

“Dealing with some of these problems in the Middle East, whether you're talking about Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Libya, others, these are some of the most complex and complicated issues that I've seen...we have to recognize that sometimes our engagement and direct involvement will stimulate and spur additional threats to our national security interests.”

John Brennan, CIA Director, 2015

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-transcripts-may-31-2015-jeb-bush-john-brennan/>

“Al Qaida and associated groups will continue to represent by far the greatest terrorist threat to Western interests, and that threat will be heightened by military action against Iraq. The broader threat from Islamist terrorists will also increase in the event of war, reflecting intensified anti-US/anti-Western sentiment in the Muslim world, including among Muslim communities in the West. And there is a risk that the transfer of CB (chemical and biological) material or expertise, during or in the aftermath of conflict, will enhance Al Qaida’s capabilities.”

UK Joint Intelligence Committee assessment to PM Tony Blair, February 2003

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/tony-blair-was-specifically-warned-that-isis-could-come-into-being-and-now-were-paying-the-price-a7123501.html>

“Our involvement in Iraq radicalised, for want of a better word, a whole generation of young people, some British citizens — not a whole generation, a few among a generation — who were — saw our involvement in Iraq, on top of our involvement in Afghanistan, as being an attack on Islam...”

Baroness Manningh-Buller, former head of MI5, 2010 evidence to the Chilcot Inquiry

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-10693001>

“An unintended consequence of the attacks has been a marked radicalization of the local population. The evidence of radicalization emerged in more than 20 interviews with tribal leaders, victims' relatives, human rights activists and officials from four provinces in southern Yemen where U.S. strikes have targeted suspected militants. They described a strong shift in sentiment toward militants affiliated with the transnational network's most active wing, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP.

"The drone strikes have not helped either the United States or Yemen," said Sultan al-Barakani, who was a top adviser to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Washington Post 2012

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/in-yemen-us-airstrikes-breed-anger-and-sympathy-for-al-qaeda/2012/05/29/gJQAUmKI0U_story.html?utm_term=.6b86d87439b7

“If you listen to the video of that guy, Michael Adebolajo, he very much says it is because of the [Afghan] war. At what point are you going to start listening to the perpetrators who tell you why they’re doing this? The same applies to the videos of the 7/7 bombers. At some point you have to be grounded in reality.”

Mark Sageman, counter-terrorism expert and former CIA field officer 2013
http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/05/27/sageman-interview_n_3342206.html

“American direct intervention in the Muslim World has paradoxically elevated the stature of and support for radical Islamists, while diminishing support for the United States to single-digits in some Arab societies.

- Muslims do not “hate our freedom,” but rather, they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights, and the longstanding, even increasing support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan, and the Gulf states.

...

Therefore, the dramatic narrative since 9/11 has essentially borne out the entire radical Islamist bill of particulars. American actions and the flow of events have elevated the authority of the Jihadi insurgents and tended to ratify their legitimacy among Muslims. Fighting groups portray themselves as the true defenders of an Ummah (the entire Muslim community) invaded and under attack — to broad public support.”

Report to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication 2004

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4040543.stm>

(Document originally at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/ADA428770.pdf>, now removed)