Foreign policy is normally recognized as the exclusive property of states. States are territorial actors; therefore, the notion of ‘foreign’ is constructed on the basis of territory and in relation with it. Viewed from this perspective, actors, institutions and activities existing beyond the frontiers of a state are ‘foreign’, except their embassies and other diplomatic offices which are in a sense an extension of the states’ territoriality and as such benefit from the rule of ‘extra-territoriality immunity’. Territoriality is also a constitutive pillar of a state’s sovereignty the defense and protection of which are emphasized in almost all constitutions as essential duties of the government and the armed forces.

Parallel to the Westphalian and ‘state-nation’ schema, there are an important number of international actors who are not territorial, however pretty influential. This group of actors represents a vast spectrum of organizations, embracing both inter-governmental organizations like the UN, NATO, OECD and the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) and non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International, Greenpeace, IBM, Coca Cola, Google and so on. Instead of having a regular foreign policy, these kinds of actors are equipped with highly developed public relations.

In this puzzle, the Vatican and the European Union (EU) stand as particular cases. The Vatican is interesting since, on the one side, the Holy See has a territory (of only 0.439 km² of its own since the Lateran Treaty of 1929). On the other side, the Vatican’s ‘foreign’ policy is not defined in relation with territory. The Papal authority is transnational and its fundamental political lines are expressed through the edicts and via the Vatican’s world-wide networks and channels.

As regards the EU, according to the second and third pillars (common foreign and security policy and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters), the EU is on the one side a predominantly inter-governmental actor while on the other side, and following the first pillar (European Community), the EU as European Community is supranational, meaning that “the member states have progressively pooled sovereignty and the role of the Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice” (Aggestam 2008:361).

The same dichotomy is evident in the domain of EU foreign policy. On the one hand, the EU members have their individual, national foreign policy and, on the other hand, the “EU member states have committed themselves to speaking with...
‘one voice’ on a range of foreign policy issues in international affairs” (ibid.). The EU ‘common foreign policy’ is conducted by a High Representative (currently Javier Solana) who is actively representing the EU on the international arena and, depending on the context, even plays a leading role in international negotiations.

In addition to this group of non-territorial actors, there is a group of non-state actors who are territorial or at least semi-territorial. Movements like the FLN in Algeria before independence, the ANC in South Africa before the end of apartheid and criminal-terrorist organizations of today like FARC in Colombia belong to this category. All these organizations or movements conduct a kind of foreign policy of their own. The FLN and the ANC were recognized by some countries which harboured their diplomatic delegates. In the case of FARC, some states (e.g. Venezuela and France) have negotiated with them in order to liberate hostages. What is common to all these three cases is firstly their territoriality and secondly attainability of their goals: Independence for Algeria, the end of apartheid in South Africa and liberation of FARC prisoners as well as finding some political accommodations in Colombia. The same rule is applicable to Islamist movements like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. They have a specific ‘foreign policy’ distinct from and even contradictory to the policy of their government (‘Authority’ in the case of Hamas). Here again in both cases, actors, whatever their goals could be, are directly connected to a specific territory. The goals of the FLN and the ANC were clear and, especially, they were realistic and attainable. While the goals of Hezbollah and Hamas are a mixture of attainable and less attainable ones. Annihilation of Israel and establishment of the (World) Caliphate (or Imamate for Hezbollah) are not considered so reasonably attainable.

Compared to all other non-state actors, the case of al-Qaida is quite different. Deprived of a determined territory, this ‘organization’ is active at the global level as a distinct, influential actor. Does al-Qaida have a ‘foreign policy’? Is the foreign policy of a non-territorial, non-governmental and transnational religiously based actor substantially different from territorial actors? This study aims to answer these questions. It is obvious that al-Qaida is neither a genuine organization nor an institution. It is an umbrella or a pillar (Qaida) of a virtual global gathering whose strong ideological creed ties together its various components. The question is who formulates al-Qaida’s ideology? According to Thomas Hegghammer, there are five principal categories of actors that shape contemporary global jihadist ideology: 1) The “old al-Qaida”, i.e. Bin Laden and Zawahiri who have a mythical status in Islamist circles and exert tremendous ideological influence, 2) some [Sunni] religious leaders whose fatwas and books are published and distributed on the Internet, 3) the strategic thinkers in their twenties or thirties who are members of militant groups, 4) the active militant organizations such as “al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula” and “al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Rivers”, and finally, 5) the “grassroot radicals” such as *al-Ansar and al-Islah* (Thomas Hegghammer 2006: 15-17). It is also assumed that ideology in general and a strongly religiously rooted ideology like al-Qaida’s in
particular have a direct impact on the formulation of foreign policy. In this concise study, I refer predominantly to the first of al-Qaida’s ideological sources.

Al-Qaida and Foreign Policy

The first question is what is ‘foreign’ to a non-territorial actor like al-Qaida? First, unlike territorial states who define ‘foreign’ in terms of territory and nationality, to al-Qaida, everybody (physical and moral body, every institution, organization and authority) who is not with al-Qaida is a ‘foreigner’, irrespective of religion, nationality, race and so on. Second, al-Qaida as a non-territorial entity could theoretically be present on each and every territory. These two distinctive elements make al-Qaida into a very singular entity, indeed. This singularity is found not only in comparison to the Westphalian territorial construction, but it also, and especially, represents a rupture from the Islamic classical theory. According to this theory, the world is divided into 2+1 categories, consisting of Dâr al-Islâm (the World of Islam), Dâr al-Harb (the World of War) and something in between, Dâr al-Aqd (the World of Contract/Armistice). However, al-Qaida’s ‘revisionist’ approach must be credited for being in compliance with the original Islamic model (Umma) designed by the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the real architect of this original approach is not al-Qaida, but Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) who invented the ingenious theory of Jâhiliyya (State of Ignorance). Jâhiliyya is grosso modo a state equivalent to what the ‘Middle Ages’ represent in western mentality as the epoch of darkness and backwardness.

He defines the jâhili society as any other society but the Muslim society. Jâhili societies may be anti-religious or religious in diverse ways, but the only thing that really matters is what they have in common – that they are jâhili. Likewise ethically, there are no agrarian ethics and no industrial ethics; there are no capitalist ethics or socialist ethics. There are only Islamic ethics and jâhili ethics (Shepard 2003: 525).

Jâhiliyya in its extension embraces not only the non-Muslim societies, but also the Muslim societies. Qutb declares that we classify them among jâhili societies not because they believe in other deities besides God or because they worship anyone other than God, but because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe in the Unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life (ch. 5).

What is particularly important in this context is that, by including the existing Muslim societies among the jâhili societies, Qutb broke down the classic Islamic categorization 2+1 mentioned above. It means that in the present situation of Muslims in the world, there is no such entity as a ‘Muslim’ or an ‘Islamic’
world. The true ‘Islamic world’ must be rebuilt on the basis of its authentic design which was thought and realised by the first Muslims.

It is in such a chaotic approach that al-Qaida defines its policy towards ‘foreigners’ which embraces Muslims as well as non-Muslims indiscriminately.

**Bin Laden and Carl Schmitt: Meaning of Politic**

To al-Qaida, the outside world, or what in the literature of foreign policy is generally called the ‘Environment’, is based on a Jâhili order which is both ignorant and repressive. Therefore, the task for true Muslims is the same as was the mission of the first Muslims and it consists in a drastic change of the whole system, beginning by tearing down the pillars of Jâhiliyya. In its world view, al-Qaida represents an incarnation of Carl Schmitt’s theory of enmity (Schmitt 1996). It is doubtful whether Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are familiar with the work of Carl Schmitt, but the study of al-Qaida’s multiple declarations and actions demonstrates a clear similarity between Schmitt’s fundamental thesis on the concept of the political with al-Qaida’s world view. To Schmitt, the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy (Schmitt, 1996:26). Viewed from this angle, the political grouping is the pillar and objective of enmity and friendship, not individuals. Precisely, al-Qaida is acting on behalf of an imaginary community which does not exist as a ‘community’ in the real world, but is living in the imagination of many Muslims as ‘real’ or at least attainable.

**Friends**

Bin Laden is not particularly explicit in his concept of friends. Obviously, his own entourage and the al-Qaida network are those closest to him. But he does not expend much energy on distinguishing between Muslims. Consequently, all Muslims are potential allies. His understanding of friends should also be seen in the light of his call for armed struggle and so Bin Laden is willing to accept Muslims with another understanding and interpretation of the Koran as friends in a given situation (cf. also his pragmatic approach to the implementation of the shari’a).

"If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves; the ill effect of ignoring these differences, at a given period of time, is much less than the ill effect of the occupation of the Muslims’ land by the main Kufr [i.e. USA]” (Declaration of War, 9).

The quotation shows again that Bin Laden is willing to enter into a compromise with his ideology to attain the final goal.

The fact that his concept of enemies is as explicit as shown below and that Bin Laden feels threatened by the USA and Israel is logically followed by an undefined concept of friends. This again is in keeping with Bin Laden’s priorities
concerning allies. Thus, Bin Laden should be seen as a strategic commander who wants as many allies as possible to fight his primary enemy. It is also from this perspective you can look at the speech from November 1, 2004 in which he addresses the American people. This may be regarded as an attempt to fight the offensive of the American state against the Muslim world from within. At the same time, it is important to note that there has been a development from the early speeches to this most recent speech. Previously, you could be left with the impression that he also wanted to fight American civilians. To what extent this development is self-contradictory is hard to tell since Bin Laden, in Declaration of War, declares that the enemy must be fought in many ways, “... the ultimate aim of pleasing Allah,...is to fight the enemy, in every aspect and a complete manner” (Declaration of War, 9-10). In this way, Bin Laden’s speech to the American people may be regarded as a tactical move in the struggle against the external enemy. To sum up, Bin Laden’s concept of friends may be seen as a result of temporary strategic considerations. So, to Bin Laden, friends and alliances become a means to fight the primary enemy.

Enemies
Overall, the point of departure for Bin Laden’s concept of enemies is those who offer resistance to or oppose Muslims in general and everywhere.

Bin Laden is very explicit in his concept of enemies. Thus, the USA is the primary enemy:

“If there are more than one duty to be carried out, then the most important one should receive priority. Clearly after Belief (Imân) there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land.” (Declaration of War, 9).

Apart from the USA being the primary enemy, Bin Laden constantly links the USA and Israel together as being part of the same hostile conspiracy. “...and leaving the main enemy in the area – the American Zionist alliance – enjoy peace and security?!” (Declaration of War, 8). This quotation also refers to the tolerance shown by the Saudi family vis-à-vis Israel and the USA. Thus, enmity towards others is derived from the influence the USA has upon other states and groups. The acceptance of American influence is consequently the root of degeneration of Muslim societies. Where the USA and Israel are the primary enemy, the allies of this alliance become the secondary enemy who should also be fought. As examples of secondary enemies or collaborators, Bin Laden mentions Great Britain, Russia and the West in general, in addition to the Saudi regime in Saudi Arabia.

Neither Friends nor Enemies
Besides ‘enemies’ and ‘friends’, there are some states or a group of states that al-Qaeda considers equivalent to the Islamic classic, the World of Contract (Dâr al-‘Aqd). The best example of this category is the Islamic Republic of Iran. It
should be noted that from the creation of al-Qaida in 1998 until today, there have been systematic clashes—some of them very violent, indeed—between al-Qaida and a number of Muslim countries, in particular the Arab governments. Several bombings and other terrorist actions in Egypt, in Jordan, in some North African countries, in Saudi Arabia, in Indonesia and so on. But, not a single action of this kind against Iran, neither within Iranian territories nor against Iranian interests abroad. And this, despite the fact that Iran is a Shi’a country, governed by the Shi’a clergy while Bin Laden is a Wahhabi. And according to the Wahhabi creed, the Shi’a represent a heretic sect that must be combated. The only few altercations on the Shi’a issue between al-Qaida and Iran happened sporadically; one between Zarqawi, al-Qaida’s commander in Iraq (killed in 2006), who criticized the Shi’a in Iraq very vigorously. And vehement attacks on the part of al-Zawahiri against the Iranian government on 8 September 2008 (Reuters) in which he accused Iran of collaborating with the USA against Muslims. An accusation that is a manifestation of Zawahiri’s frustration rather than a serious statement rooted in facts. The Iranian government had neither initiated any attack nor regular criticism against al-Qaida. It is even alleged that in the aftermath of the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Iran had hosted Bin Laden’s family (among them, his oldest son) and al-Qaida’s combatants. The fact is that al-Qaida and the Iranian Islamist government are tied to each other in a cooperation-conflict relation. They are each other’s allies against the West while at the same time, they are competing for the leadership of the Islamic world. This picture corresponds somehow to the relations between the USSR and China under Mao; both countries were socialist and anti-Western, though at the same time, each other’s rivals.

From the same perspective, organizations like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon which are Iranian satellites and protégés, belong, of course, to the same category as Iran herself. It is a fact that Hamas which is Sunni and a branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Hezbollah which was initially created by revolutionary Iran in 1984 as a Shi’a jihadist organisation, are both cultivating ambivalent relations with al-Qaida. No direct relations between them, sporadic support from al-Qaida to the Palestinian cause and to the ‘people’ of Lebanon only in words. It is also a fact that due to the massive presence of Hamas and Jihad al-Islami in Palestine, al-Qaida has until now had no real opportunity to organize actions in Palestine. On the other hand, when opportunity arises, al-Qaida tries to provoke trouble and actions which are not necessarily compatible with the pro-Iranian organisations. The best example of this kind of attitude is perhaps the rebellion of the Fath al-Islam (a Sunni jihadist movement) in north Lebanon which was clearly an al-Qaida showdown after the reinforcement of Hezbollah’s position due to the Israeli war on Hezbollah in the summer 2007.

Iran and its allies are not the only example in this category. Bin Laden has offered Europe to become a ‘neutral zone’ in al-Qaida’s struggle against the USA. In his declaration of 2007, he explicitly proposed to the European
countries to dissociate themselves from the US yoke in exchange for a guarantee of not being al-Qaida’s target anymore.

Conclusion
This study shows that, in our globalised and ‘googlised’ contemporary world, states are no longer maintaining the monopoly on foreign policy. The last three decades have witnessed the emergence of an increasing number of non-territorial actors who are also conducting foreign policy, albeit without the traditional protocol and formalities. In this context, al-Qaida represents a prototype of new international and even global actors who consider themselves not only a substitute of the ‘State’, but also act as delegates of or successors to a titanic ‘Empire’; although it is, in the case of al-Qaida, the Islamic empire. On the question that ‘politics’ in general and ‘international politics’ in particular are in reality a matter of friends and enemies, it is curious that this idea emanated from a pro-Nazi jurist (Carl Schmitt) and that it is prominent in the mode of thinking and acting of Islamists. Perhaps the obsession with the concept of ‘enemy’ in a normal situation (without war or great crisis) is generally more visible with totalitarian regimes than with non-totalitarian ones. One reason may lie in the self-reflection of totalitarian regimes which by nature are convinced of being besieged by enemies both internally and externally. To them, everything outside of the totality that they can control is a potential enemy.

Bin Laden has a geographical point of departure which originates in his rupture with Saudi Arabia. The main enemy is the USA-Israel alliance, alternatively those in support of this alliance. The concept of enemies and the rhetoric are very direct and explicit. However, the concept of friends is not a static concept as it may be adapted according to a given situation. Thus, the general view is that Bin Laden is strategic in relation to his mission and chooses his friends and allies on the principle whether they will be able to help him with his primary mission. So, the primary goal is to fight the main enemy and subsequently to introduce the world Islamic order.

This study reveals the existence of a relation between the nature of the goal and claims put forward by the non-state actors and the plausibility of compromise as well as the degree of attainability of the goals. When the claim is territorial (autonomy, independence) and when the goal is political rearrangement at national level, compromise would be very hard, however not impossible. When, on the contrary, the claim is not territorial and the goal is beyond the reach of attainability, eg. restoration of a new Caliphate, compromise becomes almost impossible. The non-state actor who persists in pursuing these claims and goals has only little chance of satisfying the claims and attaining the goals. This is the case of al-Qaida.

