



## THE NEXT BIN LADEN?

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**WELCOME/MODERATOR:**

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**SPEAKERS:**

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CHRIS BOUCEK: Good afternoon and welcome to the Carnegie Endowment. I'm Chris Boucek, part of the Middle East Program here and I'm very excited to be welcoming Jarret and Brian to be talking about what should be a fascinating topic, The Role of Abu Yahya al-Libi so far. So Jarret is going to speak first for about 15 or 20 minutes and then Brian will give some comments.

Jarret is currently at North Dakota State University where he teaches about counter terrorism in addition to other things, consulting and what not. He is the author of Global Jihadism, Theory and Practice and was the first Director of Research at the Combating Terrorism Center at Westpoint.

Brian was also recently at Westpoint, also Director of Research at the Combating Terrorism Center and recently started at the New America Foundation. So we're very excited to have him much closer.

So Jarret, please begin.

JARRET BRACHMAN: Thank you everybody. I know Fargo, North Dakota is a hotbed of counter terrorism research and analysis. We're actually trying to make it such. It's my hometown and it's good to be in a heat wave here. It was about 45 below a few -- how is the microphone level? Does that work?

So I've been musing about Abu Yahya al-Libi for a long time and Chris and I had been talking a lot about who he is, what he represents. And at first I started ringing his bell I guess around 2006. I mean, it was an interesting story. We'll get into it when he escaped from Bagram in 2005. He was really a nobody. He was being put out on peripheral media organizations. He wasn't really coming out until 2006 in *al Sahab*, which is al Qaeda's official

media outlet. And so I think people thought he was a curiosity. He was a novelty. He was one of the four who spoke more in some of the debut videos.

But by 2006 it became clear to me that this guy was different, fundamentally, I thought, than the rest of the al Qaeda boys who are the talking heads. And so I started saying, "He's a pendent. He's a warrior. He's a scholar. He's an artist. He's whatever." And I got a little criticism at first saying he is not as important. What are your metrics? How do you assess that you as an intellectual -- you know the saying if all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail. Well, as an intellectual, I see intellectuals who are budding intellectuals in these guys. And so I had to think for some time about whether or not this guy lived up to the hype that I was giving him.

And other people challenged me saying, "Am I actually amplifying him by praising him as much as I was?" And so this is a constant struggle, I think, we face in our community trying to assess these guys' importance without giving them exactly the credibility that they need. And, in fact, that's what happened with Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. He cited a report that Brian and I had worked pretty closely on as proof that he was still the most important thinker within al Qaeda – which is weird.

So there are a lot of postmodern twists and turns to al Qaeda's media strategy. So I'm going to try to talk a little bit about that.

In September of 2008 there was a video featuring a guy who was using the name Shaykh Atia Atallah. It turns out this is not Shaykh Atia Atallah, or so some of us think. But what got my attention was you see the *al Sabab* logo here in the lower right hand corner. Do you see something else in this video? This is a still from a video. There is a coffee mug

on the guy's desk and it's got the *Al Sabab* media logo on it. And I thought, well, this is really, really strange. Why would al Qaeda's official media organization emblazon their logo on coffee mugs and then feature it prominently on the desk of one of their leaders?

Well, shortly thereafter, you saw Abu Yahya al-Libi giving a talk again with a microphone with the *al Sabab* logo. So what you see here are two things. One is that al Qaeda has adopted their media organization's logo as their official logo. And, two, I think they imagine themselves like a new al Jazeera in that formality. And I think Abu Yahya al-Libi was the face of this transition. And I had been arguing for some time now that al Qaeda has transformed from a global terrorist organization that used the media into a global media organization that uses terrorism. While the recent events suggest that al Qaeda's back in the terrorism business, as well. So I think the pendulum swings back and forth.

But I think there is a fundamental transition, say around 2005, when you have al Qaeda's senior command being totally marginalized in Afghanistan because you have the rise of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq. And he's getting all of the media attention. Zarqawi and his friends have to figure out how to make themselves more relevant, so they start talking more.

And it just so happens that in 2005, Abu Yahya al-Libi escapes from our custody at Bagram base in Afghanistan. Him and three other buddies, these guys -- it is a great escape and they actually detail it minute by minute in a two part video series. And they transcribed it and published the transcript in English and Arabic. And, I mean, this is the stuff movies are made of. These guys are hiding in bails of wheat. They knock on people's doors and some people are against them and some people are for them. And they're traversing at night

and helicopters and planes flying over. So it's this wild escape plan. But somehow they made it out. They got to Kabul. They hooked up with some Taliban folks and got passed back to al Qaeda.

So this was the first time that the world had heard of Abu Yahya al-Libi. But he has a long history of being involved in jihadist activities. One of the things I thought was most interesting -- first he is a Libyan. Date of birth is -- people say he is somewhere in his late 30s to mid 40s. We don't have a date of birth down that I have seen that I believe. He was a pretty thoughtful student in college. He was very interested in science, engineering. He really enjoyed studying categories and trying to assess how things fit together. So you can see he enjoys puzzles, it seems.

And he eventually got to Afghanistan, joined up with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, was sent to Mauritania to get some formal religious training. Now, this is something that people debate in my field because al Qaeda has never been clear about the extent to his formal religious training. And so, of course, everybody and their dog in al Qaeda goes by the label of Sheikh. I think he's got the most religious credentials of most of the talking heads that we've seen.

And so, in fact, he has kind of become the jurisprudential police chief for al Qaeda. I think Mike Shroyer called him their Sharia pit bull or something to that effect. So he's the one who keeps al Qaeda in line and he does this from a religious jurisprudential standpoint and he's the one who came out almost second to Zarqawi most rabidly against Sayyid Imam Sharif, Dr Fottle [sp] who is a prominent previous jihadist who renounced al Qaeda.

So by 2005 we come to understand who this Abu Yahya al-Libi is thanks to al Qaeda

media. But again, like I said, he wasn't featured prominently in al Qaeda's big media organization, *al Sahab*. It was coming out of this peripheral media organization, *Labaik* Media. And so one of the things you see here is the making, arguably of Abu Yahya al-Libi, the branding of him. Think like any corporation tries to brand a new product you have to debut, you have to roll out this new line. And so, starting in late 2005 you have a series of videos from *Labaik* where you show Abu Yahya al-Libi firing a Kalashnikov. You show him giving Eid khutbah and out there, wind blowing in his hair and he's got 50 guys who are hanging on his every word. So he's a fighter. He's a romantic. They start publishing some of his previous poetry, some of his essays.

I mean, you start to see that this is a very comprehensive man. This isn't just a guy who was sent out there to go kill. I mean, he was on the Sharia Council for the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. He is a thoughtful and smart religious guy as they are painting him. You see him sitting here with a guy who is flanking him to his right side almost in every video from 2005 forward, named Abdullah Ashami. This is a guy I hadn't thought of but he's right next to Abu Yahya al-Libi, one of his Bagram escapees. It turns out that I think Abu Yahya al-Libi had been grooming him to be the next Abu Yahya al-Libi and he's kind of served as the lap dog, I think, for Abu Yahya al-Libi. He was always there right at his side.

So you start to see Abu Yahya al-Libi on these various poses. Here he is instructing tactical training which I don't think he has an ability to instruct. But everything comes to a head in November and December of 2005 when he releases a letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Now, if you know there are three letters that were written from al Qaeda's senior command to Zarqawi. One was from Zawahiri. And that one was published by the

Combating Terrorism Center. It was a desperate plea for money, for information, for news. Al Qaeda was saying, "Brother Zarqawi, we know you are doing great things in Iraq according to the news. You are also killing a whole lot of people. Could you stop that? And by the way, I have written a lot of books. I am really important." This is what Zawahiri was saying. "And we feel irrelevant. Could you send us a couple thousand dollars? Because we are broke."

Well, that had no impact. Zarqawi kept going. In November, Abu Yahya al-Libi puts a direct letter, publishes it online, I think 26 pages or something. And this is "Dear Mujahid Shaykh, you are the best in the world, but there are a few things that I need to remind you of." And he gives kind of a lecture to Zarqawi. And he says, first, the jihadist movement has been embattled whenever it commits crimes of excess. You kill too many people, you get too loud, you get too ambitious, you over extend. He doesn't come out and say this is what you're doing, but he implies it pretty heavily.

Second, he says the Jihadist movement is always strongest when it consults with one another. And this was one of Zawahiri's complaints. He said be careful who you surround yourself with to Zarqawi. Abu Yahya al-Libi says the same thing. You need good advisors. And this is a trend or a theme that we see running through Abu Yahya al-Libi's writings and his action is that he surrounds himself with similarly thoughtful people and bounces ideas. He tries to be as transparent in his thinking process as possible.

Third, he says communication is key. You need to explain to the people what it is you're doing, why you are doing it, how you are doing it. And this is really rooted in an approach pioneered by Abdullah Azzam, the godfather of global jihadism, you could say.

And fourth, he talks about the importance of strategy and doing things sequentially. And then, again, you see Abu Yahya al-Libi's mind. There is a certain order. There is the right path that one needs to traverse. And so this letter in concert with a third letter that was sent from Shaykh Atia Atallah who I believe to be Atia Abdulrahman al-Libi, another Libyan who seems to be a partner in crime with Abu Yahya al-Libi. Seemed to get Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to actually back down.

So we have, within months of him escaping, being a no name guy in the open source world to lecturing the greatest mujahid on earth, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the one who was actually up to something, about how to go about his job, which a fascinating position for Abu Yahya al-Libi to insert himself in.

By 2006 you start seeing the official *al Sahab* media coming out. And here we have him sitting on the floor. He is humble. They introduce him as Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Libi. And what do you see behind him? A laptop and a rifle. And this is important. Everything that al Qaeda does in its videos, I think, is critically symbolically important. And so what they are reminding you is that in 2000 Abu Yahya al-Libi was a web master for the Taliban. In 2000, I was still trying to figure out how to use e-mail. He was making web sites, uploading news, content, and keeping stories going for the Taliban's website. So he's an innovative thinker. He's youthful. He's charismatic. People respect him.

So they are really branding him as a guy for the new millennia, Bin Laden 2.0 you can say, the upgrade. And I think this is an important step.

Well, as you move through 2006, 2007 you start to see just what this guy is capable of and his role that he plays for al Qaeda. So I think some of the most important positions

or things, contributions that he has provided to al Qaeda is he served as -- you can call him the religious mapmaker for al Qaeda. He's a jihadist cartographer in the sense that he is mapping the typography of global jihadism. He is saying that movements historically have gone awry because they have gotten off the right path. I'm going to articulate what that path looks like. And then I'm going to make sure that everyone stays on that path and I'm going to scold you if you are off that path. He has been very aggressive against Saudi mainstream [INAUDIBLE]. So you can call him the religious policeman.

And he is obsessed with purity, religious purity. And we'll talk about this but his argument is that Islam is being diluted from within by the embracing of non-Islamic concepts, nationalism, using the word resistance instead of jihad. Anytime you embrace a concept that is not doctrinally Islamic, what he says is you're introducing Trojan horses into Islam that will allow the west, the Iran Corporation specifically, he says, to come in and take over Islam from within. Mainstream moderate Islam is just a fabrication. Democracy is nothing more than a ruse to take over Islam, insurgency being waged by the west within Islam. And so he spends most of his time trying to point out anytime there is semantic or terminological insurgencies, I guess you can say.

The irony of this is that he has embraced the same approach. And he spent a lot of his writings identifying religious concepts and then trying to gut them of meaning, replace them with his own meaning and then remake Islam from the inside out in his own image, arguably. So I think those are some important roles. Another one is you can call him the global jihadist movement's cheerleader and chief. He makes sure he hits every major field of jihad: Somalia, Chechnya, Algeria. He goes through anywhere where he feels that al Qaeda

is being under attack or he wants to point more attention to. He will write a thoughtful treatise about it.

And I think he serves as al Qaeda's investigative reporter. But he's always the first on the scene when it comes to intellectual issues. And we'll talk more about that when I get into some of his writings. About how much time? A few more minutes? Okay.

Let me show you a little bit more imagery from some of the early videos here. Here is him in night vision. They are on a raid. So he has to get his operational credentials checked. It was silly. He did nothing and then he gave a sermon at the end praising the three Afghan soldiers that they killed and set their Jeep on fire. Great operation.

This was fascinating here. This is a photo shoot that al Qaeda released or *Labaik* media released of Abu Yahya al-Libi teaching, providing kind of a classroom session. And it's important I think because everyone of these photos is put out for a specific reason. Here is showing he is relaxed. He's a man of the people. He gets along well with the troops. He is humble. He sits and eats with the -- he is the kind of general that will come down and walk through the camp and be with his soldiers. And I think that's very heartening for a lot of people who are logging on the internet. And they want to be one of these guys sitting around eating with the great Abu Yahya al-Libi.

This was an interesting photo to be added to this mix. It was a guy making bagels, which we laughed about. I blogged about this and joked. But, what I think is most interesting is that for those of you who know who Abu Laith al-Libi is, it's arguably him. And so the fact that they obscured his face - so he attended Abu Yahya al-Libi's teaching but they didn't show that the great general of al Qaeda, Abu Laith al-Libi had attended.

They let you think that he may have been the guy but they don't confirm it.

Well, this is something that gets replayed in the recent Eid video that was released where you have Abu Yahya al-Libi at the end after he gives his talk, people come up and hug him, which is customary. He has done that a lot. And then you see this image intentionally blurred. And who are you left to think this might be? Would Osama bin Laden actually attend Abu Yahya al-Libi's Eid? Who knows? They don't confirm or deny it. They just trickle it out there and let you believe it.

So there's I guess this consistency to his videos where somebody, be it him or his handlers, are trying to make you think that very important people take him seriously. You should, too.

These are some of his writings. The one I'm just going to concentrate on real quickly here is he talks about the issue of human shielding within Islam. It's called al-tatarus. And he says this concept of altatarus, or the ability to kill another Muslim because your enemy is using them as a human shield. He spends the first 20 pages of this essay going through, systematically, the Quran and Hadith justifications saying it is okay in these circumstances to kill other Muslims if the west or if your adversary has used them as a human shield. But then he says something which I think embodies all of his writings and his entire approach. He rejects the premise. He says the fact is that warfare has changed. The nature of the adversaries we face today and the nature of the wars that they are waging against us have fundamentally changed. Therefore, everything I just wrote about that limits our ability or constrains our ability to kill Muslims is irrelevant. He wipes the slate clean in terms of Islamic limitations or al Qaeda's ability to do what they do. And he rewrites it or at

least he suggests that he's the one in a position to rewrite it. So I think his ego, despite this humility that he projects, is massive.

Recently all of his statements have been compiled and put out here on the forums. And this guy I can't tell you how popular he is on the al Qaeda forums. And one of the reasons, and I'll stop on this, is that not only does he approach criticism by rejecting the premise, but sometimes he'll actually up the ante. And so, for instance, al Qaeda came under a lot of attack for killing Muslims in Algeria saying that they were killing innocent Muslims. He said not only did we kill these guys, first of all I reject the premise. They weren't Muslims. They were in the wrong place meaning they shouldn't have been there meaning that they were probably allied with the crusaders meaning that they are apostates. But we're going to kill more of them and, in fact, you should, too. And if you are not killing Muslims, or these apostate Muslims, then you are not doing your duty to Islam.

So he doesn't just try to tiptoe around criticism much like Zawahiri does, he actually embraces it and turns it back on you, triples it. And so I think that's why the movement just loves him because he is tough. He's macho. He's intellectual. This guy's got every box checked from al Qaeda's perspective.

So I will maybe stop there and maybe I'll let Chris ask me why he gave us six strategies for how to defeat al Qaeda so we can get to Brian's comments.

BRIAN FISHMAN: Great. Thanks. First off, I just want to thank Chris and Carnegie and Jarret for having me up here. It is fun to be here with Jarret. We worked together for a long time and it's good to be able to comment; take my shots at him first. In general I think that Jarret is right on that Abu Yahya al-Libi has been positioned as a very

unique kind of leader in al Qaeda and Jarret explained why; mostly because he has been positioned both as a religious leader, as a cheerleader, but also as an on the ground commander and that's all been done in the media. But what I think makes Abu Yahya al-Libi interesting is that al Qaeda has changed.

Now we framed this talk today in terms of who was going to be the next Bin Laden. So I'm going to reject the premise for a moment, much like Abu Yahya al-Libi, and say that al Qaeda has changed fundamentally since Bin Laden became its leader. And so the next Bin Laden really may not have that much in common with Bin Laden. It's worth looking back and say, "What brought Bin Laden to the forefront the way that he was?" And I think you can look at a variety of things, most important, obviously is circumstance, that he was there in this very unique time period with the anti Soviet Jihad. You have this relationship with Abdullah Azzam, which gave him tremendous entree. But really, critically, in that period after the anti-Soviet jihad he had connections in Saudi Arabia and he had finances that enabled him to sort of separate himself from others and provide the back bone for a wide variety of organizations where he was a touch stone and could be a touchstone for groups that were operating all over the place even if they were operating independently. He was still somebody that had access to resources that they did not have.

And I think, though, when you look at al Qaeda today it's operating very differently. And this is where I will quibble with Jarret a little bit. He talked about al Qaeda being a media organization and now sort of potentially swinging back towards being a terrorist organization. But I really think when you look at the way al Qaeda's organized today the al Qaeda central that we think about in Afghanistan and Pakistan serves as a media

organization and as a consulting organization. It's McKinsey plus Time Warner. And the military aspects of the organization come in with the affiliated groups, whether it is al Qaeda in Yemen or al Qaeda in Iraq or less so in Algeria, I think. But also in particular with the universe of Pakistani-based, what we call Taliban groups. And these are the organizations that I think are particularly worrisome today. And we see that with what seems like this very sophisticated intelligence operation with Abu Juhanna al Corsanni. We see it with the Beitulla Massoud Group's attempt on the Barcelona subway. We see it with a lot of the other organizations even here in the United States where Nigel [INAUDIBLE], David Headley, these guys were connected not at least what we know thus far directly to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, but to LET, to Jaish Muhammad, to these other groups that sort of sit around al Qaeda but have their own bases. That's where the muscle is coming from as we move forward.

And so the qualities that we're going to see, I think, in the next sort of supreme figure in al Qaeda if there is going to be a single supreme figure is going to be someone that has a couple qualities. One, they need to be telegenic. They need to be smart. Abu Yahya al-Libi does those. They need to be able to defend the movement writ large from a tax on it. And I'm glad Jarret mentioned that. This is critical. And it separates somebody like Abu Yahya al-Libi from, certainly, the sort of the people that really lack credibility. And Adam Gudan or someone like this that recently comes out and says al Qaeda never kills Muslims on the same day that 80 people are killed in a market.

This is a very big distinction. And you are exactly right, Jarret. Al Qaeda is at its most dangerous when it defends whatever it does whether it's killing people that it shouldn't

be killing, whether it's killing Muslims. It's most dangerous when it stands its ground. And we need to keep that in mind because the audience for their activities is not the west primarily. We have to understand it's the same thing with this attack in Detroit. Some folks have said that this was a failed attack because the plane didn't go down but that is from a western perspective. From the perspective of the primary audience, I think, which is Muslims that al Qaeda is attempting to recruit and attempting to reach out to, they show determination, continued capability to come close and a reason to keep fighting. And when you think about it that way these sorts of things are successful. And I think Abu Yahya al-Libi communicates with those groups very well.

The last thing -- and the reason I think Abu Yahya al-Libi is particularly powerful, is two things. One, he is often quoted by the affiliate organizations. He is clearly seen as very important to AQIM. It quotes him quite a bit; Quotes him in Somalia. It's not even really al Qaeda. They use him. He is clearly influential in those groups and because of his background and his presence in the *Labaik* media which was much more closely associated with the Taliban than al Qaeda, he's got very good ties in with a variety of Taliban groups and that is important at a time when Taliban groups -- Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban doesn't even come close to describing the complexity of this.

But Abu Yahya al-Libi I think is well positioned to communicate with those organizations and variety of those groups and lead them intellectually. And this is where al Qaeda projects power especially in Pakistan. And we have to understand that that's how al Qaeda is going to project power is intellectually by leading existing organizations down the road to do the kinds of activities that it wants them to do. And Abu Yahya al-Libi is well

positioned to do that.

I would say, however, and I will throw some sand into the mix so we can have some debate, which is that Abu Yahya al-Libi doesn't stand on his own and you still see, I think, that Zawahiri has a more prominent role in the organization and is still the most important second to Osama bin Laden. Zawahiri recently released a long book criticizing the Pakistani constitution which we can talk about. But in it, he thanks Shaykh Atia Atallah and he thanks Abu Yahya al-Libi for their advice and support. That was nice of him especially because there are rumors that Zawahiri and al-Libi have had conflicts in the past. But I think it also demonstrates that when push comes to shove Zawahiri is still closer to the center of the circle than somebody like al-Libi and al-Libi still revolves in an advisory role.

And I'll stop there.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thank you very much. I think this is great. I've wanted to do an event to highlight this for a long time so I can't think of anyone better to come out and talk about this than Jarret who is actually in the process of writing a book about Abu Yahya al-Libi. So this is fabulous. I think this whole notion of how he's been rolled out and how he has been presented and framed, I think wearing the camouflage jacket and some kind of Kalashnikov, and visually I thought that was fascinating in addition to the engineering bit which we have talked about before.

I do want to get you to talk a little bit about the six easy steps. So before we get into questions I hope you can do that real quick.

JARRET BRACHMAN: I'll do two things. Real quick, I just want to respond to two things that popped up when Brian was talking. I thought Brian's comments were awesome.

So I think one of the biggest differentiations between al Qaeda's high command represented by Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Yahya al-Libi is that he admits mistakes. And I think what you were talking about, when al Qaeda stands its ground. And I think when they are honest in standing their ground. What you were saying about when Gudan comes out, it just sounds like propaganda. And Zawahiri, for instance, he was like: "we have been accused of killing innocent Muslims. We don't kill Muslims and if we did oops then they shouldn't have been there and God will sort it out." He is all over the place.

When Abu Yahya al-Libi comes out, he says, "I screwed up". I said that these two guys were in heaven and who am I to presume that I know that they are in heaven. The movement called me on it. I was wrong. You guys were right. Thanks for keeping me straight. And I think for the global movement -- and that is where I move into my second point, is that that they love Abu Yahya al-Libi. They respect and reveres Ayman al-Zawahiri but I think that's a fundamental difference in how the global movement. I think you're right. He totally serves as an advisory capacity to al Qaeda's senior leadership. I don't think he's calling the shots right now and maybe it's better to call him the next Bin Laden less the next Ayman al-Zawahiri. And maybe that's the role that Atia Abdulrahman al-Libi is going to be playing. So those were two comments back to Brian.

So what Chris was talking about was something that Abu Yahya al-Libi did that just blew my mind. I couldn't believe that this guy would have done this. He's in the course of an interview in September, the 9/11 anniversary interview in 2007. And his al Qaeda interviewer says if the Americans were going to defeat al Qaeda ideologically, they are going to try to degrade our movement and wage in a successful war of ideas. How would they go

about doing it?

And Abu Yahya al-Libi says well there are six easy steps they could use. And he starts going through it. And the interviewer says, "but, brother, are you sure you want to reveal these strategies to the United States? What if they used them against us?" And he says, "Well, look, the Americans are already using these in an ad hoc kind of fashion. They fund certain things in Egypt. They support things and this and that but they haven't put it all together yet. So I'm going to put it all together for them and demonstrate that I'm the best counter terrorism analyst that the west has ever had. I'm going to stick my thumb in their eye. They haven't come up with this strategy yet. But, two, I'm going to inoculate the global movement from these efforts by identifying them I'm going to make sure that they can't hurt us in the future because we're all aware of them."

And so from then forward he's always like there is another one. And this is why I was saying he's the investigative reporter for al Qaeda. So real quick, the six steps: Amplifying back trackers. This is something anybody who used to be a big voice in al Qaeda, the global Jihadist movement that then renounces al Qaeda hurts them. He says it hurts them. It hurts them really bad. I call it my barking dogs metric. However many barking dogs are yapping in response to something is an indicator of how vulnerable they feel. The Sayyid Imam Sharrif recantations, revisions, Zawahiri wrote a book about it in response, did two videos about it. Abu Yahya al-Libi did a video and wrote a book about it. All of these guys responded to it. He says this hurts and it does.

Second, fabrication and exaggeration. Anytime the west can either make up lies, he says, or just exaggerate that which al Qaeda has already done to make it look bad really hurts

them. The best quote I can think of is a quote that says, "when your adversary is busy shooting himself in the foot don't stop him." This is I think the mantra that al Qaeda understands as the case and thank God, they would say, America stopped them from shooting themselves in the foot based on a number of things they would argue.

Number three, supporting anybody who renounces or issues religious rulings against al Qaeda, it does some damage. I think the most prominent guy who has hurt them from the mainstream community would be Yusuf Qaradawi. I think this guy carries more weight than anybody else but they are careful with him, too. I haven't seen many head-on attacks of him.

BRIAN FISHMAN: I think they think he's dangerous.

JARRET BRACHMAN: They know he's popular.

So, four, introducing new voices. Insurgency is fundamentally predicated on eliminating distinctions between you and the host population you are trying to blend into. So al Qaeda understands that the more distinctions and shades of gray that are introduced within Islam the worse it is for al Qaeda. Salafism, the same thing. They want to eliminate these distinctions, blend in to allow themselves to look like pious Muslims.

Five, anytime when we issue this KSM photo of him with the hair, we make him look [Khaled Sheikh Mohamed] terrible. This is useful for us and bad for al Qaeda. He says anytime you can symbolically degrade senior jihadist leaders, Abu Faraj al-Libi had a pretty horrible photo that was released to the press, too.

And then promoting these distinctions. In my book I talk about Afghani Salafis and Bin bazi Salafis and Manhali Salafis[34:34]. This drives them through the roof. They don't

want to deal with that. There is only one Salafism and it's al Qaeda Salafism, they would argue.

So the fact that he would announce these I think was a strategic blunder. I think it was out of ego. I think he was trying to be a little too cute. And I think it's a really great strategy that, like he said, we are kind of doing but we haven't put all of the pieces together into a robust and systematic approach. So I think we should if we are not.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thank you. I think that just kind of goes to underscore why it is so amazing that Abu Yahya is the terrorist nobody knows about or the leader that nobody is talking about, which I think is really kind of fascinating, that he has laid out a whole plan for what you would think someone would be doing and isn't doing.

With that I would like to turn it over to questions and discussion. I would like to remind everyone if you could just please introduce yourself and wait for the microphone to come to you. But also to leave it to a question, not a big, long comment. And who would like to start? Lee Ann. I think we will take some groups of questions so, in the front.

AUDIENCE: Hi, Lee Ann Kennedy with Rand Corporation. I just wanted to ask you Jarret and maybe Brian, too, if you would elaborate a little bit on the implications of the generational change in al Qaeda. If we look at Abu Yahya al-Libi as an example of generational change within al Qaeda what that means for al Qaeda's relationships with other groups, specifically with the Taliban, if we look at Mullah Omar as perhaps an older generation and the Masud Clan as a newer generation, what are the implications for the larger levels of collaboration and cooperation between the two of them?

Secondarily, if I might, what do you think, Jarret, about what Abu Yahya al-Libi will

do, if anything, to respond to his brother's recantation with the [36:40] group? Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. My name is -- I'm a Japanese journalist who's [INAUDIBLE]. I have a question about relationship with between Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Yahya al-Libi. I'm talking about Zawahiri and his original followers from Egypt. Are they doing good or are they frustrated with the new potential leader?

AUDIENCE: Hamid from [INAUDIBLE] Quantico. I have two questions for Mr. Brachman and one for Mr. Fishman. I'm not here to start any mix, but according to some speculations, particularly in the Middle East, maybe there is no longer any historical leader in al Qaeda as Zawahiri and Bin Laden. Do you think you are trying to put human face on global terror organization to keep public alert?

Second question, please. Regardless politics, differences between Shia, Sunni or the four Sunni schools, how would you categorize Muslims in general? I mean how many groups of Muslims? To help people in the U.S. or in the west to understand who are those Muslims to not mix between Muslims and radicals.

And for Mr. Fishman, you just said that al Qaeda leadership get to their positions according to their skills. If they are smart and they work hard, if you compare it with Middle Eastern so called secular regime they look like they are much better because those regimes used nepotism.

Thank you very much.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thank you. Gentlemen.

JARRET BRACHMAN: So I'm just going to pick and choose at a few things. Lee Ann, hi. Generational shift, I think, totally. I guess I don't have anything brilliant to say

about the relationship with other groups. I think Brian is probably a lot better at that than I am. But I think as we have talked a lot about just his resonance on the forums versus -- I think it's just qualitatively different than how Zawahiri or Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, the old guard, resonates. So I don't have anything profound to say about that. I agree. I think that's a very important point that I didn't emphasize enough.

On his brother, many people don't realize this and it's shocking and appalling to me. And I was going to bring this up and I didn't have time. So, the senior leadership of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group has been detained or imprisoned for some time now in Libya. And there's been a recent effort to get these guys to come out and renounce their previous activities. And, so they wrote a 430 something page book— the senior four or five leaders of the LIFG. One of these senior leaders is Abu Yahya al-Libi's older brother. And so think about this. You have a guy who is poised, potentially, to be the next Bin Laden out there, trying to run al Qaeda. And then you have his older brother who is renouncing everything that he had ever stood for when it comes to violent Jihad. And this is not a story. It's a story that we've been talking about for a while, but think about it. There are so many angles here. The older brother wagging his finger, it's not resonating. I think in large part this is because we don't understand that his older brother is in prison. We don't understand the historical relationship between al Qaeda and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. We don't understand a lot of dimensions to this.

And so until we can understand and build that foundation, we can't possibly appreciate the gravity of this situation. So I think, thanks for reminding me about that.

On the relationship between Zawahiri and Abu Yahya al-Libi, Brian maybe you can

remind me. I think it was maybe Newsweek had put out something that said there were tensions between the Libyans and the Egyptians.

BRIAN FISHMAN: Yes. It was late 2006, early 2007. I think it was a News Week story.

JARRET BRACHMAN: And then like two months later isn't that when Abu Laith al-Libi announced that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group was joining al Qaeda? So al Qaeda has this habit of kind of like kumbaya videos. Whenever they are under attack or somebody accuses them of not getting along well with somebody they all come out and hug and play patty cake. And so this is what happened with this video. So whatever it is the public faces at their unified command.

The question about the human face. I don't work for the U.S. government. If that's an unintended consequence of me identifying him as such, it's not my goal. I think you are right to point out, as Brian has, that the global Jihadist movement is incredibly complex and multi layered. And so it is always easier to fight an enemy who has a face. And, in fact, al Qaeda realized this by they built their entire anti-Pakistan rhetoric on one man, Musharraf. And so when Musharraf left al Qaeda had no argument because they made hating Pakistan -- they equated that with hating Musharraf.

So I don't think that's what I'm doing. I think you're right that it could be construed as a reductionist argument. I hope that the quality of my scholarship, though, would help people see the granularity and sophistication nuance within this movement.

BRIAN FISHMAN: I just want to applaud. I think that is a really good question about whether or not we put too human a face on a movement that is composed of people

with a wide variety of motivation in all corners of the globe. And I think one thing that's interesting about al Qaeda is that it is increasingly, I think, trying to be more ideologically homogenous. There, for a long time and some may disagree with this, but Brynjar Lia, a wonderful Norwegian researcher, has talked about this split in al Qaeda between doctrinarians and strategists. The doctrinarians tended to be people like Zawahiri, folks that really wanted to pull everyone together and the sort of classic strategists, a guy named Abu Musab al-Suri who is now in prison somewhere.

So this debate and generally speaking the strategists were looking to create wider, broader coalitions of people even among folks that didn't necessarily agree on every ideological and particularly on religious points. That movement, I think, is failing in al Qaeda almost completely. And in part because of the influence of Zarqawi, but in part because indoctrination has become really critical as this movement spreads out all over the place you don't have the same kind of sort of brotherhood-in-arms that is gained when peoples are standing shoulder to shoulder trying to kill Soviets together. And so you don't have as many personal relationships.

And so if you are going to build a movement that is cohesive it needs to have a more distinct ideology. Zarqawi actually called this – he said, we will be strangers. And this is from a line in Quran. And it says that Islam is a stranger. It will be a stranger again but the strangers ultimately will prevail. And what he was saying is though we are ideologically separated from the bulk of society, we know that we are actually doing the right thing because of the appreciation that we receive.

And al Qaeda as a rule I think has started to pick up some of those ideas. And Abu

Yahya does that, as well. The one thing that I think Jarret didn't mention, though, on Abu Yahya that I want to talk about because it gets to some of the things that Lee Ann was asking about in terms of generational change is that Abu Yahya has been at the cutting edge of the campaign to discredit the Pakistani regime. And I think that is fundamental to where al Qaeda's senior leadership is going today.

Most of you probably read Bruce Hoffman's article in the Washington Post yesterday. If you didn't you should. It's very good. The two things that I think Bruce didn't mention there are that al Qaeda right now is doubling down on trying to delegitimize and discredit the Pakistani regime, one. And secondly they are increasing their efforts to co-opt the public opinions surrounding the Israeli Palestinian conflict. And that's creating all sorts of problems for them but also opportunities.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thank you. Let's get some more questions. In the back, please. And there's a microphone coming.

AUDIENCE: I'm a scholar studying this phenomenon and writing a book about the Libyan Afghan. As my friend has stated there is no relation between all these groups. This relation is starting in Peshawer during the assassination of Hazam. All of the difference now between Sayyid Azzam and the other scholar is just a joke. As my friend mentioned, Abu Yahya al-Libi, his name is Hassan Abu Baker Gayyed. He was born on January 1, 1963. And this is confirmed. As the turn that is going to fighting this phenomenon, during Libya fighting the people in mountain of Dharna and the green mountain. All the support coming from some Arab countries supporting them to topple the regime. Al Qaeda originally created to topple some Arab regime. I state this in an interview in al Watan al Arabi

magazine in 1996 issue number 963, 964, 965. They created this monster and they left them in the desert without food. They turned and eat those who create them. As a matter of fact

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CHRIS BOUCEK: Sir, if we can just get to the question because I know there are many other people who would like to ask questions.

AUDIENCE: The question is: Making the new Bin Laden. Who is making the new Bin Laden?

CHRIS BOUCEK: Yes, please. Raise your hand. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Hi, I'm Holly Diagreth. I'm an intern for the Middle East Institute. My question is: From my intake on your presentation I think al Qaeda is actually becoming divided and that Abu Yahya al-Libi is not the new Bin Laden but an opponent to him and Zawahiri. What's your intake and do you think this is a possibility?

AUDIENCE: I'm Jackie Northum with NPR. I'm wondering if you can help me. Is your charting the development of al-Libi as he goes along and the relationship with Zawahiri, are you cleaning any information about where Bin Laden is in all of this? In other words, this forum is called the next Bin Laden. What does that actually mean? Do you have any idea if he is on his way out or if he is already gone or where he sits in the whole calculation of what al Qaeda is doing right now? Again, as you chart the growth of al-Libi.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thanks. Jarret, would you like to start?

JARRET BRACHMAN: So the question of who made Bin Laden is one I'll leave to smarter people who have written longer books about that. Who's making the next Bin Laden I think is a beautifully phrased rhetorical question that maybe we can all debate that.

Hopefully I'm not -- but I don't know.

In terms of is he in opposition to Bin Laden and Zawahiri, yes. Change always hurts a little bit. So I think that we've talked about issues kind of related to it. I don't have anything profound on any of these questions. So Brian, you will have to come through.

And finally in terms of the relationship between Bin Laden and Abu Yahya al-Libi I don't think Bin Laden has mentioned Abu Yahya al-Libi. Has he? He did in one of his recent statements give a reading list. So he may have been on Bin Laden's recent reading list. But I would have to go back to the transcript to see that.

But in terms of -- I call him the next Bin Laden because it's cute. I believe it. I think symbolically I think he will take the place of The Senior, The Anointed One, The Grand Pubah basically of al Qaeda. I don't necessarily mean that Bin Laden is going anywhere. In the open source there is very little information about that relationship.

BRIAN FISHMAN: I think the rumor back in the News Week story years ago was that Zawahiri was jealous because he perceived a relationship between al-Libi and Bin Laden that he wasn't a part of which is at least plausible. I don't want to sit here and say that it's necessarily true, but it's plausible in the sense that Zawahiri has always had sort of a manipulative perception or attitude towards Bin Laden. One thing that I would say, though, is that I think that on the most important strategic maneuvers that the senior leadership is doing right now, one which I mentioned, one is the turn against the Pakistani government and the real decision since 2007 to highlight that and prioritize it. And, also, to prioritize Palestine in their propaganda in a way that they hadn't done in the past, everybody is on the same page. Though I think Abu Yahya al-Libi has been at the cutting edge. Zawahiri

recently released this book that was a takedown of the entire Pakistani Constitution, which is interesting, noting because Jarret's exactly right that it used to be that al Qaeda's line was you hate Musharraf therefore you hate Pakistan fundamentally which was in line, frankly, with what the other Pakistani militant group said where they said the fundamental basis of Pakistan was that it was founded on an Islamic basis but that the rulers had differentiated from that.

Al Qaeda is now at the leading edge and says no that is false. Fundamentally what Pakistan is an infidel state. It's not even an apostate. They are going farther an apostate. This is a fundamentally disreputable state that needs to be attacked. And it is not about changing leadership. And I think that Zawahiri and al-Libi and Bin Laden are all on the same page on that.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Let's get another group of questions, please. John, can you stand up and then the microphone will come to you?

AUDIENCE: John Iskander, the Foreign Service Institute. The question: Can you talk more about ways that Abu Yahya al-Libi is trying to enforce some sort of purity? You talked about that, but without a lot of examples. And I'm curious about that because that seems to me in line with a couple of things that you said in the Q and A, both of you, that enforcing that sort of purity is itself potentially divisive. So how is he doing that? What's the response been? I would assume that given the disparities within the movement that it would actually create ruptures and fractures as much as unifying them on an ideological basis. And what do you know about any of that? Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Jessica Matthews, Carnegie Endowment. You may have already

decked this question. I'm not sure. Is there a central -- who gets to control a decision to roll out a new major figure as you have described? Who controls access to the websites? Is there a central intelligence somewhere that says we need a second group of people in case the first rank gets killed or whatever? And if so, who are they?

AUDIENCE: Scott Shane with the New York Times. This is sort of related. Could you say something about the relationship between al Qaeda central as it is sometimes called and these various regional affiliates such as AQAP? And whether there is any tension in local goals versus this vague sort of global Jihad? And also, is there any significance, do you think, for al Qaeda in the fairly dramatic decline in the popularity, its popularity and the popularity of its tactics in most Muslim countries including Pakistan?

CHRIS BOUCEK: Who would like to start?

JARRET BRACHMAN: I will take a couple of these. I'm going to defer to Brian on some of them. In terms of how he enforces religious purity I mean there is nothing -- it's mostly through expose journalism. I mean, he brings up the same ideological alliance. He points a lot more aggressively at people and mocks them and hangs them out to dry much more so than I think other al Qaeda guys had done. For instance, he takes on Shaykh Nasser al-Omar who had written a book against al Qaeda. He was a Saudi Salafi Shaykh. He ripped this guy apart. And what he does is he takes him point by point. And so it is a lot of fun to read when Abu Yahya al-Libi takes somebody to task. I mean, he doesn't pull punches and he does it systematically. So it's not that he is coming up with anything all that new. I think the most fascinating attempt, though, to enforce this religious purity is when he is taking Islamic concepts like *al tatarus* or when he is dealing with this terminological issues,

the use of nationalism or atheism or resistance as being western concepts.

What's interesting, though, is there had been a push a couple of years ago instead of calling these guys jihadists, to call them *erhabi and mufsidoon*, These Arabic terms. Abu Yahya al-Libi actually uses these terms that people in the United States were promoting to call al Qaeda against the United States. He calls us highway brigands and thugs. And I don't know if he is doing it, if there is a causal relationship there.

So it's word play. Orwell said "without words you have nothing." And I think Abu Yahya al-Libi has really embraced that.

In terms of who controls access to the media, I think that's a brilliant question and that's something we don't have a lot of knowledge on. KSM's combatant status review tribunal said that he was the external media ops director for *al Sabab* under Ayman al-Zawahiri. So it seems to me that Zawahiri probably founded it, runs it and is the guy who sits at the head of the table in terms of identifying who, when, where to release. And so we have seen roll ups not just with Abu Yahya al-Libi but you saw Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, the number three, I guess. That was a very strategic roll out that went over a few months. Thematically you can see they push him on one front and his next video they push him another. You saw the same thing with Abdullah al-Saeed who we just found out was killed.

There is a new guy who no one is really paying attention to who I think al Qaeda has positioned to be one of their top three Shaykhs, Mansour al-Shami. He's been releasing and writing in Vanguard's [INAUDIBLE] and some of the Taliban magazines for years. He started releasing audio tapes. And just in December he released his first videotape. We now know what he looks like. And it made no news.

But al Qaeda doesn't -- with the form of media, the themes that are addressed in the media and the timing of the media, I think it is all choreographed. And I think it is Zawahiri that oversees it. I think they have a media counsel of people. And these are mostly people who you have never heard of or you will never see.

And to Scott's question. If I knew the answer to some of those I would get a lot more quotes in your newspaper I think. From an open source perspective, man, that is really hard.

BRIAN FISHMAN: That is a really good question about who controls the media. But I think it is important to recognize here and one thing that Jarret said was that when Abu Yahya al-Libi in particular was rolled out he was rolled out on *Labaik* media which was not Sahab media. He was doing it independently which likely was through networks, I would imagine through networks that were more closely associated with the Taliban that he knew from his previous stint with them. So it probably wasn't directly through AQ at first. I mean I don't think you want to call that an end run. But he was developing a power base separately from Sahab. And then Sahab sort of adopted him.

Interestingly it was about a year and a half ago where the Labaik media organization that Abu Yahya al-Libi started out with was folded officially into al Sahab. And they announced that. So you do see, even with these media organizations, them coming together and sort of integrating.

And oftentimes that can be a leading indicator of -- use of the media tends to be a leading indicator for relationships between different organizations. It was a leading indicator with AQIM before they joined al Qaeda, when they were GSPC and it was Fatah al-Islam in

Lebanon though it never did join al Qaeda, at one point just before it was routed by the Lebanese Army, started using the Al-Fazal distribution network which suggested to me that they were becoming more closely aligned and have closer ties and networks with al Qaeda central.

That says something about the relationship between al Qaeda central and the various affiliates. I think much of it has to do with the media. And you do see public instruction of strategy. Some of it quite specific. Bin Laden released a statement called practical steps for the liberation of Palestine in which he described a movement from Iraq not into Syria and Lebanon which is what I would have expected, but he said the way to get to Palestine is via Jordan. And at the same time he started reaching out more aggressively to Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi who was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's mentor there and is kind of this senior religious and ideological figure, almost sitting above the Jihadi movement. Though I think he is kind of -- he is in Jordan and he is sort of a strange figure. He's in and out of prison. He gets let out of prison. Sometimes he says something nasty about Zarqawi and go back into prison. He would come out again. So he would get attacked quite a bit for this sort of thing.

But I think so you do see this public kind of messaging but there is private messaging, as well. And it's hard to know exactly how that occurs today. We do know something about that from the Iraq time period because of the capture of the Zawahiri document to Zarqawi, which was sent through a variety of messengers. And it seems like it may have been a hard copy of something, a thumb drive or something like that. But that's more difficult. I think it is probably harder to get from Pakistan to Yemen than it was to get from Pakistan to Iraq. And so I would imagine that the internet plays an even more

important role.

One of the things that you saw there was that -- and this will become more difficult. It also gets to the generational question -- was that people would identify themselves. Atia Abdulrahman al-Libi, in identifying himself to Zarqawi so he would know that he was credible, he would say I still remember that object you gave me in Herat. He would refer to something that because they had a shared history together in order to sort of gain credibility. That kind of thing is going to be more difficult going into the future for al Qaeda because you don't have the same sort of cohesive moment that there was during the anti Soviet Jihad or that period in Peshawar in the 1990s.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Please.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. I'm Allen with CNO Resources, the Middle East Institute. My question is for Jarret. What are the vulnerabilities of Abu Yahya both internally within al Qaeda and, more importantly, as we are here in Washington as a strategist, as a counter terrorism strategist?

AUDIENCE: Viola Ginger from Blumberg News. You talked about who controls the media, but before someone is rolled out or either roles himself out using your terminology, there needs to be a strategic decision made if it is plotted as said that it seems to be. So I guess I want to just take it one step further and that is who is making that strategic decision or what is the likely answer to that? And what are the implications of his rise in the organization for how al Qaeda operates? And then further for how the U.S. needs to respond, for the U.S. response?

CHRIS BOUCEK: One more question. In the middle in the back.

AUDIENCE: Hello, Katlyn Duke from Time. This is a little bit of a change of topics, but you mentioned Yemen. I am wondering if the U.S. is contributing to raising Anwar al-Awlaki's status by targeting him and as John Brennan mentions on CNN that he is a bad guy. Does that boost his standing? Thank you.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thanks.

JARRET BRACHMAN: Okay. I'll try to go quick here. I don't know where we are on time. So, vulnerabilities. Brilliant question. I would like to write an article about this. I would have to think about it in depth first. I think the most glaring vulnerability is that he has sold himself as the living embodiment of ideological purity and consistency. And so I think it only takes one misstep. The problem is that he is very quick to acknowledge when he takes the wrong steps. So he is already trying to preempt our ability to do that. But I think anytime anybody builds themselves up on purity, then that's the best way to attack him. Brian and Chris, you guys might have some different ideas.

I think ego may be in there, too. He has to have a massive ego based on how much he just talks. He just fills the airwaves up with his voice. Anyways. So the question is who is making the strategic decisions about whether to roll out? I think it is an interplay. I think you've got the backroom guys who you don't know about within al Qaeda. These are names that -- al Qaeda has kind of a think tank that no one is really focused on. I would encourage somebody out there unless I can get to it first. This magazine, the Vanguard of Corasan is kind of their research institute, their think tank. And this is where most of the guys who have been rolled out have been writing articles in this magazine for two years prior to getting rolled out officially. So they kind of test fire them. It's their test bed. For the internal

community they test fire some themes out. You also saw the same thing, Gudan sometimes will test fire a theme and then Bin Laden will draw on it or Zawahiri will pitch it six months later.

So I think there is this constant interplay between them, their advisors, the top commanders and strategists, the global movement, the forums. I think they religiously mine the al Qaeda forums to get the straw poll indicator. And this is why Ayman al-Zawahiri actually didn't open a town hall forum or Q and A to respond to the questions and criticisms he was facing on the forums because they do value the global movement's opinion, because that is their primary constituency.

So I think in terms of how that mechanism works, I wish I knew. They just don't expose that side of them.

Implications for his rise for al Qaeda, I think he's done his damage. The next question is what happens if he dies. So I think he's already raised the movement up to a level of ideological sophistication that it otherwise would not have been without him. And I think he has prioritized the importance of terminological purity and all of these things that I have already talked about. It's now on everybody's radar. He has made his contribution. So the longer he lasts the more damage he can do, but it was reported a few months ago that he had been killed. Unfortunately I had mixed reactions when I heard that because that's a short book. But I do think he is one of the most dangerous terrorists out there because of his mind.

And in terms of Awlaki I think the fact is he is really bad. I think he actually was a religious advisor to al Qaeda in the peninsula. It seems to me. And so I think he was a fire

breathing Shaykh after he left the U.S. for a while and that's bad enough. But I think he was actually doing bad stuff. So I think targeting him was probably necessary.

BRIAN FISHMAN: Chris can answer questions about Yemen and Awlaki far better than I can. But I will say one thing. I will mention again as Bruce Hoffman's article yesterday. He talks about a new strategy which I generally agree with and it is death by a thousand cuts. It's not dependent on necessarily a large scale attack 9/11 style. I think that's accurate. He says there are five pieces. One is to create background noise, economic warfare, to divide the anti al Qaeda alliance, to actively exploit failed states and to earn western recruits. And these five are interesting because, again, it allows us to ask who can do those things well. And if effectiveness really breeds leadership, then who else besides Abu Yahya al-Libi is potentially a successor. I mean, I don't think -- I mean, Jarret would say that Abu Yahya al-Libi is the guy 100 percent. There are other folks out there and I think we should ask these questions because one of the things that made bin Laden bin Laden was that he was effective. He got stuff done.

The embassy bombing in 1998 and the American response to it with cruise missiles raised Bin Laden's stature inside Afghanistan and pushed Mullah Omar to give him more influence over the various foreign groups that were operating there. So it is true. And so the answer to your question about is our attention being paid to Awlaki raising his stature, I would say yes, absolutely it is. And we should be careful because there are lots of fun ways that we could go about trying to undermine somebody like Awlaki because he has lots of things that he has written in the past that have been criticized. He was declared *kafir* by Abdul al-Faisal.

JARRET BRACHMAN: Arrested for prostitution charges.

BRIAN FISHMAN: I mean, there are lots of things that we could be talking about with Awlaki and that frankly from a communication standpoint would be great for us as a nation to be talking about to undermine this guy. But we have a problem when somebody like this comes up that we always seem to elevate them. What we need to do is look at these people as human beings because it's their humanness that is their weakness. And that's how we exploit them and that's how we get them. They're not 10 feet tall, none of them.

CHRIS BOUCEK: Thank you very much. I think this has been a great session. In sitting and listening to this, this really reminds me of -- especially all the names I don't recognize -- reminds me of the importance for why we need to study these things. And it is shocking to me that 8 or 9 years into this protracted conflict, there is still not an organized format, an organized funded way to study this. And I think it is shocking. If you look back during the Cold War there is a whole science of Kremlinology and Russian and Soviet studies and Chinese and Maoism and Communism. And it's amazing to me that there's not a more coherently organized and funded and structured program to understand this conflict that we find ourselves in now.

So please join me in thanking our speakers. I am really looking forward to the book and having you closer. Thank you.