the movement and the goal in the wrong direction.

And did you say Mullah Omar, as well, and the Taliban?

MR. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: There's one letter that Osama wrote only about two months before he died, which was released, where he's had a letter from Mullah Omar which he's absolutely delighted about because they fell out really badly because after Mullah Omar and the Taliban gave al-Qaida

sanctuary in Afghanistan, and then al-Qaida started attacking targets and then bringing all of the attention to Afghanistan and the war.

There was one final meeting at which the Mauritanian attended, along with Osama's son, Omar, between Mullah Omar and Osama. And they had fallen out so badly that Mullah Omar had been invited for lunch -- well, invited to talk about how can al-Qaida sort of calm down and stop bringing bad attention towards the Islamic State because the Islamic State was still kind of trying to grow and formalize itself. And Mullah Omar was allegedly so angry with Osama and his reluctance to back down and say, yes, yes, we'll behave ourselves and we won't do all this bad stuff, that he stomped off without having lunch and sat in a chair and Osama was sitting on the carpet, and that was the last time they ever met.

They were supposed to meet on the first day of the American war in October 2001, but that meeting didn't happen because a U.S. drone, I think, dropped something on them, on Mullah Omar's compound. But, yes, at the end of his life, Osama received a letter from Mullah Omar and he was very pleased that he'd written to send his respects and good wishes. And I think had he not been killed, he would have tried to rekindle that relationship. But luckily, they're both now dead.

MR. RIEDEL: If I could editorialize one more time. For anyone who wants to do a book project, somebody needs to write a book about Mullah Omar, one of the most important people of this century. A man who hosted Osama bin Laden, a man who figured out how to defeat the American military in Afghanistan and NATO, a man who died and for two years we didn't know he was dead. It's a remarkable story.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: You can't make this stuff up.

MR. RIEDEL: You can't make this one up. This one is too good to be true. And what we don't know is, what is really true of his story? It's amazing. We've been at war now in Afghanistan for 16 years, we don't have a single quality biography of the man who's led the war against us for most of those years. I'll stop my editorializing there.

The gentleman in the back?

MR. HAYEE: Hi, I'm Bilal Hayee from the Embassy of Pakistan. I appreciate your insight. And since I haven't had the opportunity to glimpse through the entire book, but I just wanted to ask your comment, if you had the opportunity to look into some of the documents that have been

declassified and put on a website by the DNI. This is, I think, from the collection taken from the OBL compound.

And in one of the documents that I was able to see, it talks about the position of the Pakistani regime on the war against Islam. And here, probably, the OBL himself talks about how Pakistan played the main role in defeating the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. That Pakistani regime arrested more than 800 foreign mujahideen and handed them over to America.

And then he also goes on that when the mujahideen could not find safe havens in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which were once a hospitable area to them, because Pakistani forces began a series of military operations against them in these areas, aiming to defeat them totally or at least to distract them from carrying out jihadi operations against America and NATO.

So these were the justifications of OBL to inspire and motivate his followers to wage jihad inside Pakistan against the state of Pakistan and Pakistan's military forces because, according to his view, the Pakistani state was the main impediment in furthering their cause of global jihad. So could you comment on that? Thank you.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I haven't seen those documents. I would like to see those documents, but I think some of what you say is right, that Osama and al-Qaida viewed the state of Pakistan as an enemy. And, in fact, there were several attempts in the early days of Musharraf's presidency where he was -- sorry, two attempts on his life because they saw Musharraf as doing America's bidding, signing up for the war on terror, launching attacks in Waziristan, closing down their bases in places like Shakai Valley. So, yes, Pakistan has suffered a lot from al-Qaida attacks post 9/11 and prior to 9/11.

But yes, I'd like to see those documents. I haven't seen them. Thank you.

MR. RIEDEL: The gentleman right here.

MR. BOONE: Thanks, Rob Boone from the World Bank. You mentioned that you see al-Qaida being around for some time and having some staying power, and you also mentioned some of the reasons that people are motivated to join and support it. So, in light of that and, as you said, getting the perspective of Muslims and people in the Middle East, so what would your guidance be to countries that are feeling the effects of the different checks, whether in the West or even in the region, to address this

form of violent extremism? Because you've made allusions to certain things that you don't think are productive, so what do you think would be?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: That's a huge question. I think understanding motivation is really important and engaging, and engaging with people who are pushing the al-Qaida line or pushing the theology or the clerical support. I think it's really important to reach out to those people; some of the clerics in Georgia, for example.

I mean, people all around the world, they're not officially in al-Qaida, but Osama bin Laden listened to them and quoted from them. They're sitting there in Amman and what they say is read on the Internet by a huge number of people. And I think until you can start sitting down and engaging with them about what's wrong and understanding why they believe what they do believe and addressing some of the -- I mean, I'm not in government, I'm just a journalist, but addressing some of the core issues of Palestine and Israel.

You have to kind of not put yourself in their shoes, but you have to -- rather than just fight it, you have to understand and talk to them. That's all I can say, but what am I?

MR. RIEDEL: Well, they're not bashful.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: No, they love to talk.

MR. RIEDEL: Ayman al-Zawahiri has told us endlessly why he "hates us." And it is all about Israel, all about Palestine, about perceived Western injustices to the Islamic world.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I mean, did anyone see -- I don't actually know if it's a genuine video, but there was a video of the Palestinian girl who was shot the other day and she was shot by I don't know if it was Israeli Defense Forces, but anyhow, she was shot and people were shouting at her as she was lying injured on the ground. And this is all videoed. And she died; she's 14 the day after.

If I'm a young Muslim man or woman watching that on the Internet, you can begin to understand why people get so angry. And there's no response to that. But I'm not at all kind of vindicating what people do, I just think we need to understand better.

MR. RIEDEL: As we're both saying, if we want to know the answer to the question, why do they hate us, they've told us. We don't seem to want to receive the message. It doesn't mean you have to endorse their view or their objectives, but there's no mystery as to why we have Islamic

extremists and a lot of people who are willing to support them.

I want to raise one other question, as well. There's another country in this mix that we haven't really talked about, but which is Osama bin Laden's homeland. You've talked to members of the family, some of whom now have gone back and are living in Saudi Arabia. What are their living conditions like? I'm sure they're pretty carefully monitored by Saudi authorities, but have the bin Laden family been rehabilitated or are parts of it still beyond the pale? How are the bin Ladens now treated inside the kingdom?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: If you're talking about the kind of Osama bin Laden --

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: -- bit of the family, which is completely separate from the larger bin Laden corporation, and brothers and sisters who had nothing at all to do with al-Qaida? The family have been split, so basically the four wives and his eldest daughter, Fatima, who's lost two husbands, one of whom is here, they are in Jeddah and they have been rehabilitated. They are looked after by the family, who gives them accommodation and money, but they have a very, very limited life. Fatima is not -- because her husband is the first husband that died, and the second one is on a life sentence here in Colorado, she can't leave the house. Her children can't go to school, which is more for cultural reasons than anything else because she's on her own.

They're not short of money at all and, in some ways, their life hasn't changed, the women, because they've always lived behind closed doors, hidden away, their views are not understood. Nobody is interested in their views or what they have to say. So they've just been transplanted from one compound to another one, but no longer with any threat because he's gone.

And most sons, excluding Hamza, now live in Doha, in Qatar, in quite a bizarre cul-de-sac, which I've been to, where they've been put together. They have six different houses. There's lots of different sons and they all have children and families, but they've been put together with Saddam Hussein's wife. She lives in another house around the corner, and Yasser Arafat's daughter until recently lived in a house.

And there's a sheikh, an Egyptian sheikh -- his name I can't remember -- but he's called the Sheikh of Death. And they all live in West Bay, near to the Pearl, in Doha, in government houses

which are given to them rent free, with nice cars and the shopping's done for them. They're doing quite well. I think they're having a better time than the women in Jeddah.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, that's a community association that we really want to get inside of and know more about. (Laughter)

I think we have time for one more question. All the way in the back?

MR. ADRAYBAH: Hi, I'm Gabriel Adraybah (phonetic). I'm a recent graduate of Georgetown University. As a wrap-up question, I guess, since we're the Center of 21st Century Security and Intelligence, you mention that Iran and al-Qaida have some common interests, and I believe they share some contacts, namely the Taliban.

What is your take on the future of the relationship between al-Qaida and the Taliban? Do you see the Taliban eventually giving up their ties to al-Qaida to gain international respectability? You know, Iran has contact, Russia has, Rumania has contacts. So what is your take on that, and is that a way to weaken al-Qaida or are there other ways?

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: I'm not an expert on the Taliban at all. I studied them in as far as their historical relationship with al-Qaida, but I think the Taliban at the moment are very weakened because they've had their leader -- well, one leader died and we didn't know he was dead, and then the next one was taken out by an American drone in Balochistan last year. This year?

MR. RIEDEL: Last year.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Last year. And the new leader is a very old-school member of the Taliban. I'm not sure if I'm qualified to speak about it, really.

What I believe, and I don't know this based on any interviews, is that the Taliban views the whole al-Qaida/Osama bin Laden period of residency as the worst element of their history because it destroyed the Islamic Emirate. Al-Qaida came in like a magpie and took the place to pieces, so I can't imagine in the long-term that the Taliban would want to continue that relationship.

But that then doesn't take account of organizations like the Haqqani network, which kind of are in the middle. So I don't feel qualified to really answer your question, I'm afraid.

MR. RIEDEL: I want to thank you very much, Cathy. I believe this is the first book event in the States --

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Yes.

MR. RIEDEL: -- for "The Exile". And I understand you've graciously agreed to sign books at the desk outside, so I urge all of you to get a copy. You really only scratched the surface in the last hour and a half. There's a lot more to understand and to learn and to think about in this book. Thank you very much, again.

MS. SCOTT-CLARK: Thank you. (Applause)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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Expires: November 30, 2020