Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism

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INTRODUCTION

As the United States continues to fight on multiple fronts to disrupt the efforts of al Qaeda and its affiliates, the U.S. government has slowly come to realize that military force alone cannot defeat radical Islamist extremism (hereafter "radical extremism").[1] Today, there is a growing consensus that countering the ideology that drives this extremism is a critical element in the overall effort to prevent extremist acts of violence. Despite this greater realization, developing a precise strategy to counter extremism effectively and empower mainstream alternatives has proved challenging. This issue posed a difficult challenge to the Bush administration and remains a daunting and urgent task for the Obama administration.

While President Obama's attention has been focused primarily on economic issues during his first year in office, he has also engaged in high-profile public diplomacy in an effort to develop a new relationship between the United States and what he refers to as "the Muslim world." Early efforts are promising. But the Obama administration faces tough challenges. Radicalization has grown so complex that a grand, overarching strategy is unlikely to succeed.

Al Qaeda and like-minded groups have demonstrated an ability to propagate their ideology throughout the world, and thus they pose a terrorist threat not only to the United States but to all nations. They have succeeded in radicalizing a segment of Muslim youth that finds appeal in al Qaeda's global narrative that the West is at war with Islam. Radical ideology is also propagated by so-called "conveyor belt" groups, such as Hizb al-Tahrir, which do not explicitly endorse violence, but contribute to the underlying problems. Other groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, do not subscribe to al Qaeda's global jihadist vision, but have nonetheless increased extremism

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1. We define "radical Islamist extremism" to include the ideologies of takfiri jihadist groups like al Qaeda; nationalist Islamist terrorist groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah; and the so-called conveyor belt groups like Hizb al-Tahrir. While the conveyor belt groups do not perpetrate acts of terrorism per se, they help lay the groundwork for al Qaeda's toxic message to take hold and for individuals to take action. We do not consider anti-U.S. or anti-West attitudes alone to constitute radicalism. The Task Force also distinguished between radicalization and religious piety/devotion to Islam. The extremist ideology at issue is a distortion of Islam, and, in fact, many who have been radicalized remain surprisingly ignorant about the religion, particularly as the radicalization process has accelerated in recent years.

among the populations in Palestine and Lebanon – often building support through their broad and extensive social service networks. Developing a strategy to address all of these differing manifestations of the extremist ideology will be no easy feat.

While the public and the media have often focused on radicalization and terrorism emanating from the Middle East or South Asia, extremism has become a serious problem in a number of European countries as well, such as the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Europe has attracted a huge number of Muslim political and economic refugees in the past few decades. These immigrants and their children do not always fully integrate into European societies. Instead, they experience identity crises and build resentment toward their new countries. Terrorist and extremist groups are able to exploit this resentment.

While many European countries face acute radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups, recent events suggest that the United States is not immune to similar phenomena on our side of the Atlantic. Overall, Muslim-American communities have had a relatively positive integration experience – particularly in comparison to Europe. This is often attributed to the inclusive, immigrant-friendly environment in the United States, stringent and well-enforced antidiscrimination policies, and, most of all, the strong belief in an equal opportunity to climb the socioeconomic ladder and achieve financial prosperity.

But recent months have seen troubling developments. In October 2008, a Somali youth who was apparently radicalized and recruited in the Minneapolis area participated in what the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) believes is the first instance of a suicide bombing by a U.S. citizen. In March 2009, a senior FBI official told the U.S. Senate that "In Minneapolis, we believe there has been an active and deliberate attempt to recruit individuals – all of whom are young men, some only in their late teens – to travel to Somalia to fight or train on behalf of al-Shabaab."[2] None of these recruits is believed to have been trained to return home and conduct attacks in the United States, but the FBI remains concerned about such a possibility.

The United States has uncovered terrorist cells operating in the United States and apparently planning to conduct attacks here. In March 2009, two members of a group dubbed the Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for plotting to attack synagogues and the Israeli Consulate in California in 2005. The cell, comprised of Muslim converts who had met while incarcerated, highlighted the problem of radicalization in U.S. prisons. In 2007, a potential plot was disrupted in which Atlanta college students had surveilled possible targets in

2. Philip Mudd, Assoc. Executive Assistant Dir., National Security Branch, FBI, Statement before the S. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Gov't Affairs, (Mar. 11, 2009), *available at* http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress09/mudd031109.htm.

Washington, D.C. According to the FBI, these students were connected virtually to a global network run by British webmaster Younis Tsouli, who facilitated Internet communication with prospective cells in Sweden, Bosnia, and Canada, among other locations. Indeed, one reason that the United States is not immune to extremist radicalization is the transnational reach of extremist media outlets, violent propaganda on the Internet, and virtual connectivity between U.S. extremists and those overseas.

To confront this ideology of radical extremism, there is a variety of steps that the Obama administration should take, including strategic, functional, and organizational departures from the previous Administration's approach. First, and perhaps most importantly, the Obama administration needs to view the spread of an ideology of radical extremism with a degree of urgency comparable to the way it views the spread of violent groups animated by that ideology. The government's first priority is to prevent extremist groups from using violence to achieve their goals. In addition, the government needs to elevate public consciousness, and it needs to make very clear that it fears only the distorted version of Islam propagated by radical extremists. Islam itself is not considered a danger.

To break the radicalization cycle, the United States and its allies must stimulate competition to thwart the would-be "radicalizers": influential, independent extremist clerics, low-level recruiters, or al Qaeda and its global propaganda network. It is essential to provide a multiplicity of choices to distract or dissuade those tempted to join extremist causes.

By definition, the greater the number of alternatives available to young people, the greater their freedom; the more credible the voices who expose young people to alternative arguments, the less vulnerable they are to extremist narratives. Having these choices will help reduce the likelihood that the terrorists' and extremists' global narrative – that the West is at war with Islam – resonates in individual psyches.

Like in Iraq, cultivating such alternatives will require empowering mainstream Muslims in their efforts to provide hopeful, practical alternatives to jihadist ideology. It will also require substantial investment.

A key part of an effective strategy will be rejuvenating efforts to encourage prosperity, reform, and democracy in Arab countries. As a strategic response to extremism, the United States and its allies must offer viable and attractive political alternatives to the dark vision offered by radical extremist groups. Prosperous democratic societies that respect the rights of their citizens are more resilient and less susceptible to political instability and radicalization. If grievances can be peacefully expressed and mediated through democratic institutions, citizens are less apt to turn to more extreme options.

Democracy promotion efforts must be de-linked from counterterrorism policy, however. Connecting the two, as the Bush administration did, has the unintended consequence of undermining the ability of both the U.S. government and nongovernment organizations to play an effective role in

supporting democracy and reform efforts. It raises suspicions that the real purpose of the efforts is regime change.

U.S. aid can be leveraged more effectively in the Middle East by linking assistance to anticorruption. Persistent corruption is the number one frustration among the Arab public, a factor radical extremists exploit to challenge government legitimacy. By challenging these governments to become more transparent, the United States builds bridges and delivers al Qaeda a rhetorical jab.

Where terrorist groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, provide social support and aid to their communities, the United States must work to empower alternatives to compete with such groups. In some cases, this will require that the United States help governments to decentralize and rely on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and other sources of expertise to do so. These actions might not help to "sell the United States" to skeptical countries, but they might achieve a related goal of at least preventing extremist groups from reaping political benefits from community aid.

The United States should also work more aggressively to end government-only contacts within Muslim majority countries. By identifying and supporting entrepreneurs, writers, activists, business people, media personalities, and other opinion leaders, the United States can find new ways to empower or amplify voices competing with those of the extremists.

While radicalization is a significantly smaller challenge in the United States than it is in many Middle Eastern, South Asian, and European countries, the United States cannot afford to ignore the threat of radicalization of American youth. It is critical to take steps now to ensure that the broadly positive situation here does not deteriorate.

To do this, the United States need not reinvent the wheel. It should pay close attention to counterradicalization programs established in Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia – ideally, by creating a "counterradicalization forum" where the policymakers and practitioners from countries engaged in these efforts can compare notes and best practices. In particular, U.S. officials should learn from a U.K. strategy that seeks to ensure that all relevant government agencies are engaged in and fully understand the counterterrorism and counterradicalization strategy. At the very least, the United States should focus on ensuring that its agencies avoid mistakes that will poison community relations and possibly heighten the radicalization threat. Most importantly, U.S. government outreach should be as broad as possible. The government must not allow one group or organization to monopolize representation of these tremendously diverse communities.

The U.S. government should work with communities to develop means of engagement at the local level beyond those provided by law enforcement. The City of Amsterdam's "information house" is a good model of an innovative approach to countering radicalization at the local

level. Amsterdam has developed networks in the local communities that people can turn to with concerns about specific individuals. The information house can resolve and address concerns about radicalization, as distinguished from merely increased religiosity, for example. Amsterdam's information house works closely with law enforcement officers, who get involved only when individuals are deemed to pose an immediate danger. Otherwise, the information house leads in intervening and defusing situations.

U.S. law enforcement agencies have long reached out to Muslim and Arab communities. However, it is important that these communities see more of the government than only its law enforcement arms. Therefore, it is critical that the government broaden its means of engagement to include service-providing entities, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Finally, the Obama administration should work with the existing bureaucracy to confront these challenges. There are a number of steps to take in this regard. The Administration should start by designating the White House as the single address for the counterradicalization strategy. Only by having someone close to the President in charge of the overall effort can there be any hope of maintaining strategic focus over the long term.

I. EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY TODAY

While President Obama's primary focus since taking office has been on economic issues, he has also personally engaged in high-profile public diplomacy efforts. During his inaugural address, he spoke about a new relationship between Washington and the Muslim world, and emphasized a new framework based on commonality of interests. President Obama also granted an extended interview to al-Arabiya, the Saudi-based television station. The President appears particularly interested in setting a new tone and style to U.S. engagement with Arab and Muslim peoples. Public diplomacy is only one part of the equation, of course. Exactly how these statements are to be translated into a more comprehensive policy will be the ultimate determinant of success of the President's efforts in this critical area.

While the President's early efforts and personal attention to the task at hand is promising, he faces many tough challenges. The radicalization problem has grown in complexity over the past seven years. Simple, overarching solutions are unrealistic. Al Qaeda remains the major threat to the United States, due in part to its ability to conduct large-scale terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies, and in part to its demonstrated ability to spread its ideology and propaganda far beyond the increasingly secure safe havens in the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Like-minded terrorist groups located in Asia, Africa, Europe,

and the Middle East with varying degrees of ties to al Qaeda also play a key role in radicalizing Muslim youth and encouraging them to pursue a path of violence. Radicalization is spread by conveyor belt groups, which do not explicitly endorse violence, but contribute to the underlying problems. Radicalization is also spread by Hamas and Hezbollah, which have succeeded in dramatically increasing extremism among the populations in the Palestinian territories and in Lebanon.

A. Al Qaeda's Narrative and Some Positive News

While al Qaeda remains the most serious threat to the United States, at times over the past year its core has experienced real difficulty disseminating its message. Its websites have been compromised, and the organization is becoming paranoid as it struggles to adapt. More significantly, the organization has been compelled to respond defensively to a small but growing chorus of Muslims who are challenging al Qaeda's violent tactics, especially those against fellow Muslims.

Former supporters and extremists are turning against their old organizations, and expanding existing fissures. The most prominent is former Egyptian Islamic Jihad head Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (also known as Dr. Fadl). Al Qaeda often cited Dr. Fadl's previous treatises as ideological justification for its actions, but he has since firmly renounced Osama bin Laden and has written a new book rejecting al Qaeda's message and tactics. Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-Awdah, an extremist cleric whose incarceration in the 1990s by the Saudis reportedly helped inspire Osama bin Laden to action, went on television to decry al Qaeda's actions, asking bin Laden, "How much blood has been spilt? How many innocent people, children, elderly, and women have been killed . . . in the name of al Qaeda?"[3]

In addition to the clerical establishment, other former extremists have stepped into the debate over the future of Islam and have begun to reject the fringe ideas advanced by extremist theoreticians. The U.K.-based Quilliam Foundation is the best known of the nongovernment organizations challenging the extremist ideology. Led by two former members of Hizb al-Tahrir (HT), the Quilliam Foundation describes itself as the first "counter-extremism think tank." The organization aims to undermine the ideological foundation of radical extremism by denying its premises. Quilliam argues that the ideology must be critiqued and refuted "wherever it is found." This includes developing an effective counternarrative to rebut the message put forth. Addressing local grievances is also critically important, in their view, to ensure that the terrorist and extremist global narrative does not resonate in individuals' psyches.

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3. Peter Burgen & Paul Cruickshank, *The Unraveling: The Jihadist Revolt Against bin Laden*, THE NEW REPUBLIC, June 11, 2008, *available at* http://www.tnr.com/article/the-unraveling?page=1.

B. The Extremist Global Narrative Is Still Strong

Despite these signs of progress, the underlying extremist narrative offered by al Qaeda and its affiliates remains strong and compelling for many Muslims. Al Qaeda charges that the United States and the West are at war with Islam and that Muslim countries must unite to defeat this threat and reestablish the Caliphate (a unified federal Islamic government ruled by Sharia law), with its Caliph as spiritual and temporal head of Islam. As evidence of the truth of their narrative, extremist groups point to the war in Iraq, Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib, U.S. support for Israel, and Washington's reluctance to compel changes in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East.

While radicalization would hardly be surprising among those personally affected, such as the detainees at Abu Ghraib, it is alarming that al Qaeda has successfully recruited distant witnesses of these policies. Instrumental to this wider success is the group's ability to connect individuals' grievances to this global narrative. In fact, there is strong evidence that al Qaeda's efforts to spread its destructive ideology have encouraged terrorist groups, such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (formerly known as the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat), to shift their ideological focus from local targets to the global struggle. By appropriating the al Qaeda brand, "homegrown" terrorists have become far more dangerous than they would otherwise have been. Terrorists inspired by, but with no direct ties to, al Qaeda continue to perpetrate violence and justify their actions by reciting al Qaeda's global narrative.

The reasons that the extremist narrative finds fertile soil in so many societies around the world are as various as the societies themselves. Some young Muslims respond to a radicalizing message because they feel excluded from their own societies, trapped in poverty or hopelessness within authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and beyond. Others, well-off and well-educated, live in Western democracies but struggle with issues of belonging and identity and find that the extremist message resonates with their experience and circumstances. Even as armed forces score successes against al Qaeda, the ideological challenge, unless confronted, will continue to metastasize. There are many cases of groups taking advantage of al Qaeda's global narrative.

C. "Conveyor Belt" Groups

Beyond al Qaeda's terror network, there are extremist groups that, while they do not meet the criteria of "terrorists" and do not condone violence per se, do contribute to the radicalization process. This category includes groups such as HT and Tabligh Jamaat, which are often referred to as "gateway" or "conveyor belt" groups. Through these groups, as the State

Department describes, individuals can turn "by stages, into sympathizers, supporters, and ultimately, members of terrorist networks."[4]

HT, or "The Liberation Party," is an international Islamist party, whose raison d'être has been to propagate an "Islamic" way of life by re-establishing the Caliphate. HT plans to achieve its ambitious objectives by overthrowing Arab and Middle East regimes through military coups, to unify their disparate states into a Caliphate under a single ruler, and then to wage war from the Caliphate on the rest of the world.

HT preaches a "clash of civilizations" ideology to its members: it criticizes Western societies as immoral and destructive, and thereby intensifies the need to transform those societies. HT tries to connect individuals' vastly ranging local grievances, including perceived racial, religious, and socioeconomic discrimination, to the perceived global injustices facing Muslims, such as the conflicts in Iraq and Bosnia. In essence, localized problems are reinterpreted as links in the chain of the global Muslim struggle.

Although their tactical use of violence differs, HT and al Qaeda share similar goals, and the danger posed by groups like HT should not be underestimated. Numerous individuals, radicalized by the toxic message and ideology of HT and comparable groups, have joined terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda, which more explicitly endorse violent activity. Perhaps most famously, Syrian-born militant Omar Bakri was formerly an HT member in London until he left to form al-Muhajiroun, a jihadist organization that advocates the use of violence. Richard Reid, the British "shoe bomber" who attempted to blow up an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami in 2002, was one of the members of the latter group. Several of the plotters of the September 11 attacks, including Mohammed Atta, read HT's German magazine, *Explizit,* and attended lectures by one of HT's leaders in Germany.

In fact, HT has openly acknowledged its association with terrorist entities. In an interview with a Pakistani newspaper in 2005, HT spokesman Naveed Butt said:

> After the Iranian revolution, Hizb's senior leaders went to see Imam Khomeini to discuss Islamisation with him and to ask him to declare Khilafa. Similarly, we went to Mulla Omar to enquire whether he had declared Khilafa the goal of the Taliban. We have given all these movements assistance in following the road back to the Khilafat.[5]

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4. OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM 2006, at 12 (2007), http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82727.htm.

5. Mazhar Abbas, *Hizb-ut-Tahrir Attracts Educated Elites in Pakistan*, FRIDAY TIMES, July 1-7, 2005, *available at* http://corpusalienum.multiply.com/journal/item/183/Hizb-ut-Tahrir_attracts_educated_elites_in_Pakistan_Mazhar_Abbas_The_Friday_Times_July_17_2005_Vol._XVII_No._19_.

HT is also becoming widely popular, as the group attracts thousands of people to its rallies in Europe and Asia. HT has been especially adept at taking advantage of the Internet, including "YouTube," to promulgate its message. This avenue of dissemination is quite effective, particularly with the younger generations of Muslims in the West.

D. U.S. Efforts To Counter Conveyor Belt Groups

U.S. efforts to defeat al Qaeda and the broader terrorist networks have been well documented. Developing a strategy to take on these types of conveyor belt groups has proven vexing. The United States has been understandably reluctant to use prosecution, designation, or other legal tools to target these groups for a variety of reasons, including concerns about violating First Amendment protections. However, by confronting only the violent groups that embrace an extremist ideology, the United States has taken legitimate concerns too far and has largely ignored some groups that are feeding the causes of radicalization.

The task of countering extremist conveyor belt groups has fallen on organizations like U.K.-based Quilliam. Targeting extremists is the main focus of their efforts. Quilliam aims to operate globally and has a high profile. On university campuses and in the public square, Quilliam openly challenges extremist groups and accuses them of having twisted Islam beyond all recognition. By fostering a "genuine British Islam . . . free from the bitter politics of the Arab and Muslim world,"[6] Quilliam believes extremist ideology can be defeated. Unfortunately, voices like Quilliam are far too few in number. There is a need to identify and amplify such voices throughout the world as a key component of a strategy to counter all groups espousing the ideology of extremism, not only groups perpetrating violence.

E. Hamas and Hezbollah

Islamist terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah have gained power and momentum over the past eight years, both through the ballot box and through force. Hamas took the United States by surprise with its 2006 electoral victory in the Palestinian territories, and followed this win with an armed coup in Gaza in 2007. Hezbollah, on the other hand, has been a political party in Lebanon for many years and is currently a major power center in the Lebanese government. The extent of Hezbollah's control of the government is best illustrated by its power to veto any government action that it opposes. Hezbollah was able to achieve this greater political role in the wake of its armed takeover of Beirut in early 2008.

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6. Why Quilliam?, http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/why-quilliam.html.

Hamas' and Hezbollah's greater domestic legitimacy complicates external efforts to develop strategies to reduce their appeal. Legitimacy has been gained not only through the ballot box (a process rejected by al Qaeda), but also through extensive social service networks that local governments have proven incapable of matching. The 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel is a good example of this. In the wake of the 34-day war, Hezbollah immediately stepped in and took the lead in providing financial assistance to those whose properties were damaged during the conflict. This was a task well beyond the capabilities of the Lebanese government.

Because military solutions against groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah are unlikely to succeed, a successful strategy will require the emergence of credible domestic political alternatives that are demonstrably able to contend with each group. Such alternatives exist but are presently weak and fragmented; far too little has been done to support them, either politically or materially.

F. Radicalization in Europe

While the public and the media have often focused attention on radicalization and terrorism emanating from the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, or from South Asia, extremism and radicalization have become key issues in European countries, including in some key U.S. allies such as Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Renowned historian Bernard Lewis recently noted: "In the last few hundred years or so Europe has played a prominent and often a dominant role in the affairs of the Middle East . . . . [F]or the time being I think the interesting question is not what role will Europe play in the affairs of the Middle East but what role will the Middle East play in the affairs of Europe."[7] In recent years Europe has attracted huge numbers of Muslim political and economic refugees from Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. Some of these immigrants and their children are failing to – or are not allowed to – integrate into European societies. This creates profound questions of identity. Individuals who no longer identify with their "home" country and feel excluded from and resentful toward their adopted society search for a cause. Some choose to accept an ideology of violence or define themselves as adherents of a radicalized form of Islam; though their numbers are small, their potential impact is large. Radical preachers, such as U.K.-based Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza, aggressively pushed the extremist ideology and for a number of years served as influential radicalizing forces in the United Kingdom and beyond. The terrorist cells in Britain have proven particularly dangerous because of their links to al Qaeda. These links have often been established through personal

7. Bernard Lewis, *Lectures at the Jerusalem Conference*, Feb. 20, 2008, *available at* http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/125332.

connections between the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom and Pakistan and Kashmir.

While only a very small percentage of radicalized European Muslims have turned to terrorism, those who do present a special threat. Would-be terrorists emigrating from European countries face far fewer obstacles than those from the Middle East to entering the United States and adapting to its lifestyle. Therefore, the U.S. government must pay close attention to radicalization abroad. In addition, small cells of extremists in the United States can connect far more easily with like-minded terrorists overseas using technological advances available via the Internet.

G. Radicalization on the Home Front

Muslim-American communities have had a more positive integration experience as compared with their counterparts in Europe. This difference is largely attributable to the inclusive, immigrant-friendly environment in the United States, stringent and well-enforced anti-discrimination policies, and, most of all, the strong belief in an equal opportunity to climb the socioeconomic ladder and achieve financial prosperity.

The U.S. government has established a bureaucracy to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all U.S. citizens, including those of Muslim and Arab origin. It has long been doing so with little fanfare or publicity. As a beneficial by-product, these actions may help thwart radicalization. The following are some of the many, little-known U.S. government actions:

- Justice Department lawsuits against schools and employers prohibiting students and employees from wearing hijabs.
- Justice Department prosecutions of hate crimes against Muslims.
- Efforts of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights to address and resolve complaints of individuals (including Muslims) related to no-fly lists, profiling, and naturalization backlogs.

Law enforcement and intelligence officials have identified prisons and the Internet as two major areas of potential radicalization within the United States. A good example of this phenomenon is the 2005 plot by the Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh involving Muslim converts who met in prison and were planning an attack on synagogues and the Israeli Consulate in California. In 2007, Atlanta college students surveilled and plotted attacks on possible targets in Washington, D.C. According to the FBI, these students were connected virtually to a global network run by British webmaster Younis Tsouli, who facilitated Internet communication with prospective cells in Sweden, Bosnia, and Canada, among other locations. The plot was disrupted before any attacks occurred.

Today, U.S. authorities are increasingly concerned about possible radicalization in Somali-American communities. There have been reports of young men disappearing from these communities in the United States and then surfacing in Somalia, where they have fought with the Islamist forces in the battle for control over Mogadishu. One of these individuals committed a suicide attack. This phenomenon of increased radicalization in the Somali expatriate communities is not limited to the United States, as similar counterterrorism probes are underway in Europe and Australia.

Authorities have also uncovered entities tied to Hezbollah and Hamas in the United States, though this has been less of a concern in recent years. For example, in November 2008, jurors convicted the leaders of a Texas-based charity, the Holy Land Foundation, for providing support to Hamas and serving as the group's representatives in the United States. Evidence presented at the trial revealed that the defendants "provided financial support to the families of Hamas martyrs, detainees, and activists knowing and intending that such assistance would support the Hamas terrorist organization."[8] In July 2007, the United States designated the Goodwill Charitable Office (GCO) in Dearborn, Michigan, for its ties to Hezbollah, charging the organization with instructing "Hezbollah members in the United States to send their contributions to GCO and to contact the GCO for the purpose of contributing to the Martyrs Foundation."[9] The activities of groups like Hamas and Hezbollah in the United States remain a concern.

The vast majority of the Arab-American and Muslim-American population is well integrated and rejects this violent ideology. Unfortunately, the U.S. government has not always effectively empowered these communities to provide an alternative to the extremist narrative.

II. EFFORTS TO ADDRESS EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY

A. Enhancing Counterradicalization Programs

As specialists in the Middle East and Europe have begun to understand the radicalization process and what feeds it, many Middle Eastern and European countries have begun to create programs to combat it. These programs are designed to intervene early to prevent radicalization from taking place or to reverse radicalization where it has already occurred. European countries are developing their own unique national approaches to preventing radicalization, and some regional coordination is beginning to

8. Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Federal Judge Hands Down Sentence in Holy Land Foundation Case: Holy Land Foundation & Leaders Convicted on Providing Material Support to Hamas Terrorist Organization (May 27, 2009), *available at* http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2009/May/09-nsd-519.html.

9. Press Release, U.S. Dep't of the Treasury, Twin Treasury Actions Take Aim at Hizballah's Support Network (July 24, 2007), *available at* http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/ 200772410294613432.htm.

occur. The French strategy, for example, differs greatly from the British and Dutch approach in that France sees radicalization as a problem of social integration rather than a religious issue. As such, France maintains a strong police and intelligence presence, rather than cooperating with local imams to create a connection between them and the local community. France is confident that this approach is highly effective, but support for the Dutch and British method is more widespread. The Dutch and British approach engages the community and uses individuals – imams, teachers, and social workers – who have already established a community network.

The British have also tried to extend implementation of their counter-radicalization strategy to areas of government beyond the law enforcement and intelligence agencies because many agencies can have an effect – negative or positive – on community relations and radicalization. The British have even taken steps to ensure that the diplomatic corps follows through and implements this counterradicalization strategy, which is also called the "Prevent" strategy. Ambassadors in posts where potential threats to Britain emanate, such as Pakistan, are rated on how effectively they have carried out their counterradicalization responsibilities. Like Britain, many European countries perceive radicalization as serious and thus have developed programs to address it.

The best known government counterradicalization program in the Middle East is that of Saudi Arabia, where the threat originated and funds to sustain it often emanate. The program focuses on radicalized individuals who have not yet taken violent action and attempts to reintegrate them into Saudi society. The rehabilitators help these individuals find jobs, housing, and spouses. Saudi clerics use the Quran and other religious teachings to "reeducate" them, and explain how they were previously on the wrong path. While U.S. officials and others have been highly complimentary of the Saudi program, citing its low recidivism rates, this model would not be easily replicated in the West, in part because the Saudis put tremendous pressure on the individuals' families, threatening to hold them accountable if the individual rejoins the terrorist cause.

B. Countering Extremism Through Democratic and Economic Reform

Political and economic reform in the Middle East remains the best strategic response to overcoming the region's deep structural challenges and reducing the pool of potential recruits to radical extremism.

Deeper economic reform is urgently needed. According to the World Bank, the region as a whole currently faces a youth bulge that requires that one hundred million new jobs be created by 2010. Finding ways to absorb such huge numbers of young people presents a daunting challenge, especially given current unemployment rates of twenty-five percent or higher.

From Morocco to the Gulf, governments are experimenting with ways to revitalize or retool their economies. Due to a surge in oil prices over the

past few years, spectacular cash holdings have spurred the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, among others, to invest directly in megaprojects within their countries and across the region. Saudi Arabia is establishing entirely new cities and making renewed efforts to diversify its economy. Egypt has established an independent central bank, reformed its financial sector, and begun to privatize some state-owned industries. In turn, Egypt has enjoyed steady economic growth averaging five percent or more in the past few years. Now, with the global slowdown touched off by the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis, finding a way to cushion these economies will be extremely difficult, especially in poor and over-populated countries such as Egypt. Failure might fuel political instability and further radicalization.

While governments have attempted to stimulate their economies, they have done little to improve democratic governance. In fact, according to Freedom House, sixty-one percent of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa region are "not free" as of 2009.[10] The past three years have seen incremental and uneven progress in political rights and civil liberties indices.[11] That an absence of democratic oversight and accountability restrains economic growth and inhibits human development has been clearly stated in Arab Human Development Reports (AHDR) from 2002 onward.[12] Parliaments in the region remain weak, and judiciaries lack independence. Political parties do not fulfill their function, and the independent media, where they exist at all, are small and continually harassed. Without such institutions, creating the necessary transparency to provide oversight to the executive branch becomes impossible, which fuels frustration and resentment, and occasionally drives political groups underground. If economic reform is to be advanced and sustained, democratic development must also take place.

U.S. efforts to address these challenges have produced mixed results. Governments in the region have yet to establish the legal frameworks necessary for thriving economies and functioning democracies, and the political will to implement them has been fundamentally lacking. Outside actors like the United States have limited leverage over foreign governments, but can still exercise influence. USAID, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, as well as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, have separately made inroads in stimulating reform, but they are severely

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10. ARCH PUDDINGTON, FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2009: SETBACKS AND RESILIENCE 10 *available at* http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/FIW09_OverviewEssay_Final.pdf

11. *Id.*

12. *See* U.N. Dev. Programme (UNDP), Sub-Comm'n on Regional Bureau for Arab States, Arab Fund for Economic & Social Dev., *Arab Human Dev. Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* (2005); UNDP, *Arab Human Dev. Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World* (2004); UNDP, *Arab Human Dev. Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society*, U.N. Sales No. E.03.III.B.9 (2003); UNDP, *Arab Human Dev. Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, U.N. Sales No. E.02.III.B.9 (2002), *available at* http://arabstates.undp.org/subpage.php?spid=14.

under-resourced relative to the task at hand. Annual spending on democracy programming for the whole of the broader Middle East remains less than one percent of the Pentagon's annual expenditures in Iraq alone.

With the collapse of oil prices and the contraction of the global economy, pressures on the region's states create both opportunities and challenges for the United States and its partners in the region. In the short term, helping the governments of the region to stabilize their economies is clearly in the interest of the United States, but only if such assistance is linked to serious commitments to political reform and anti-corruption measures. Otherwise, any "stability" achieved will be short-lived, subject to populist reaction, and could potentially lead to greater dislocation later.

C. Partnering with Arab Governments

In part because of the region's "democracy deficit," the question arises as to whether the governments in the region can be real partners with the United States in countering extremism. The Bush administration determined that altering the relationship with America's allies in the Middle East was essential to creating a more lasting stability in the region. Bush chose to put public pressure on U.S. "friends" to open up both their political processes and their economies. The public aspect of the "Freedom Agenda" contributed to significant friction with the governments, but, in order to get the United States off their backs, many governments reluctantly began to make changes – both real and cosmetic – after 2002. As the situation in post-war Iraq deteriorated, however, opinion turned against the Bush administration. These governments argued that the United States was trying to impose its political system on the region and claimed that Iraq was proof that democracy brings only instability and insecurity.

After September 11, the Administration publicly advocated the "Freedom Agenda," but quietly came to rely on the same governments for intelligence and partnership with U.S. military and intelligence agencies in an effort to combat terrorism aggressively – both inside their countries and globally. Cooperation between governments with shared interests is logical, but if it is not contextualized it results in a schizophrenic message to the recipient governments and citizens and exposes the United States to charges of hypocrisy, double standards, and inconsistency. With the election of Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006 and the electoral gains of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Administration was seen to shelve its reformist push altogether, further undermining its credibility in the region and signaling to Arab governments that the U.S. support for greater freedom within their societies was over.

A key test for the Obama administration will be to determine the precise formula of cajoling and cooperating with friendly governments for the long-term efforts that both support political and economic reform and confront radical extremism.

D. Egypt Remains the Bellwether for U.S. Policy

As the most populous Arab state and the largest recipient of U.S. economic and military aid in the Middle East, Egypt presents a crucial case for applying this balancing formula. Under the leadership of President Mubarak, Egypt has been a strategic partner of the United States for nearly thirty years, but soon faces an inevitable transition. The Obama administration must have a clear view of how it wants to shape that transition and, if it so chooses, how it wants to redefine the partnership.

Over the past few years, President Mubarak, now 80 years old, has permitted the government to undertake a series of economic reforms that have contributed to a growing Egyptian economy but have not been accompanied by political reforms. As the economic reforms have begun to trigger political unrest, the regime has, in fact, come to rely increasingly on its security forces and the defense establishment to maintain stability. The reluctance to increase space for political liberals, leftists, nationalists, bloggers, Facebook activists, and journalists has contributed to a strengthening of the only opposition with access to resources and to the mosque – the banned but tolerated Muslim Brotherhood. This combination of events puts Egypt's stability, and with it the stability of the region as a whole, at risk.

Despite concerns over Egypt's worrying political circumstances, the United States will continue to cooperate with Egypt on a full range of foreign policy priorities, including peace between Israel and the Arab states, security in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea area, and programs to counter radical extremism. However, as the Administration sets priorities for continued partnership with Cairo, it should formulate new ways to secure long-term objectives while meeting its short-term goals. For example, in exchange for U.S. commitment to continue the strategic, military, and economic partnerships, the Administration should seek Egypt's commitment to an agenda of regional responsibility: structural eradication of corruption, and expansion of civil and political space. Prioritizing U.S. engagement with Cairo among these various objectives requires deft and nimble diplomacy, but how well Washington succeeds in its larger regional policy will be judged in large measure by how well that policy works for Egypt.

E. Public Diplomacy Efforts

The Bush administration made a variety of public diplomacy efforts, some successful, others less so. Overall, however, the Administration did not meet the challenges elaborated above. In pursuing new missions, defining new strategies, and assembling available tools, the Obama administration should retain those elements of existing policies that have proven successful while garnering greater financial and human resources to develop a fresh approach to public diplomacy.

During the past eight years, for instance, satellite television has demonstrated a dramatic impact on the region. Al-Jazeera Arabic, with its emphasis on sensationalism frequently tinged with anti-Americanism, has carved out a substantial market share. If Nasser's myth of an Arab world was just a myth, al-Jazeera might succeed in forging a real Arab world consciousness – for better or, more likely, for worse. U.S. means of creating alternatives have proven insufficiently responsive to changes in policy priorities. Distracted by highly partisan in-fighting, the Broadcasting Board of Governors and Congress have lacked a sense of mission and imagination, and have failed to provide Voice of America (VOA), Radio Farda, and al-Hurra with consistent resources or oversight.

As a result, powerful tools have remained on the periphery of policy discussions and have not been utilized to provide alternative sources of news, opinion, and cross-cultural content. The result has been lost time, missed opportunities, and, in some cases, declining audiences. Not until Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice took independent action in the 2006 supplemental appropriations request was Congress forced to double the broadcaster's budget for Iran. More than eight years after September 11 and despite these additional resources, VOA today continues to broadcast Larry King and other CNN "filler" content to Iran for lack of original programming. Moreover, the broadcasters remain frequent targets of criticism from across the political spectrum for their failure to make dramatic progress on reaching more of their intended audience.

F. Public Diplomacy v. Battle of Ideas

The U.S. government has been insufficiently attentive to foreign mass media, partly because it fundamentally misunderstands the nature of public diplomacy. For the bulk of President Bush's two terms, a succession of Under Secretaries for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the State Department believed that the primary challenge of public diplomacy was to persuade foreign citizens to view the United States in a more positive light. Initiatives centered on ad campaigns, listening tours, "goodwill" ambassadors – such as Cal Ripkin, Jr. – and the like. Most of these efforts, though well meaning, have been wholly ineffective in empowering voices at the forefront of the struggle with radical extremism. The traditional tools of public diplomacy – exchanges and scholarships, for example – expose foreign individuals to the best of American culture and thus are extremely important, but their scale and scope are extremely limited. Empowering those who have a stake in their communities' wellbeing is far more important in the battle of ideas. Less important are the actors' views of the United States and its policies.

Late in the second term, the Bush administration began to understand the differences in the two approaches: improving foreigners' perceptions of the United States (conventional public diplomacy) versus supporting

mainstream Muslim voices. In 2007, for instance, the State Department, cognizant of the need to understand the radicalization problem in Europe, established a senior-level position within the Bureau of European Affairs to work with and advise the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe. The State Department also initiated an array of programs to begin to identify and support mainstream Muslim voices, but many of these are new and have yet to be established within the bureaucracy.

G. The Growing Military Role in Strategic Communications

Since September 11, the Pentagon has increased its capacity in strategic communications, as it has in so many areas from humanitarian assistance to intelligence. In 2007, it established a Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Support of Public Diplomacy. The Combatant Commands, particularly Central Command, have understood the necessity of engaging in "shaping operations," or information operations, to fulfill their responsibilities to position the U.S. military better in foreign engagements.

In conflict situations, it is clear that the U.S. military should take the lead in developing and implementing integrated political-military strategies to ensure protection and broader security and stability. Increasingly, however, the Pentagon is developing capacities that are more appropriately the domain of civilian agencies. Civilian agencies, unfortunately, lack the capacity of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Efforts to foster alternatives to extremism currently suffer from a hopeless imbalance in the allotment of resources between military and civilian agencies. By the end of this decade, the Pentagon will have three times as many Special Operations Forces (60,000), as the State Department has total employees (18,000-plus in 2006). Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates has recognized this problem and has called for more resources for the State Department and USAID, but the Obama administration will have to persuade a reluctant Congress to provide the necessary funds.

Strategic communications efforts are also plagued by poor coordination. While the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the State Department is the White House designee in charge of the government's strategic communication efforts, the position does not have any budgetary authority beyond its office. The Under Secretary has been relegated to a weak coordinating position. The Under Secretary, for example, has no clear view of how the Combatant Commands are disposing of their extraordinary resources and is powerless to direct them. By establishing a strong interagency process, the State Department would assume a greater role in strategic communications, improve coordination of efforts, and achieve greater results.

Recently, the government took a step forward by establishing an informal "small group" – the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), DoD, and State – to share operational details concerning both overt and covert activities. However,

given the challenges outlined above, an informal sharing exercise is clearly insufficient. The Deputy National Security Advisor (DNSA) for Combating Terrorism is fully occupied with the military, law enforcement, and intelligence aspects of counterterrorism, leaving insufficient time to focus on combating radicalization and the associated ideology.

To summarize, a British government official, speaking of individuals' connection to extremist ideology, put it best: "There is no single path that leads people to violent extremism. . . . Social, foreign policy, economic and personal factors all lead people to throw their lot in with extremists."[13]

In order to break this disturbing cycle of radicalization, the United States and its allies must stimulate alternatives to the extremist ideology. The creation of choices is critical in dissuading would-be extremists from becoming violent. The more alternatives available to young people, the greater is their freedom. The more credible the voices that expose them to alternative arguments, the less vulnerable they are to extremist ideas. However, the United States should also deepen its efforts to counter the extremist narrative by better using its existing mechanisms and by gradually partnering more and more with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. The United States must simultaneously work with foreign governments on systemic reforms.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

To confront this ideology of radical extremism, there are a variety of steps that the Obama administration should take. They include a number of key strategic, functional, and organizational departures from the Bush administration's approach in this area.

A. Strategic Recommendations

The Obama administration needs to view the spread of the ideology of radical extremism with an urgency and seriousness comparable to the Administration's view of the spread of violent groups animated by that ideology. Obviously, the government's first priority is to prevent radical extremist groups from using violence to achieve their goals. The government also needs to elevate in bureaucratic priority and public consciousness the need to deter the spread of radical extremist ideology. At the same time, the United States must make very clear that it does not consider Islam itself a danger; it is only the distorted version of Islam perpetrated by radical extremists that is a threat.

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13. Duncan Gardham, *MI5 Chief Warns of Threat from Global Recession*, DAILY TELEGRAPH (London), Jan. 7, 2009, *available at* http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/defence/4144460/MI5-xhief-warns-of-threat-from-global-recession.html.

The ultimate objective of U.S. public diplomacy, democracy promotion, and counterradicalization efforts should be to encourage and support mainstream Muslims who are competing with extremists and offering an alternative vision for society.

International attention has been largely focused on the global issues cited by al Qaeda, such as Iraq, Guantánamo, Kashmir, and, above all, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Resolving these issues would not only further our counterradicalization efforts, but also would increase other countries' willingness to cooperate with the United States on counterterrorism matters. However, these developments alone would not end the radicalization process. The Obama administration must also focus on ensuring that the radical extremists' global narrative does not resonate in individuals' psyche.

B. Functional Recommendations

The United States and its allies must offer a viable and attractive political alternative to the dark vision offered by radical extremist groups. Prosperous democratic societies that respect the rights of their citizens are more resilient and less susceptible to political instability and radicalization. If grievances can be addressed peacefully and mediated through democratic institutions, citizens are less apt to turn to more extreme options. Efforts to promote prosperity, democracy, and respect for human rights should, therefore, remain key elements of this Administration's foreign policy agenda – even if the rhetoric changes. The key is to improve execution.

In recent years, U.S. public diplomacy rhetoric has made democracy promotion an explicit aspect of counterterrorism policy. This rhetoric has had the unintended effect of damaging the ability of both U.S. government and nongovernment organizations to play an effective role, because it raises suspicions that the real purpose of the U.S. efforts is to overturn undesirable regimes. Advancing freedom and opportunity around the world increases U.S. national security; it is not merely a counterterrorism tactic.

The U.S. government needs to lay out an integrated agenda for political, economic, administrative, and judicial reform throughout the Middle East. The U.S. government should emphasize economic reforms that diminish state control and expand the sphere for private activity. In countries where this is already underway, the U.S. government should partner with the private sector to advocate increased trade and investment.

Persistent corruption is the number one frustration in the Arab countries, a factor radical extremists exploit to challenge government legitimacy. By encouraging governments to become more transparent, the United States builds bridges to diplomacy. Since many governments have signed on to international agreements, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption, legal commitments could provide the benchmark conditions for assistance, thereby eliminating the argument that the United States is dictating a form of government. In this regard, maintaining and even expanding support for the Millennium Challenge

Corporation makes excellent sense. Offering carrots to reward good policy is as least as important as brandishing sticks.

Where terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah provide social support and aid to their communities, the United States must find and empower alternatives to compete with them. This will require helping governments to decentralize, relying on USAID, World Bank, and other sources of expertise to do so. When the United States investigates charities associated with terrorist groups, it should develop robust mechanisms to provide "charitable backfill" so that legitimate humanitarian work is not disrupted by U.S. actions. Such mechanisms should include more robust support to nonsectarian, nongovernment organizations that wish to compete with Hamas and Hezbollah in providing such services. While these actions may not help in "selling" the United States to skeptics, they may at least prevent groups like Hamas and Hezbollah from becoming more popular.

The Administration should double the level of resources available to both the National Endowment for Democracy and the Middle East Partnership Initiative to assist their support of human rights and democracy in the Middle East. Support through both organizations should be directed to institutions that have demonstrated track records in standing up to and competing with both violent and nonviolent extremists.

The sine qua non for more open, transparent societies is a free and independent press that can educate and inform, as well as shine a spotlight on government malfeasance. To this end, the Administration should encourage organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy to make media expansion a pillar of their programming and develop private-public partnerships. Through credit guarantees and matching seed capital, the U.S. government could help new media – whether satellite, terrestrial, or Internet-based – become viable entities in the Middle East.

The core mission must be to identify and support mainstream Muslims in the ideological and political contest against radical Islam. The United States must win backing for such efforts from non-Muslim societies around the world. U.S. public diplomacy efforts should be targeted toward that goal, with the recognition that more traditional public diplomacy programs, such as educational exchanges, will continue. International broadcasting, in particular, should reflect this core mission.

United States public diplomacy efforts must be mainly about empowering mainstream Muslims to compete with radical extremists, not about employing U.S. researchers, pollsters, and marketeers to improve the American brand. The United States must more effectively identify Muslim activists, entrepreneurs, writers, business people, media personalities, students, and others who lead opinion abroad and within their domestic communities, particularly at the local level. The State Department should instruct U.S. embassies to find ways to identify and empower them.

The Obama administration should emphasize that it understands that religious piety is not synonymous with radicalization. To counter radical

extremist ideology effectively, the United States must stress that we are not at war with Islam. Nor should the United States be seen as endorsing any particular form of Muslim religious observance. U.S. policy should be to recognize that religious diversity and education can be a bulwark against extremism. In its engagement with Muslims here and abroad, the Administration should reach out to a broad spectrum of groups and individuals, both religious and secular.

While interacting with a diverse range of Muslims and Arabs, the U.S. government should prioritize its political engagement with parties and groups that share its long-term objectives and have a demonstrated track record in standing up to and competing with both violent and nonviolent extremists. U.S. engagement will naturally vary in regard to different strands of Islamist groups.[14] We endorse such engagement when its objectives are concrete and clearly articulated to advance U.S. interests. In the Middle East it is widely understood that official engagement (i.e., political level dialogue) is an act that has important and wide-ranging implications. While the United States should take steps to ensure that it has open lines of communication and intelligence throughout Middle Eastern societies, the U.S. government needs to avoid a situation in which its pursuit of "dialogue" with certain Islamists has the unintended consequence of dispiriting or even undermining other groups and parties with whom it shares closer interests. The U.S. government should allow local actors and the nongovernmental sector to operate free of official policy.

Al Qaeda is trying to portray itself not as a terrorist organization but as a global movement that can successfully defeat the West. Official U.S. rhetoric should highlight how little al Qaeda's ideology offers, with no viable vision for the future or redress for everyday problems. The United States should emphasize that victims of al Qaeda's terrorist attacks are primarily Muslims and mosques. The media should humanize the victims of al Qaeda by telling the personal stories of the widows, mothers, sons, and daughters who lost their husbands, fathers, and mothers due to al Qaeda's carnage.

The United States should continue to exploit and amplify existing ideological fissures and drive wedges between radical extremists and their followers and prospective followers. The United States should amplify the voices that are critical of al Qaeda, particularly former jihadists and extremists like Dr. Fadl, even though the United States may still take issue with many of their views. As demonstrated by Zawahiri's defensiveness in his lengthy question and answer session over the Internet in the summer of 2008, these voices appear to be the ones that al Qaeda itself fears most.

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14. We define Islamist groups as those who endorse the reestablishment of a Caliphate, which is governed by Sharia law, including those who support achieving this end state through the political process. We explicitly do not put all religious and practicing Muslims in this category, as most do not support this broader vision and do not believe political systems and governments need be run according to these principles.

Focusing on the specific terrorist threats in each country and moving away from the "war on terror" rhetoric would short-circuit the extremist narrative that "the Muslim world" is involved in a global conflict with the West, and would reduce other countries' abilities to take inappropriate action toward their own citizens under the guise of counterterrorism. Indeed, even referencing a singular "Muslim world" inadvertently echoes al Qaeda's narrative while downplaying the rich diversity that exists within the global Muslim community.

Recent policy frameworks that envision the United States as involved in a "global counterinsurgency" are unhelpful. Such sweeping generalizations encourage suspicions that all existing governments are targets of insurgency. The United States has pushed many countries to take aggressive counterterrorism actions, at times allowing government action against dissidents under the rubric of fighting terrorism. This policy has often left the United States as the "bad guy" who supports oppressive governments and stands by as they abuse their people.

The United States should devote far more resources to countering radical extremist messages on the Internet as the radicalization process on the Internet is accelerating. Recently, the State Department has developed a variety of creative initiatives in this area, including the team of bloggers in the Department's Counterterrorism Communication Center, but this effort must be expanded dramatically to other agencies and include nongovernmental actors as well.

The United States should focus its efforts on extremist chat rooms, because these types of two-way interactions are far more dangerous as recruiting tools than websites, where propaganda can merely be downloaded.

The United States should pay close attention to the counter-radicalization programs springing up in Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, as radicalization in these distant locations can often have a direct impact on U.S. national security. The United States should create a counterradicalization forum. Policymakers and practitioners from the countries engaged in these efforts should compare notes and best practices. This organization could also perform independent assessments of each country's success and press for needed improvements, and could encourage the development of these types of programs in at-risk countries that do not currently have them – Belgium is an obvious candidate. The organization should pool available funding to disperse for designing, implementing, and improving national programs.

The United States should recognize that not all countries view counterradicalization in the same way. For example, in an effort to prevent an attack in the immediate future, the British are willing to work with some groups and individuals whose views the United States might find distasteful. Given the grave and imminent threat that exists in the United Kingdom, this approach may make sense, as long as the British recognize

that it may have long-term negative consequences and that the approach should be adjusted once conditions improve.

A special focus of a counterradicalization forum should be Saudi Arabia. While the Saudis should be applauded for their domestic counterradicalization efforts, they continue to support extremist ideology, as they export educational material, train imams for foreign posts, and build mosques in foreign countries. The United States should press Saudi Arabia to cease these activities that endanger all, including the Saudi kingdom itself.

Better understanding of the radicalization and deradicalization processes is critical to developing effective policies. The United States should press for a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the radicalization cycle: why do people join terrorist organizations, why do some choose to leave, how do radicalization and deradicalization processes differ in the United States and overseas, how is radicalization changing as the terrorist threat evolves, and what limits are realistic in the deradicalization process?

The United States benefits from a broadly positive integration experience among its Muslim-American communities. There are steps the government can take to ensure that this trend continues. The United States should closely study other national counterradicalization programs to see whether there are any lessons to apply at home. For example, the United States should learn from the British and ensure that all relevant U.S. government agencies are engaged and fully understand U.S. strategy. At the very least the U.S. government should avoid mistakes that will poison community relations and possibly contribute to radicalization. For example, in the United States, a citizen can turn only to the FBI with concerns about radicalization. This option increases perceptions that the U.S. government views communities only as a threat. Newly released Attorney General Guidelines may increase this perception. They give the FBI more latitude and authority to conduct broad-ranging assessments of the domestic threat. This authority will allow the Bureau to move beyond investigating specific cases to more broadly "chasing the threat." The U.S. government should work with local communities to develop alternatives to law enforcement mechanisms to deal with radicalization in local communities. The City of Amsterdam's "Information House" is a good model.

The United States should also work closely with its Arab-origin and Muslim communities to ensure open channels of communication. The U.S. federal law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Attorneys Offices, the FBI, and DHS have had extensive engagement with the domestic Muslim and Arab communities. While this contact is important, these communities must see the government for more than its law enforcement arms. It is, therefore, critical that that engagement be broadened to include service-providing entities such as U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The United States should also ensure that its outreach is as broad as possible and not allow one group or organization to monopolize representation of tremendously diverse U.S.-Muslim communities.

The U.S. government also should better publicize its extensive but little known efforts to protect the civil liberties of its Arab-origin and Muslim citizens. These efforts will help to reassure domestic Muslim-American communities, alert them to outlets for resolving their grievances, encourage greater cooperation with law enforcement and other government agencies, and reduce the resonance of the radical extremist global narrative.

C. Structural Recommendations

While there are worthwhile debates about whether new agencies are needed to meet the substantial challenges outlined in this article, the Administration should begin by fixing the existing bureaucracy. This effort will require the right leadership and some important adjustments to the machinery of public diplomacy, democracy promotion, and counterradicalization.

Despite the undesirability of a drastic reorganization, it is critical that strategic coordination in combating extremist ideology be provided by a senior Administration official at the White House. Only by having someone close to the President in charge of the overall effort can there be any hope of maintaining strategic focus over the long term. The ideal solution would be for the DNSA for Combating Terrorism to focus on the military, law enforcement, and intelligence aspects of pressuring and defeating violent extremists. A second DNSA, perhaps the DNSA for Strategic Communication, a position that already exists, could devote full time and attention to the ideological parts of this struggle.

Splitting these responsibilities instead of creating a new DNSA position makes sense, given current fiscal realities and difficult adjustments still underway from other recent government restructuring. However, ensuring a specific address for the policy coordination effort is crucial, whatever the specific structural nature of the assignment.

The holder of this position should coordinate the public diplomacy and counterradicalization functions. An important aspect of the DNSA's portfolio should be the construction of a formalized interagency group, including State, DoD, CIA, and NCTC. This group should track and assess progress and challenges in the implementation of both the overt and covert components of the overall strategy to confront radical ideology. This contact will help foster cohesiveness among the key agencies and awareness of each others' activities, which was not always the case in the previous Administration.

The Administration should seek to bolster the capacity of the State Department to operationalize strategic communications and public diplomacy. There is a need to balance civilian and military resources. The State Department's public diplomacy and strategic communications efforts are underfunded. The Administration should seek to redress this imbalance as a top priority.

It is also necessary to expand the role of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The Under Secretary should have the powers and resources to spearhead the ideological contest against radical extremism. This position should be viewed as critical to national security, not as a public relations job. The Under Secretary should be given far greater control over agency public diplomacy personnel and planning around the world. The U.S. embassy missions should include an emphasis on implementing efforts to counter radical ideology specifically.

To assist in executing these expanded responsibilities, the Administration should work with Congress to create a new Assistant Secretary within the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy who would oversee and direct all International Information Programs (IIP) conducted by the Bureau. The new Assistant Secretary would also work with embassies and regional bureaus to develop strategies to empower and amplify mainstream Muslim voices around the world and be provided with the resources to implement them.

Currently, a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs works bilaterally with embassies in Europe as well as with many groups and individuals across the continent to implement the U.S. public diplomacy, strategic communications, and counterradicalization strategy. This role should be institutionalized as a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for each regional bureau. Each regional DAS would maintain a dotted-line relationship with the new Assistant Secretary. This would create an effective counterradicalization forum within the State Department.

To ensure that U.S. embassies in key posts are appropriately focused on countering extremist ideology, responsibility should be explicitly included in the White House's Letter of Commission for all ambassadors. Ambassadors should also be rated on their efforts in this area, an approach the British have used effectively in specific countries of concern. Both the DNSA for Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy, and the Assistant Secretary responsible for these efforts would have input into these ratings.

International broadcasting is an essential element of U.S. counterradicalization efforts. Already it consumes more than half of the public diplomacy budget. It is essential that BBG members commit their media outlets to this goal. Therefore, policy considerations that emphasize commitment to and appreciation of counterradicalization should drive decisions in filling vacancies in the BBG. With so many vacancies, there is an opportunity to create a BBG of outstanding Americans committed to the

spread of enlightened values. At the height of the Cold War, for example, Ronald Reagan infused international broadcasting with a sense of national purpose and strategic mission. Today, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton should seek to endow the BBG with a comparable stature. U.S. international broadcasting to Arab and Muslim societies should reach beyond governments to give voice to the peoples of the Middle East and to build – through satellites and radio waves – a network of human connections between them and their American partners in the effort to counter radical extremism. With proper leadership, mission, oversight, resources, and personnel, America's broadcasting outlets to Arab and Muslim societies can be a powerful tool in this undertaking.

CONCLUSION

Radicalization is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that requires a comprehensive, integrated strategy. There are no silver bullets. An integrated approach requires not only coordination of multiple government agencies and programs, but also the enlistment of the private sector. Until now, however, the U.S. government has failed to develop the proper policies and mechanisms to effect the required change of course. Coupling a new conceptual approach with concerted action, the Obama administration has the opportunity to make this effort a top priority. Despite the enormous challenges currently facing the Administration, it should not wait. Already we have allowed too much time for an ideological cancer to grow. As that cancer metastasizes in the Middle East, South Asia, and Europe, it would be naïve to believe that we will remain safe on our side of the Atlantic. The recent events in Atlanta and Minneapolis are strong warning that, in fact, the United States is not immune. Undermining al Qaeda's narrative and presenting alternatives is the best way to ensure that Atlanta and or Minneapolis remain isolated events. We must act now. If and when the FBI informs the public that a second American has carried out a suicide bombing, possibly here at home, it will be too late to develop a counterradicalization strategy.