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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

10 March 2003

# Al-Qa'ida in Sudan, 1992-96: Old School Ties Lead Down Dangerous Paths

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)  
EO 12958 1.4(b)<25Yrs  
EO 12958 1.4(c)<25Yrs  
EO 12958 1.4(e)<25Yrs  
EO 12958 3.5(c)  
EO 12958 6.2(c)

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: 25-April-2012

CTC 2003-40028CHX

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**Al-Qa'ida in Sudan, 1992-96: Old School Ties  
Lead Down Dangerous Paths** [redacted]

**Key Findings (U)**

While based in Sudan from 1992-96, al-Qa'ida was transformed from an only partially realized idea to an international organization ready to operate on its own. A major factor in this development was the education al-Qa'ida members received working with officials of Sudan's National Islamic Front (NIF) to strengthen Sudan—some reporting says to build an international jihad infrastructure [redacted]

- Al-Qa'ida left Sudan with an independent ability to establish and operate training camps [redacted]

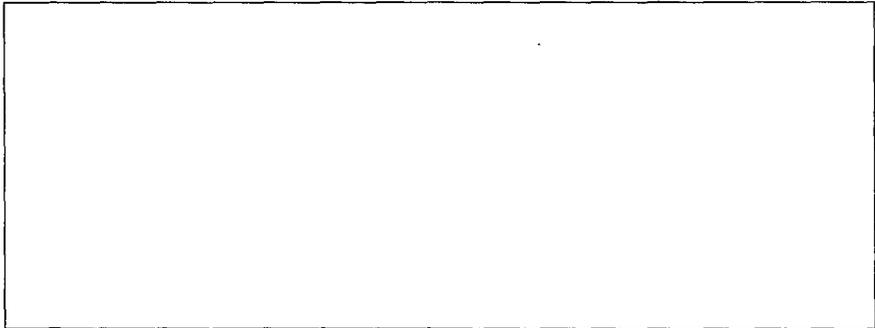
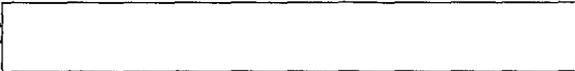
- While in Sudan, al-Qa'ida developed relations with every noteworthy Islamic extremist group [redacted]

- Intelligence reporting on contacts between Iraq and al-Qa'ida [redacted] included senior Iraqi officials and suggests the contacts culminated [redacted] in Iraq's provision of explosives training to al-Qa'ida. [redacted]

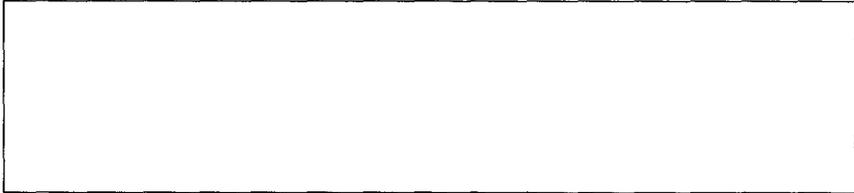
- Al-Qa'ida received funding from wealthy backers [redacted] and the international jihad they supported. [redacted]

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- The contacts and capabilities al-Qa'ida members established in the Sudan period give them a flexibility that may help the group find creative and replicatable ways to compensate for the loss of its safehaven in Afghanistan.



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~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]**Scope Note (U)**

This paper was written in response to a request to review information on al-Qa'ida's years in Sudan, 1992-96, with the benefit of hindsight, to identify key issues or threads of reporting whose importance may not have been apparent then or which may need additional exploration. Although the paper addresses al-Qa'ida's relationship with the Sudanese Government and National Islamic Front officials, it also considers other activities al-Qa'ida was able to pursue because it had safehaven in Sudan or because of connections its members made while in Sudan. [REDACTED]

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**Al-Qa'ida in Sudan, 1992-96: Old School Ties Lead Down Dangerous Paths** [redacted]

**Terrorist University, 1992-96** [redacted]

While based in Sudan from 1992-96, al-Qa'ida was transformed from an only partially realized idea to an international organization ready to operate on its own. The National Islamic Front (NIF) of Sudan—which seized power in a coup in 1989—welcomed al-Qa'ida and other extremist groups during the 1990s largely because these groups shared Khartoum's interests in promoting pan-Islamic unity, toppling moderate Arab governments deemed hostile to Islamist movements, and countering Western influence in the Islamic world. Hassan al-Turabi, the NIF's leader and Khartoum's primary ideologue until his fall in late 1999, considered his primary goal to be the creation of an Islamic state inside Sudan, but he eagerly seized opportunities to cultivate like-minded foreign groups for a variety of reasons.

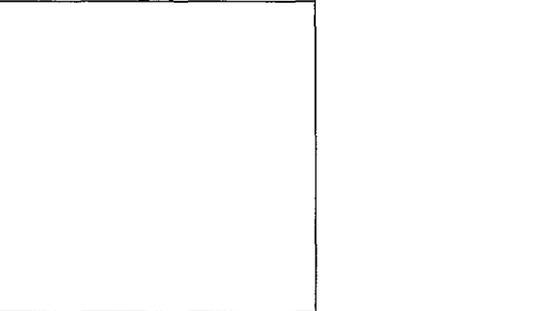
- A variety of reporting indicates Turabi and other NIF leaders used such contacts primarily to raise and distribute money, develop recruits, provide cover for intelligence activities, and promote their Islamist agenda throughout the Arab world.
- Turabi formed and led the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference (PAIC) in 1991 as the public face of his foreign outreach efforts. Attendees at PAIC meetings throughout the 1990s included PLO, HAMAS, and Hizballah; Iraqi, Afghani, Libyan, and Iranian Government representatives; Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and various individuals and groups advocating extremist and militant Islamist agendas. [redacted]

With the help of the NIF, al-Qa'ida solidified its formal structure, learned or enhanced key skills, and made the contacts necessary to become a self-

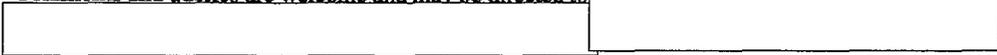
sufficient international terrorist organization. Al-Qa'ida also contributed money, labor, and material to building up Sudan's physical infrastructure.



Sudanese officials also may have worked alongside al-Qa'ida members to acquire weapons on the international gray arms market.



This assessment was prepared by the DCI Counterterrorist Center's Office of Terrorism Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to [redacted]



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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Chemical, Biological, Nuclear, and Radiological (CBRN) Programs**

Al-Qa'ida and Sudan also shared the goal of producing chemical, biological, and possibly nuclear or radiological weapons.

[Redacted]

- Al-Qa'ida also attempted to acquire nuclear materials—probably falling victim to scams—and

[Redacted]

- Al-Qa'ida procurement officer Abu Hajir al-Iraqi had good ties—not further specified—to Iraqi

intelligence, according to Wali Khan, an al-Qa'ida associate convicted in 1996 for his participation in the Manila Air conspiracy.

[Redacted]

1995—after

a visit to Khartoum by the director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS)

[Redacted]

- Both Bin Ladin and Iraq had connections to Sudan's Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant, which was destroyed by US strikes in August 1998. Bin Ladin may have been connected through his financing

[Redacted]

revealed the presence of EMPTA, a known precursor used in the production of VX. EMPTA is the route by which Iraq planned to produce VX for its chemical weapon program according to its declaration to the United Nations.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

• [Redacted]  
al-Qa'ida began running training camps at Bin Ladin's farms and other facilities in Sudan.

[Redacted]

**Financial Infrastructure**

[Redacted]

family money and connections also aided Bin Ladin in establishing and building up his own businesses in Khartoum. Bin Ladin's businesses included a tannery, constructions firms, and agricultural interests.

[Redacted]

**Relations With Other Groups and States**  
Through meetings, training, and other activity, the NIF facilitated contacts in Sudan, some of which had first been forged in Afghanistan, between al-Qa'ida members and nearly every noteworthy Islamic extremist group.

[Redacted]

• Turabi's PAIC served as one forum for groups to meet from 1991 through its dissolution in 2000.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] al-Qa'ida had established cooperative relationships by 1996 with at least 20 Sunni Islamic extremist groups in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and East Asia, as well as with elements of the Saudi opposition.<sup>1</sup> This cooperation entailed generating funding, smuggling routes, training, and, in some cases, terrorist operations. [Redacted] suggests that al-Qa'ida established relations with other Islamic extremists as well, largely in Africa and Asia.<sup>2</sup>

[Redacted]

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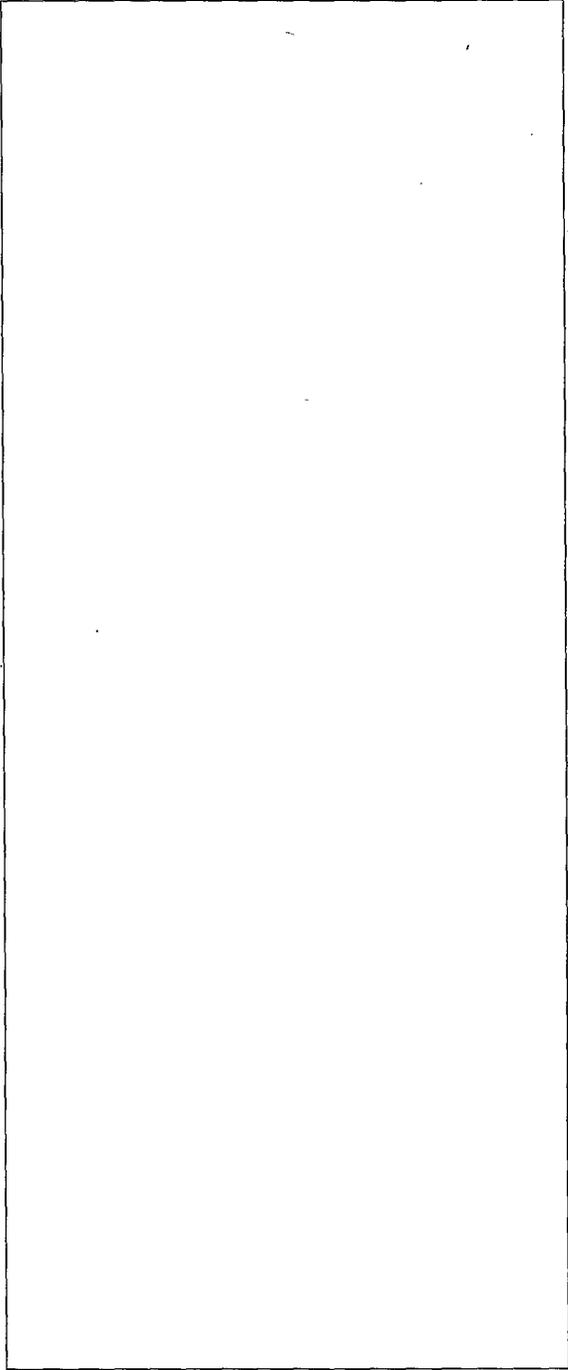
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- Al-Qa'ida and Sudan helped [redacted] set up arms smuggling networks [redacted]

- Both al-Qa'ida and the NIF continued relations with Afghan leaders [redacted]

- [redacted] al-Qa'ida had already supported terrorist operations—through funding, planning, or direct participation—by at least eight of these groups before 1996. For example, al-Qa'ida leaders have publicly admitted to supporting operations in Yemen in 1992 and Somalia in 1993. [redacted] suggests al-Qa'ida supported assassination attempts by allied groups against leaders it deemed un-Islamic, such as Egyptian President Mubarak in Ethiopia [redacted]



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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Bin Ladin continued to support anti-Saddam Iraqis, however, such as the Iraqi members of al-Qa'ida, and through them, Iraqi Kurdish groups such as the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan.

- Iraq also probably used the PAIC as a conduit to contact Islamic groups and states.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Iraq sought Sudanese help to establish contacts with Islamic extremist groups, including al-Qa'ida.

[Redacted] Iraqi contacts with al-Qa'ida [Redacted] included senior Iraqi officials, suggesting movement toward cooperation at some level. [Redacted]

[Redacted] these contacts culminated [Redacted] in Iraq's reported provision of explosives training to al-Qa'ida.

[Redacted] While Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and Bin Ladin differ ideologically, we judge that the Iraq-al-Qa'ida relationship in Sudan showed that both wanted to monitor the other as well as to keep the door open to cooperation.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Turabi had agreed to influence fundamentalist groups in Sudan on Iraq's behalf. [Redacted] most likely at Turabi's urging, Bin Ladin developed an "understanding" with Saddam that al-Qa'ida would not support any anti-Saddam activities.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

**Postgraduation: Proven Sustainability Through 2002** [Redacted]

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connections and capabilities al-Qa'ida developed in Sudan remained strong after they moved to Afghanistan, and many subsequently expanded.

[Redacted]

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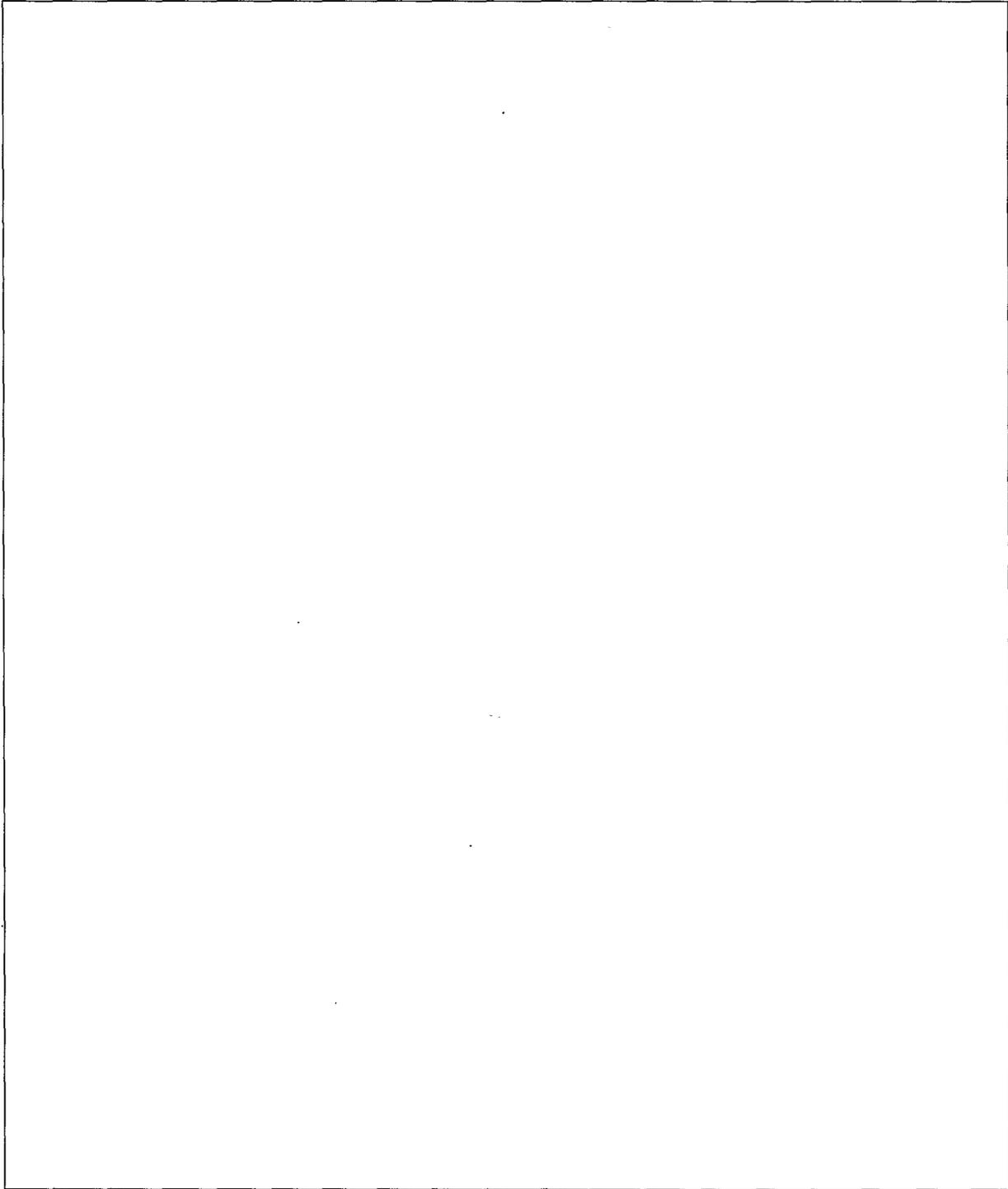
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al-Qa'ida's associations with other Sunni extremist groups, those ties have grown since 1996 to include cooperation on terrorist operations.

- Upon returning to Afghanistan in 1996, al-Qa'ida took over almost all of the training camps in the country and refocused their curriculum on terrorist tactics.
- Al-Qa'ida and associated groups still have financial links

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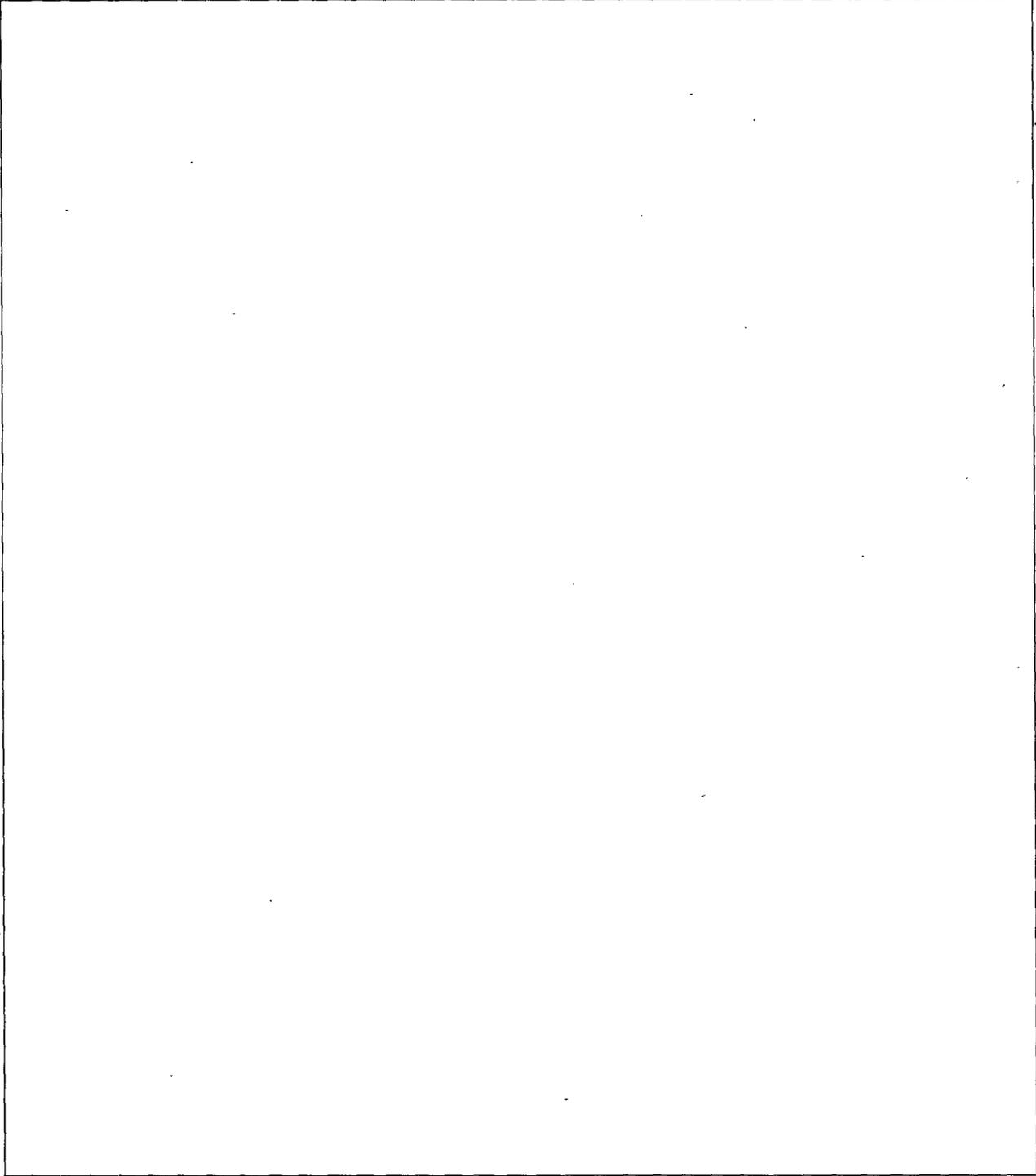
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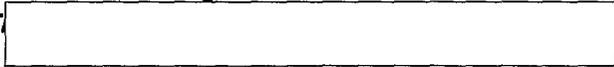
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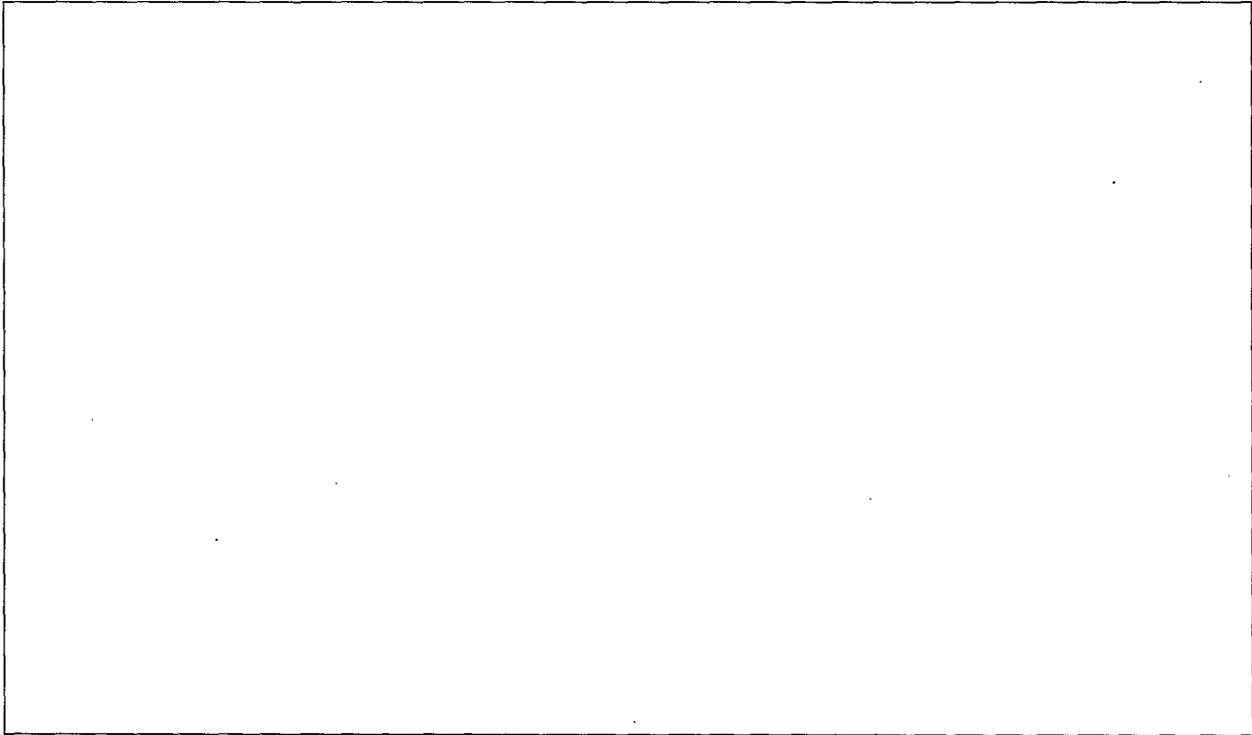
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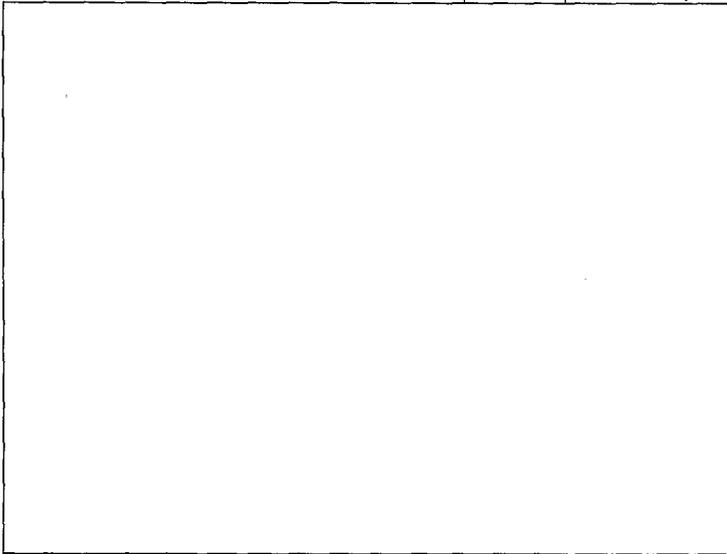
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- The capabilities and contacts al-Qa'ida forged in Sudan, including with Iran and Iraq, may give it more flexibility in designing creative responses to the loss of its safehaven in Afghanistan. [redacted]



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