

THE LOOMING TOWER

Identification Items and Review Questions

Chapter 1

Sayyid Qutb; Gamal Abdul Nasser; Anwar al-Sadat; Takfir; Jahiliyya

Why did Sayyid Qutb leave Egypt and travel to the US?

What impact did Qutb's trip to the US have on him?

What were Qutb's criticisms of the US?

What was the political situation in Egypt when Qutb returned?

Who were the Muslim Brothers and what did they share with Qutb?

Why was Qutb imprisoned?

Why did Qutb's writings say and why were they so dangerous to the governments of Arab nations in the 1950's and 60's?

Chapter 2

Ayman al-Zawahiri; Islamic Group; Al-Jihad; Sharia; Camp David Accords; Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman

What impact did Qutb's writings and teachings have on Ayman al-Zawahiri? Why?

What impact did the 1967 war between Egypt and Israel have on Zawahiri and other young Arabs?

Who was the primary target of the new Egyptian Nationalists? Why?

What was Sadat's relationship with the Muslim Brothers when he became President of Egypt? Did this change?

How did Zawahiri get involved in Afghanistan? How did his view of the conflict differ from that of other volunteers?

How did the events of 1979 shape Zawahiri's ideology?

Who was responsible for Sadat's assassination? How did this event impact Egypt? How did it impact al-Jihad?

How did prison transform Zawahiri and other Islamists? Why?

Chapter 3

Mohammed bin Laden; King Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud; Wahhabis; Aramco; Kaaba; Grand Mosque; Jamal Khalifa

What was Saudi Arabia like when Mohammed bin Laden arrived from Yemen?

What impact did the discovery of oil have on Saudi Arabia?

How did Mohammed bin Laden become wealthy?

How did the Saudi Royal family become indebted to Mohammed bin Laden?

What was Osama bin Laden's childhood like?

What religious and political awakening did Osama bin Laden have when he was fourteen?

Why did Osama begin practicing polygamy?

Chapter 4

Prince Turki; Foreign Liaison Bureau; Mahdi; Abdullah Azzam

Why did Prince Turki come to the US, and why did he return to Saudi Arabia?

How and why did Saudi society change in the years after Turki returned in 1973?

What happened to King Faisal in 1975?

Why was the Grand Mosque assaulted on the morning of Nov, 20, 1979?

How did Turki bring about an end to the takeover of the Grand Mosque?

What impact did the takeover of the Grand Mosque have on Saudi Arabia?

How did bin Laden react to the Society invasion of Afghanistan?

Chapter 5

ISI; Services Bureau; Tora Bora; Lion's Den; Abu Hajer al-Iraqi

What did Turki believe the USSR was after with their invasion of Afghanistan?

What was Turki's role in the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan?

What was bin Laden's impression of the Afghans? How did this impact his role in the Afghan struggle?

How did Abdullah Azzam and bin Laden provide a religious justification for the Afghan jihad?

What was the initial result of the bin Laden's financial support and Azzam's fatwah?

What characterized the young Arabs who participated in the Afghan jihad?

What role did martyrdom play in the Afghan jihad?

How did the Arab mujahideen in Afghanistan define jihad? How did this differ from previous conceptualizations of jihad?

By 1986, how had bin Laden and Azzam begun to diverge over Afghanistan?

Why did the Pakistani's move to shut down Arab operations in Peshawar?

Chapter 6

Al-Qaeda; Islamic Jihad; Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri; Abu Abdul Rahman

What was the relationship between the various Afghan warlords?
What did Zawahiri do in Peshawar? How did it change him?
How did takfir cause a division within Islam? How was it incorporated into Zawahiri's and bin Laden's visions of Islam?
What was the relationship like between Zawahiri and bin Laden in Peshawar?
Why did the Soviets begin to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan in 1988? How did the Afghan warlords respond?
How did Azzam view takfir differently from Zawahiri?
How and why was al-Qaeda created?
What were the requirements for joining al-Qaeda?
What characterized the Arab mujahideen movement after the Soviets began their withdrawal?
What was the "ugly irony" of the Arab Afghan crusade, which Wright identifies in this chapter? What does this indicate about the growing fundamentalist movement?
Who were the strongest competing Afghan leaders in the civil war?
How was Azzam killed? How did Zawahiri react to his death?

Chapter 7

muttawa

Why did bin Laden's return to Saudi Arabia in 1989 present a problem from the Saudi Royal Family?
What made Turki unique within Saudi government and society?
What did the confrontation between Turki and the muttawa show about Saudi politics and society?
What impact did the Wahhabi assumption of power in Saudi Arabia have for the rest of the Islamic world?
What was the basis of bin Laden's complaints against America?
What was America's relationship with Saudi Arabia in the 1980's?
What was bin Laden's plan for Yemen in 1989? Why did Turki refuse him support?
What was bin Laden's impression of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as of 1990?
How did the Saudi government react to bin Laden's scheming over Yemen and his declarations about Saddam Hussein?
How did the Saudi's respond to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait? How did bin Laden react?
Why did the Saudi invitation for US troops to be based there touch off a dispute between the Royal family and bin Laden?
How did Saudi society respond to US forces being invited into their country?
How did bin Laden's concept of a new world order differ from George H.W. Bush's?

Chapter 8

Hasan al-Turabi; Salafist movement; Abu Hajer's Two Fatwas

How were the Arab mujahideen treated when they left Afghanistan? What problems did they face? What was the result?
Why did Sudan become an ideal place for former Afghan jihadis to settle?
What characterized bin Laden's relationship with Hasan al-Turabi?
How did moving his operations to Sudan change bin Laden?
What was bin Laden's economic relationship with Sudan?
What did bin Laden claim prevented him from becoming a "simple businessman" in Sudan?
How did al-Qaeda respond to US forces intervening in Somalia?
What impact did the bombing of the US marine barracks in Beirut, in 1983, have on bin Laden? Why?
What was the first attack that bin Laden claimed credit for? What impact did it have on al-Qaeda and around the world?

Chapter 9

Omar Abdul Rahman; Ramzi Yousef; Ali Abdelsoud Mohemmed; Shayma Abdel-Halim

Why did Zawahiri visit the US in 1993?
How did the CIA drop the ball when it came to Ali Abdelsoud Mohemmed?
What problem did al-Jihad have by the time bin Laden and Zawahiri moved to Sudan? What choices did Zawahiri have?
Even after they began to incorporate into al-Qaeda, what remained the objective of members of al-jihad?
Why was the failed al-Jihad attack on Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi significant?

Chapter 10

Soba Farm; Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA); Jamal al-Fadl

What did al-Qaeda trainees have in common as they began their training in Sudan?
What was his "fixed idea about America" that bin Laden shared with all new al-Qaeda recruits?
What actions did al-Qaeda take against Americans in Somalia?

How did bin Laden respond to the 1994 attempt on his life? How did Zawahiri respond?
What did the attack indicate about the ideology that bin Laden had been preaching?
How did bin Laden's family change during his time in Sudan?
What action did the Saudi Royal Family take against bin Laden in 1994? Why? How did bin Laden respond?
How did bin Laden view the numerous civil wars waging in Africa during the 1990's?

Chapter 11

Richard Clarke; John O'Neill; Rendition

Why was John O'Neill referred to as "The Prince of Darkness"?
What fundamental aspect of modern terrorism did O'Neill recognize that others overlooked? How did this recognition impact his view of bin Laden?
What was the basis of bin Laden's August 1995 commentary or fatwa against the Saudi government?
What was the event that Turki would identify as bin Laden's "first terrorist blow"? How did the Saudis react to this act?
How did the US react to this act?

Chapter 12

Hosni Mubarak

How and why did Zawahiri order the assassination of Mubarak? What was the result of this assassination attempt? What were the long term implications for both al-Jihad and Egypt?
How did Egyptian intelligence both attempt to infiltrate al-Jihad and respond to the assassination attempt? How effective were they? How did this attempt affect al-Jihad?
How did al-Jihad's and al-Qaeda's operation impact bin Laden's relationship with Sudan?
Why did bin Laden decide to move to Afghanistan? How did he rationalize this change of events?

Chapter 13

Taliban; Mullah Mohammad Omar; Abu Ubaydah; Khaled Sheik Mohammed

What was Afghanistan like when bin Laden returned to it?
What were the three "streams" that fed the Taliban and their rise to power?
What characterized the early relationship between bin Laden and the Taliban?
What did the Taliban do once they achieved control in Afghanistan?
What was the hijira? What connections did bin Laden draw between the hijira and the events of his own life?
How and why did bin Laden declare war on the US?

Chapter 14

I-49; TWA 800; Alec Station; Dan Coleman

How did O'Neill and the FBI respond to the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia?
What did O'Neill learn during the investigation into the Khobar Towers bombing?

Chapter 15

Tarnak Farms; Luxor Bombing; International Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders

How did the CIA characterize bin Laden as of 1997? Why?
According to bin Laden, what would the US have had to do in order for him to withdraw his fatwa?
Why did Zawahiri travel to Chechnya in the late 1990's? What happened while he was there?
How does the description of bin Laden's behavior toward his family differ from the public image he had previously portrayed?
What was the Nonviolence Initiative in Egypt? How did Zawahiri react to this proposal?
How did the Egyptian population respond to the Luxor attack? What impact did this event have on al-Jihad? al-Qaeda?
What were the main grievances against the US that Zawahiri identified in his 1998 fatwa?

Chapter 16

Ahmed Ressam; Zacarias Moussaoui; Khaled Saleem bin Rasheed

What was bin Laden's "currency" by mid-1998? How did this complicate his relationship with the Taliban?
How successful was the CIA at infiltrating or covertly attacking al-Qaeda, by 1998?
How did the FBI and CIA differ in their ideas about capturing Osama bin Laden?
Why did Prince Turki fly to Afghanistan in 1998? What was the result of this trip?
When the CIA captured Ahmed Salama Mabruk, and his computer full of al-Qaeda plans, how did they assist the FBI operations against al-Qaeda? What was the reaction of the FBI to this "assistance"?

Why did al-Qaeda choose to bomb the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania?
What was unique about the two embassy bombings? What did this reveal about future al-Qaeda operations?
What was the public reaction to the embassy bombings?
How did the US government react to the embassy bombings? What were the results of this action?

Chapter 17

What was Mullah Omar's advice to President Clinton regarding the rising anti-American sentiment?
What tricky situation did Omar find himself in after the al-Qaeda embassy bombings and American response? What did he decide to do about bin Laden?
Why did Turki take the head of the ISI with him when he returned to Afghanistan? What was the result of this trip?
Why did the US not attempt an assassination of bin Laden when he was out falcon hunting with royalty from the UAE?
How did John O'Neill's personal life differ from that of Osama bin Laden?
What were the results of al-Qaeda's meetings with Iraqi intelligence over creating a common strategy against America?
Why was O'Neill concerned about the change of the millennium? Did these concerns prove to be valid?

Chapter 18

Mohammed Atta; Nawaf al-Hazimi and Khaled al-Midhar; Omar Bayoumi; JTTF; USS Cole; Ali Soufan

What characterized the young men who came to Afghanistan in the 1990's to train with al-Qaeda?
What was the al-Qaeda worldview?
What were the three stages of al-Qaeda training?
What was the debate about biological and chemical weapons within al-Qaeda?
As al-Qaeda began looking into using planes as weapons, how did they envision the plan working?
The CIA almost got information needed to uncover the plots for the bombing of the USS Cole and the 9/11 attacks. What happened? What did the CIA do with the information they gathered?
Why was the USS Cole targeted by al-Qaeda?
What obstacles did O'Neill encounter when he tried to investigate the Cole attack in Yemen?
What did O'Neill and the FBI learn from the Cole bombing?

Chapter 19

Why did Dick Clarke ask to be re-assigned from counter-terrorism when the Bush administration took over in 2001? Who did he pick to be his replacement?
When and why did al-Jihad finally merge into al-Qaeda? How did this merge impact Zawahiri?
Why did bin Laden make Afghani warlord Ahmed Shah Massoud one of his principle targets in 2001?
What was "the big wedding?"
Why was O'Neill reluctant to support an assassination attempt against Osama bin Laden?
What key information did Tom Wilshire discover in May 2001? What did he do with the information?
What prompted the June 11, 2001 meeting between the CIA and FBI? In retrospect, why was this meeting so significant and such a failure?
What was Rule 6E of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure? How did the Justice Department attempt to modify it in 1995? How did the FBI react to this modification?
What did FBI agent Kenneth Williams uncover while O'Neill was in Spain?
Why did O'Neill decide to leave the FBI and public service?
After O'Neill left the FBI, a search began for Nawaf al-Hazimi and Khaled al-Midhar. What complications arose?
What happened to Ahmed Shah Massoud on September 9, 2001? What were the intended consequences of this act?
What report did FBI agent Steve Bongardt get on the morning of September 11, 2001?
What did O'Neill do when the two planes hit the World Trade Center?

Chapter 20

How and why did the CIA assist Ali Soufan in Yemen, after the 9/11 attacks?
Who was Quso and what did he reveal to Soufan?
Who was Abu Jandal? What did he reveal to Soufan upon questioning?
How did the US retaliate for the 9/11 attacks? What did bin Laden, Zawahiri and al-Qaeda do?
What happened at the battle for Tora Bora?