

Al-Qaida in Afghanistan

Since 9/11, al-Qaida has become one of the most infamous and widely discussed terrorist organizations in the world, with affiliates spread across the globe. However, little known are the group's activities within Afghanistan itself, something that Anne Stenersen examines in this book. Using an array of unique primary sources, she presents an alternative narrative of al-Qaida's goals and strategies prior to 9/11. She argues that al-Qaida's actions were not just an ideological expression of religious fanaticism and violent anti-Americanism, but that they were actually far more practical and organized, with a more revolutionary and Middle Eastern-focused agenda than previously thought. Through Stenersen's analysis, we see how al-Qaida employed a dual strategy: with a small section focused on staging international terrorist attacks, but at the same time with a larger part dedicated to building a resilient and cohesive organization that would ultimately serve as a vanguard for future Islamist revolutions.

Anne Stenersen (M.Phil., PhD) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) in Norway. With an academic background rooted in history, Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, she has conducted research on militant Islamism, with a focus on CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) terrorism, al-Qaida and the Taliban.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-07513-9 — Al-Qaida in Afghanistan
Anne Stenersen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107427761

DOI: 10.1017/9781139871501

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First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Stenersen, Anne, author.

Title: Al-Qaida in Afghanistan / Anne Stenersen, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016059491 | ISBN 9781107075139 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781107427761 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Qaida (Organization) | Taliban. | Terrorists – Afghanistan. | Terrorism – Afghanistan. | Terrorism – Religious aspects – Islam.

Classification: LCC HV6433.A32.Q2 S74 2017 | DDC 363.32509581–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016059491>

ISBN 978-1-107-07513-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-42776-1 Paperback

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Acknowledgments

There are a number of people and institutions who deserve thanks. Let me start with the institutions. The book project would not have been possible without the support of my employer, the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). In particular, I thank the Director of FFI's Analysis Division, Espen Skjelland, and research director Espen Berg-Knutson for their support and encouragement.

A huge thanks also to institutions that assisted me during fieldwork in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States during the period of 2009–2015. I express my sincere gratitude to the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS), and its former director Mr. Hekmat Karzai, who hosted me during fieldwork in Kabul in 2009. Thanks also to the kind staff at the Afghanistan Center at Kabul University (ACKU) who helped me locate a number of rare historical sources from the 1980s and 1990s. In Pakistan, I am indebted to Mr. Saifullah Mehsud at the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Research Center (FRC), who generously hosted me during research in Islamabad in 2015, Mr. Mohammed Amir Rana at the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), The National Library of Pakistan, and the *Dawn* Newspaper archives in Karachi. In the United States, a huge thanks goes to the Conflict Records Resource Center (CRRC) at National Defense University in Washington, DC and its director, Mrs. Lorry C. Fenner, for hosting me several times during the period of 2011–2015. The CRRC's collection of internal al-Qaida documents is truly unique and this book would not have been possible without it.

Furthermore, I cannot express how thankful I am to the Afghans and Pakistanis I met and interviewed during my fieldwork, who showed

me immense hospitality and who generously shared their unique local insights and knowledge with me. Due to the political sensitivity of the topics treated in this book, and the controversies my arguments might create in some circles – although I only aspire to present the truth – I have decided to not mention your names. Just know that I am extremely grateful for your contributions.

Finally, I am indebted to research colleagues inside and outside Norway who contributed to the project with their huge knowledge and insights on al-Qaida, jihadism, terrorism, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East. I am most of all indebted to my long-time colleagues and friends at the FFI's Terrorism Research Project: Brynjar Lia, Thomas Hegghammer, Petter Nesser, and Truls Hallberg Tønnessen, who encouraged and inspired me on a daily basis. Special thanks also go to Jacob Ravndal and Erik Skare for fruitful comments and discussions and Henrik Gråtrud for his meticulous work reading and summarizing Arabic primary sources. There are many others I should thank who contributed in various ways: Noman Benotman, Bette Dam, Leah Farrall, Will McCants and Prakhar Sharma, in addition to those of you who requested to stay anonymous. Last but not least, I thank my friends and family for their encouragement and moral support. A special thanks to Thomas G. S., for everything.

Any errors of analysis or fact are, of course, my responsibility.

Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Arabic words into English has been simplified by making no distinction between emphatic and nonemphatic consonants, and between long and short vowels. When *ayn* and *hamza* appear at the beginning of a word, they have been omitted. In other positions they are represented by the signs ‘ and ’. Arabic names follow the same transliteration rules, except for names that already have a widely used spelling in English (e.g., Osama bin Laden). English names and words occurring in Arabic texts have been transliterated back to their original form (e.g., land cruiser not land kruzar).