

Al Qaeda's Candidate?

The impending US Presidential election and the recent terror alerts have caused many commentators to speculate about which of the candidates Al Qaeda would prefer. Bush's supporters tend to conclude that Kerry is Al Qaeda's candidate, because he has **no idea** what the war is about and might therefore be expected to pursue it less effectively. Kerry's supporters say that Al Qaeda wants Bush to win, because, by fighting without the approval of France and Germany, he is increasing the rage and alienation of Muslims everywhere and thus assisting terrorist recruitment.

Both these theories are false. They both make the fundamental mistake of assuming that Al Qaeda has a strategy. It does not. It merely has a **fantasy ideology**. Yes, Al Qaeda and its countless supporters are all yearning for a mega-attack on Americans before the election. Yes, they yearn to 'have an effect' on that election. But there is no such thing as 'the effect that they want' – or, to put that another way, provided that an attack causes death and pain and fear, there is no such thing, to them, as its not having had the desired effect. If they succeed in perpetrating such an attack, then whatever the outcome of the election, it will immediately go on their hallowed list of anti-American successes. And as they strut and bluster and celebrate, they will pick one of the two rationales mentioned above (they can always change it again later if circumstances dictate), and say that it was theirs.

Wed, 08/11/2004 - 21:59 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

There is a difference...

I think you, and perhaps also the commentators you (don't actually) cite, are conflating Al Qaeda with Islamism as an (anti)intellectual movement. Just as surely as George Bush is the candidate in this election who will best serve the long-term interests of Israel and of those who would live free of Islamism everywhere, John Kerry is the candidate who is most likely to revivify the policies of habitual capitulation that are necessary for Islamism to prosper in the West. Whatever Al Qaeda happens to say, now or later, John Kerry is clearly their man.

by a reader on Thu, 08/12/2004 - 17:37 | [reply](#)

Read Al Qaeda correspondence

Atlantic Monthly article has the actual correspondence of Al Qaeda up to and including October 2001 from actual hard drive information. To say that Al Qaeda has no strategy is false. Strategy may be flawed but it is clearly calculated and different from what you assume.

by a reader on Fri, 08/13/2004 - 02:25 | [reply](#)

Where's the beef?

Lovely. So what is it?

-- Elliot Temple
<http://www.curi.us/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Fri, 08/13/2004 - 05:40 | [reply](#)

Atlantic

Atlantic, September 2004, Al Quaida's Hard Drive. On Newstands.

by a reader on Fri, 08/13/2004 - 14:54 | [reply](#)

Arguments or at least links

Summarise it. You haven't given a reason to think you're source is worth checking out, b/c you haven't said anything of meaning yet.

-- Elliot Temple
<http://www.curi.us/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Fri, 08/13/2004 - 19:11 | [reply](#)

Don't Look

Please don't look. Atlantic Monthly is not worth checking out. Ever.

Read it unless you don't want to read it. I don't summarize on agricultural matters or on letters home.

I would not want to bias anyone's view. Even on choices of fundamentalist underwear, which seemed to bear more discussion than political parties or regime changes, and much less on why Al Quaida mullahed on inciting the invasion of Afghanistan. On that latter point a strategy flaw.

by a reader on Fri, 08/13/2004 - 20:40 | [reply](#)