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University of Dayton terrorism expert Mark Ensalaco is looking into the future while the world reflects on the 10 years since 9/11. The author of *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11* said, "al-Qaida will be 'that thing' we talk about in the past tense," when asked what the next decade holds in the war on terror.

Citing research in his book, Ensalaco surmises al-Qaida has about reached the end of its shelf life. The first wave of terrorism movements — the Palestinian movements — started in 1968 and started to fizzle in the late 1980s, a shelf life of 20-25 years. The second wave, or the "al-Qaida wave," started shortly thereafter. Based on the historical timeline in his book, Ensalaco said, "you can really foresee al-Qaida being gone like Black September."

"You saw Palestinian terrorism die out because of the peace process. While they haven't achieved a state, diplomacy has eliminated the strategic function of the Palestinian terror groups. If the Palestinian pattern and today's political patterns hold, like the Arab Spring, there won't be a push for Islamist terror."

It's already starting, according to Ensalaco.

"Al-Qaida is losing its relevance. Its ideology is irrelevant. Its capability to mount attacks is degraded. It's lost its leader. It's going to lose more leaders," Ensalaco said. "Look at the ETA in Spain or the IRA. They aren't around. It doesn't last."

Ensalaco cautions that al-Qaida's decline doesn't mean attacks will end. He said there probably will be outliers similar to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing that came at the onset of the al-Qaida wave. He said Islamist extremism won't ultimately end until senior clerics preach that blowing oneself up in the name of martyrdom and Islam isn't acceptable.

Ensalaco added that similar to Communism, the Islamist terror movement also will suffer a slide toward extinction because of failing to live up to its promises.

"Those movements are hollow. That's how you win these things. People wake up and say they're not taking it anymore," Ensalaco said. "Radical Muslims are going to wake up one day and say, 'What have you done to feed me? What did it get us?' Militant Islam has failed everywhere."

Ensalaco went on to say if there's going to be any type of extremism in the next 10 years, it won't be tied to Islam but to conflicts caused by dislocations of people tied to global climate change and people displaced by food shortages.

Ensalaco did take a moment to reflect on the past 10 years. He said perhaps one of the most disappointing things is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed has yet to stand trial.

"The fact we've had the mastermind of this attack since 2003 and he has yet to be tried and punished for these crimes is most disappointing," Ensalaco said. "George Bush's decision to run roughshod over the law hindered the process. We can't use his statements taken while being coerced or tortured. Prosecutors have tried to scrub the info and acquire it using legal methods, but it's been tough."

Ensalaco, who has talked to CNN, CBS Radio News, The Associated Press, *The Christian Science Monitor* and Reuters, among others, was inspired to write his book on terrorism after a student asked on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, "Where did this come from?" Ensalaco presents a narrative account of the origins of Middle Eastern terrorism, addressing when and why terrorists started targeting Americans and American interests and what led to the Sept. 11 attacks.

The book has been met with much acclaim. The Journal of American History called it "A must-read for everyone." Donna Schlagheck, author of *International Terrorism: An Introduction to Concepts and Actors*, said, "There is little or no work like this available to scholars, teachers and citizens at a time when an informed public should be engaged in a thoughtful discourse on this matter." Choice said, "In a clear, methodical, and conscientiously neutral way, Ensalaco documents the political history of
the rise of terrorism in the Middle East...Essential for anyone beginning a study of Middle Eastern terrorism, or as a historical reference."

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For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at srobinson@udayton.edu or 937-229-3391.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.