

24 February 2004

DCI's Worldwide Threat Briefing

The Worldwide Threat 2004: Challenges in a Changing Global Context

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, Members of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman, last year I described a national security environment that was significantly more complex than at any time during my tenure as Director of Central Intelligence. The world I will discuss today is equally, if not more, complicated and fraught with dangers for United States interests, but one that also holds great opportunity for positive change.

TERRORISM

I'll begin today on terrorism, with a stark bottom-line:

- The al-Qa`ida leadership structure we charted after September 11 is seriously damaged—but the group remains as committed as ever to attacking the US homeland.
- But as we continue the battle against al-Qa`ida, we must overcome a *movement*—a global movement infected by al-Qa`ida's radical agenda.
- In this battle we are moving forward in our knowledge of the enemy—his plans, capabilities, and intentions.
- And what we've learned continues to validate my deepest concern: that this enemy remains intent on obtaining, and using, catastrophic weapons.

Now let me tell you about the war we've waged against the al-Qa`ida organization and its leadership.

- Military and intelligence operations by the United States and its allies overseas have degraded the group. Local al-Qa`ida cells are forced to make their own decisions because of disarray in the central leadership.

Al-Qa`ida depends on leaders who not only direct terrorist attacks but who carry out the day-to-day tasks that support operations. Over the past 18 months, we have killed or captured key al-Qa`ida leaders in every significant operational area—logistics, planning, finance, training—and have eroded the key pillars of the organization, such as the leadership in Pakistani urban areas and operational cells in the al-Qa`ida heartland of Saudi Arabia and Yemen.