

Ten points to help face our nightmare

By GORDON SMITH

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Remember Adolf Hitler? He laid out his plans for a preceding generation, but few paid much attention until very late in the day.

Osama bin Laden is being equally direct. That he perverts Islam is largely irrelevant. He uses Islam and he rallies significant numbers of believers to his views. This is more than opportunism, more than using religion to garner support for a political or military objective.

It is worthwhile spending a little time on the statement he released the day the attacks on Afghanistan began. For those who still question whether he and his network were *really* behind this attack, he surely resolves that problem. His pride and his desire to provoke an American response that, in turn, will provoke believers, especially Arabs, to rise up and fight the United States are evident. There is no reason to think his master plan is not unfolding as he conceived it.

Mr. bin Laden makes clear that the plight of the Palestinians and the pitiful state of Iraqi children -- the result of a U.S.-led embargo of that country -- are the bases of his call to arms. He says "every Muslim should rush to defend his religion." U.S. policies have divided the world into two regions, one evil and the other Godly, he says.

On Tuesday, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, a spokesman for the al-Qaeda network, made more explicit another important grievance: the perverse role of the U.S. and its friends in Saudi Arabia. He also made a more explicit call for attacking U.S. interests throughout the world. But the emphasis is still that, against the U.S., "the battle will continue to be waged on its territory until it leaves our lands, stops its support for the Jews, and lifts the unjust embargo on the Iraqi people."

We can be sure that the 11,000 or so people who have been trained in Afghanistan are in position around the world. We have no reason to doubt those numbers. What has been unfolding since Sept. 11 is exactly according to the bin Laden plan. The people in the network he has established are prepared to act. "There are thousands of the Islamic

nation's youths who are eager to die just as the Americans are eager to live," his spokesman said.

What conclusions can be drawn?

1. The United States is not exaggerating the threat against it.
2. The war against Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda will be the United States' highest priority for a long time.
3. Alliances are changing -- NATO has a new raison d'être and opportunities exist to bring Russia closer to the West.
4. Mr. bin Laden and his associates want to use U.S. attacks to mobilize Muslims around the world.
5. While there are enormous dangers, to the stability of Pakistan and India, for example, if the conflict widens, there is no alternative to a military response.
6. We must get on with establishing a Palestinian state and supporting it, closing the refugee camps in the process.
7. This must be done in a way that assures Israel's security.
8. Something must be done about Iraq -- I don't know what -- which remains a real threat, but where the level of human suffering is intolerable.
9. A "Marshall Plan" for Afghanistan must be prepared and put in place once the Taliban are gone.
10. We must continue to promote other values and objectives -- poverty reduction, universal primary education, democracy, human rights and free media, for all these attack the roots of terrorism.

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