

Bridging the Foreign Policy Divide

Course Corrections in America's War on Terror



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In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, President Bush declared a “global war on terror.” At the time, it was impossible to predict the transformative effect that the struggle would have on both the United States and the world more broadly. Inside its own borders, the United States witnessed profound changes in the last five-plus years. The very structure of the US government has been radically overhauled through the creation of new departments, new positions, new legal authorities, and resource flows. Daily life for Americans has changed too. Throughout the war on terror, Americans have experienced moments of both tremendous hope and great despair. They have been inspired by acts of heroism, horrified by examples of terrorist violence and hate, and drawn into heated political debates on the war’s overarching purpose and strategy. Any time they travel, any time they turn on their televisions, Americans are constantly reminded about their vulnerability to the persistent scourge of Islamic terrorism. To be sure, Americans today look at themselves—indeed, the world—differently than they did on September 10, 2001.

If asked, few Americans would have a hard time explaining how the world and their lives have

changed since September 11. But many would struggle to identify the exact source of the current terrorist threat or gauge the war’s progress to date. Many complain about threat fatigue, even weariness, with a concept that has proved difficult to define. Against whom, exactly, is the United States waging war? When will we know that this war is won? How much longer will the struggle last? What sacrifices will need to be made? And what changes in strategy and tactics are required as the United States and its allies prepare for what is likely to be a long twilight struggle?

This paper, jointly authored by two analysts who sit on opposite sides of the political spectrum, aims to build consensus on the nature of Islamic extremism. The paper also will provide an assessment of progress to date, examine the continuing challenges, and outline the way ahead as the United States and its partners fight what many now refer to as the “Long War.”

The Nature of the Threat

With past terrorist threats, it was not so difficult to identify the perpetrators, understand what they wanted, and locate their main base of operation. The terrorist groups that were pursued in

the days after September 11, though, are different. A collection of loosely affiliated terrorist groups and cells associated with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda were quickly identified as responsible not only for the 9/11 attacks but also for the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 in Yemen and the destruction of two US embassies in Eastern Africa in 1998. While the group's most important operational base was known to be in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda would prove to be an elusive target for US counterterrorism officials. It had and still has a presence in dozens of countries around the world, continually developing new relationships with terrorist groups committed to reestablishing an historic Islamic caliphate.

Al Qaeda's demands of the West have also proved difficult to grasp fully. United by a common ideology that violently rejects "apostate" Muslim states and Western influ-

The terrorist tactics used by Al Qaeda—such as the 9/11 attacks, car bombs, and suicide bombers—have been both innovative and effective. There appears to be no limit to the violence that Al Qaeda and its disciples will employ to meet their overarching objectives. US intelligence continues to collect information that indicates that Al Qaeda and other groups are still attempting to acquire chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and materials. Osama bin Laden has been clear that his followers should use these weapons, from "dirty bombs" to poisons to nuclear weapons, against their enemies.

Once the 9/11 attacks were attributed to Al Qaeda and the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, the United States moved to invade Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime, eliminate Al Qaeda, and end its sanc-

Just a year after the start of the war on terror, the terrorist threat started to evolve.

ences, Al Qaeda's leadership has not demanded any single action or policy change that would constitute a satisfying outcome and a conclusion for their quest. Some, most notably President Bush, have described the group as hating freedom. That is certainly a part, but not the entire story. Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups are promoting an exclusionary ideology that fuels a violent jihad seeking the unconditional surrender of both the "near" and "far" enemy.

The Stanley Foundation's Bridging the Foreign Policy Divide project brings together pairs of foreign policy and national security specialists from across the political spectrum to find common ground on ten key, controversial areas of policy. The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of their organizations or the Stanley Foundation. The series is coedited by Derek Chollet, senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security; Tod Lindberg, editor of the Hoover Institution's journal *Policy Review*; and Stanley Foundation program officer David Shorr.

tuary there. Beyond direct military action in Afghanistan, the Bush administration drew on other instruments of national power such as law enforcement, financial actions, information operations, and intelligence work to pursue Al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups until they were depleted of their resources, arms, and will to engage in terrorism. By fighting terrorism abroad, President Bush argues the United States will prevent terrorism at home. Within merely a few weeks after the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda had become public enemy number one.

Just a year after the start of the war on terror, however, the terrorist threat started to evolve. After the military action in Afghanistan and the elimination of the vast majority of Al Qaeda's 9/11 leadership, Al Qaeda began to morph from a centrally controlled organization based in Afghanistan into a slew of loosely associated groups and cells that now form part of a global movement. In some cases, the new adherents never have contact

with Al Qaeda's core leadership nor travel to Afghanistan for training but are "home-grown" radicals. These groups, inspired by jihadist ideology and Al Qaeda's zealous sense of global purpose, often display (through evidence gleaned from confiscated laptops, messages left behind at terrorist sites, and the Internet) a mix of both local and global grievances. For example, Mohammed Bouyeri, the young man who killed Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, left behind a note, detailing his frustration both with local Dutch policies concerning Muslims and US foreign policy in Iraq and the Middle East, more broadly. That act highlighted just how attractive the radical Islamic movement can be for a young, second-generation immigrant in Europe who is facing blatant discrimination and humiliation at home and witnessing the "persecution" of his or her Muslim brothers abroad.

the human rights abuses at Abu Ghraib prison and allegations of torture and the desecration of the Koran at the Guantanamo Bay detainment camp. Smith thus believes that recruitment is on the rise. Brookes, skeptical that recruitment can be measured accurately, is less sure about this point but does believe that misdeeds, misinformation, and propaganda such as that carried on Al Qaeda-associated al-Zawraa television have provided fertile ground for the recruitment of new jihadists. Today, Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri remain the chief recruiters for Al Qaeda, even while in hiding. Not only does their rhetoric intend to provoke Muslims to undertake jihad, it is also designed to muster new adherents and boost morale. Homegrown terrorists and radical imams cleverly promote this jihadist narrative through the Internet, DVDs, and sermons to audiences in affluent as well as underprivileged Muslim neighborhoods around the world.

While the United States continues to struggle to identify, understand, and defeat the global threat of Islamic terrorism, there have been important victories.

Today the terrorist threat remains just as diverse. The challenge of terrorism plagues countries from the Philippines—where the government still is fighting an Al Qaeda affiliate, Abu Sayyaf—to the United Kingdom, where an Al Qaeda plot that originated in Pakistan sought to bring down ten airliners over the Atlantic last summer using liquid explosives and homegrown British operatives. Just across our northern border last June, Canadian authorities arrested 17 would-be terrorists who were planning bombings, beheadings, and the seizure of parliamentary buildings. In September, Al Qaeda announced that the Algerian terrorist group, GSPC, and the Libyan LIFG had aligned themselves with Al Qaeda.

Smith believes that, in addition to evolving, the terrorism threat is growing, thanks to Al Qaeda's innovative techniques, the war in Iraq, and a series of unfortunate US actions, including

Progress to Date

While the United States continues to struggle to identify, understand, and defeat the global threat of Islamic terrorism in its ideology and overarching objectives, there have been a handful of important victories in the war on terror over the last five years. First and foremost, the war in Afghanistan and the toppling of the Taliban regime deprived Al Qaeda of its core operational base, eliminating one of the most dangerous and better-known safe havens. In addition, since 9/11, a number of key operatives—such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Hambali, and Abu Musab al Zarqawi—were killed or captured, weakening Al Qaeda's ability to operate.

Through robust law enforcement, intelligence, military, and homeland security cooperation, the United States has worked with allies to foil dozens of terrorist plots. Despite significant levels of anti-Americanism, domestic legislative

hurdles, and resource restrictions in several partner countries, the level of international cooperation has been unprecedented (even with countries that firmly opposed the war in Iraq, such as France and Germany). The near-global coalition has broken up cells and deprived terrorists of safe haven, operatives, resources, and financing. The war on terror also has fostered new counterterrorism partnerships with countries such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, and some new organizations such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, which works to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of rogue regimes and terrorists.

In the United States, one of the most commonly cited success stories is the lack of another attack on American soil. While Brookes views this as a clear-cut achievement in the war on terror, Smith does so with hesi-

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itation. Smith acknowledges that the United States has made it far more difficult for terrorists to stage an attack on US soil through a number of homeland security improvements. But she also thinks it is important to note that terrorist attacks can take years to plan and implement. (It took Al Qaeda six years to carry out the attack in Kenya and eight years to strike the World Trade Center again.) Smith also believes that taking the war on terror to Iraq and Afghanistan provided terrorist groups with easy-to-reach targets in the Middle East.

Despite some differences on whether or not to credit the absence of new attacks in the United States since 9/11 as a major achievement, Brookes and Smith fully agree that the United States has made a number of notable improvements in the area of homeland security. The United States has poured massive sums of money into countering biological, chemical, and radiological attacks; strengthening commercial aviation security; improving border controls; and strengthening emergency response and con-

sequence management. The US government also has improved coordination and communication between the CIA; FBI; and other intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement agencies (although the current system still has its flaws). Many state and local institutions have played a positive and productive role, improving their ability to respond to a catastrophic attack. Gaps remain, but US homeland security is better than it was five years ago.

Continuing Challenges

To be sure, the war on terror is not without its triumphs. Unfortunately, though, moments of success have been overshadowed by missteps, highlighting the well-intentioned, but sometimes ad hoc, nature of the US response. The fact that Osama bin Laden is still on the loose is troubling. While killing or capturing him would not necessarily end the Al Qaeda move-

ment, it could be a key milestone in the decline of Al Qaeda.

It has become clear in recent months that some of the early gains in the struggle against terrorism are now in jeopardy. Despite the presence of more than 40,000 US and NATO troops on the ground, Afghanistan is witnessing an unprecedented resurgence by Al Qaeda Taliban allies, which threatens to roll back the progress that has been made since US troops first entered Afghanistan in 2001. Elements of Al Qaeda itself may also be present in Afghanistan. Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to tighten its border with Afghanistan, an area that is known to be hosting Taliban fighters, has allowed the Taliban to set up a forward operating base from which to train, equip, and launch new attacks, leaving these two authors deeply troubled about Afghanistan's future.

Pakistan itself is another deep concern. In recent months, an agreement reached between the government of Pakistani President Pervez

Musharraf and tribal leaders in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has resulted in the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other jihadists finding sanctuary in Pakistan along the southeastern Afghanistan border. Intelligence officials now believe that both Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, are holding up in the Pakistani Hindu Kush. This sanctuary for extremists in Pakistan has not only led to a significant rise in Taliban attacks in Afghanistan but also has enabled Al Qaeda to plan, operate, and direct terrorist plots in the West. While Pakistan has been an important partner in the struggle against Islamic terrorism, its policy in the FATA is failing, at a significant danger to global security.

State sponsorship of terrorism is a force-multiplier for terrorist groups—providing training, funding, weapons, and sanctuary. As the most active state sponsor of terror,

fraction of the violence. But this could change. In either case, today, the war affects the threat posed by Islamic terrorism to US national security broadly. Al Qaeda has established a presence in Iraq. In fact, documents captured from an Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) safe house revealed plans for conducting terrorist attacks in the United States. The US intelligence community judges that AQI continues to plan for terrorist operations beyond Iraq.

Moreover, AQI, which is the largest and most active of the terrorist groups in Iraq, has been joined by Ansar al-Sunna, assorted foreign jihadists from across the globe, and homegrown Iraqi “self-starters” who have joined with AQI to attack Coalition and Iraqi forces and Shia targets such as the Samarra mosque in Iraq, which heightens the sectarian conflict. These groups and foreign fighters support Al Qaeda’s efforts to attack American interests, defend Sunni inter-

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Iran poses a significant challenge for international counterterrorism, especially considering the anti-American stance of the current Iranian government. While its relationship with Al Qaeda is murky, Tehran’s willingness to employ terrorism to advance its policy objectives, especially directly or through terrorist proxies such as Hezbollah and Hamas, is not. Equally troubling is Iran’s quasi-ally, Syria, which is also a major sponsor of terrorism and cooperates with Iran in this arena.

Iraq

The biggest challenge, no doubt, is in Iraq. While Brookes and Smith would argue over the value of taking the war on terror to Iraq in the first place, both authors firmly believe that Iraq has now become a major operating base for several types of terrorists. As of early 2007, the conflict in Iraq remains primarily an intra-Arab sectarian struggle for power, and attacks by terrorist groups only account for a

est in Iraq, and replace secular Muslim governments such as that in Iraq with theocratic states.

To be sure, the war in Iraq, especially through the jihadists’ extensive use of the Internet as a propaganda tool, plays a role in attracting new recruits. What is less certain is the degree to which the foreign jihadists are returning home to establish extremist organizations or carry out acts of terrorism. There is, however, some evidence of spillover from Iraq to Afghanistan, where improvised explosive devices (IED) and IED techniques similar to those found in Iraq, as well as the increasing use of suicide bomb attacks, are being employed by the Taliban and other foreign jihadists against US, Afghan, and NATO forces.

While the intelligence community views Iraq as a motivator for the global jihadist movement, it also concludes, “Should jihadists leaving Iraq perceive themselves, and be perceived,

to have failed, we judge fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight.” The National Intelligence Estimate goes on to judge that a jihadist success in Iraq would inspire “more fighters to continue the struggle elsewhere.” This conclusion, in our minds, emphasizes the importance of reaching a resolution in Iraq that will undermine the jihadist movement both in the minds of its current foot soldiers and in the eyes of potential recruits.

No Grand Strategy?

Smith views the lack of a comprehensive policy roadmap as a major shortcoming in the United States’ fight against terrorism. The United States began this fight by declaring war on a tactic and focusing on what appeared to be, at least at the time, two tactical and relatively short-term aims—regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq. Today, with the terror-

While Brookes sees value in Smith’s proposal, he believes that the National Strategies that the Bush administration has issued since 9/11 actually do provide adequate guidance for government actors across areas such as dealing with terrorism and its state sponsors, improving the economic and political conditions in societies where terrorism is prevalent, and making terrorism a societal anathema, among others. Tactics obviously will have to change to meet evolving terrorism challenges. Brookes does agree with Smith that the United States should not put all of its resources and energy into the single threat of combating terrorism at the expense of other challenges such as Iran, Russia, North Korea, and China.

The Way Ahead

What is certain is that it will take the United States, its coalition partners, and other states

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ist threat evolving; the United States’ image tattered; and radicalization, in Smith’s view, on the rise, the United States is in need of a grand strategy, one that would match its resources to capabilities and its capabilities to its ambitions. The United States must now move its loose collection of tactics toward a long-term strategy. The country must be mobilized much as it was during the Cold War so that the private sector, universities, and our research labs—together with the US government—can combine their ends, ways, and means to craft common or at least complementary goals. Such a strategy must be constructed in a way that prevents US foreign policy from being dominated by a single global challenge. The United States’ fight against radical extremism will remain one of its core priorities, but it should never become the priority at the expense of a long list of other pressing challenges.

threatened by the current wave of Islamic terrorism years, if not decades, to defeat it. The to-do list for countering the terrorist threat is long: eliminating terrorist sanctuary; curbing terrorist activity; undermining radicalism; discouraging terrorist funding and the recruitment of future generations of terrorists; enhancing good governance; promoting democracy and education, economic opportunity, and social justice; employing finely tuned public diplomacy; providing generous foreign aid; and resolving the ongoing conflict between the Palestinians and Israel.

The authors agree that there is no pure kinetic, that is, military, solution to the challenge of Islamic terrorism. As the causes of terrorism are multifaceted, so too must be the means of opposing it. The long fight against terrorism requires a wide array of tools, tactics, and strategies that address the challenge at both the local and global levels.

Protecting 50 states; 95,000 miles of coastline; and 7,500 miles of land border from terrorism is no small task. Living in a free, open society makes us fundamentally more vulnerable to terrorism. There is arguably no such thing as absolute security in any society. The United States is deeply integrated with the world beyond its borders, and that is to its benefit. Over 300 million visitors come to the United States every year. Nine million seaborne containers enter the United States annually at 361 commercial ports, carrying half of US imports. Many firms depend on the global market for goods and labor to keep their businesses running and prosperous. Parts of our critical infrastructure—including the Internet, aviation, and energy sectors—are integrated internationally. But this openness and integration has a downside as well. The fundamental challenge is to protect the United States without

Nichols legislation would be helpful too. Furthermore, congressional oversight of all elements of the government's counterterrorism efforts, especially the intelligence community, must be enhanced.

Although the FBI has made progress in developing its domestic intelligence arm, the National Security Bureau, it still struggles to move beyond its longstanding focus on crime and toward intelligence analysis and collection, counterterrorism, and counterintelligence. In addition, the FBI still has too few agents proficient in foreign languages, particularly Arabic. To spur a shift in organizational focus and culture, the FBI should require senior managers to have experience in counterterrorism. The FBI also must do a better job of integrating terrorism-related databases among federal and state law enforcement agencies. In addition, concerns remain about sharing sensitive national security

The long fight against terrorism requires a wide array of tools, tactics and strategies directed at the local and global levels.

disrupting the American way of life or infringing upon our cherished civil liberties.

While there has not been a terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11, the threat from international terrorism, especially from Al Qaeda, persists. Although there has been progress in developing new (and improving existing) US government counterterrorism programs, much work remains to be done in a number of core areas. In general, it will be critical for the prevention of and response to terrorist attacks for the federal government to further improve inter-agency and international law enforcement as well as intelligence and homeland security consultation, coordination, cooperation, and communications. The same is true for vertical and horizontal relations between the US federal government and state and local governments. Developing "joint duty" tours for US counterterrorism officials similar to the military's efforts after the passage of the historic 1986 Goldwater-

information with state and local authorities while guarding against mishandling.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was an important step in consolidating various homeland security missions under one roof, but the agency remains plagued by turf battles, inefficiencies, and information blockages. Information sharing within the agency has improved in recent months, but DHS's ability to share information with state and local authorities and the private sector is woefully inadequate—not to mention shortcomings in "real-time" communications interoperability at all levels of government. Data mining to detect terrorism-related patterns and relationships from vast quantities of data also must be much more effective.

The visa waiver program, while valuable, can pose risks to US security because of efforts by some to exploit the system, and it must be

administered in such a way as to ensure that it doesn't enable terrorists to enter the country. While there is a move afoot in Washington to extend the visa waiver program to certain countries (particularly allies that currently do not meet visa waiver requirements), extension of the visa waiver program must be considered through a counterterrorism lens. For instance, both Richard Reid and Zacarias Moussaoui entered the United States using passports issued by visa waiver countries. The United States must fully implement US-VISIT so that the government can track who enters, when they leave, and how long they stay in the United States. Multiple terrorist watch lists are managed by different agencies, but these must be better coordinated.

There needs to be significant improvements at the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), which provides passenger security at the

ests. Without question, we must have the finest intelligence available in our struggle with terrorism. While the intelligence community has restructured itself three times over the last five years, its analytical and collection capabilities remain uneven. The new leadership post within the intelligence community, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), is still a work in progress, especially on the issue of effectively centralizing management of intelligence agencies under the DNI's aegis.

The National Counterterrorism Center has done a better job of integrating strategic terrorism intelligence, but information overload across the intelligence community is common. Better analytical tradecraft, which includes "red-teaming" by outside experts and vigorously challenging assumptions, must be incorporated and institutionalized.

The intelligence community's analytical and collection capabilities remain uneven despite three major sets of reforms.

country's 438 commercial airports. Screener performance has been uneven, leaving open the possibility that dangerous objects or materials could slip through into the sterile areas of airports or into the checked baggage system. TSA also must fulfill its congressional mandate to take over responsibility for the passenger identity-matching process from domestic air carriers in order to improve accuracy and avoid having to share sensitive information on possible terrorists with airlines. Quality assurance of no-fly lists also must be improved.

Intelligence is our first line of defense against terrorism. Good intelligence provided by the intelligence community's 16 agencies helps us track events taking place at home and overseas, delineate trends, predict events and, hopefully, shape the international environment in a fashion advantageous to American inter-

Human intelligence (HUMINT) collection capability, now under the guidance of the National Clandestine Service, has vastly improved since 9/11, especially in terms of integrating US government HUMINT efforts and putting more operatives in the field. There is still a need to enhance relationships with foreign intelligence services, while protecting sensitive intelligence sources and methods and penetrating hard targets such as terrorist cells needs to improve.

Controversial programs such as the interrogation of terror suspects and the National Security Agency's Terrorist Surveillance Program are a potential source of important counterterrorism intelligence and should continue, in consonance with our laws, subject to congressional oversight and under the scrutiny of the Department of Justice. Intelligence sharing that puts critical information in the

hands of the right people at all levels of government and the private sector as necessary and in a timely manner is also an ongoing struggle within the US government. The top priorities for intelligence must always be to give those on the front line all of the information they need and to put a laser-like focus on the nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Terrorist financing is another challenge. While it does not take much money to stage an attack, terrorists cannot recruit, plan, train, and conduct operations, especially on a large scale, without funding. Fortunately, US and international efforts to cut terrorist financing have been quite successful. Since 9/11, the Treasury Department, along with other US government agencies and foreign governments, have taken a number of steps, including better intelligence collection,

several occasions, making policy is not a popularity contest. But when political elites in other countries begin to feel that standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States is a political liability, low popularity ratings can indeed hinder the United States' ability to meet global challenges. US policies do not operate in a political vacuum.

More troubling is the failure to pair short-term tactical gains in the war on terror with matching long-term public diplomacy or development strategies that prevent would-be terrorists from walking down the path of radicalization. Many argue that we are losing the battle of ideas. Because we have failed to develop a viable counternarrative to Osama bin Laden's, many Muslims around the world believe that the United States is at war with Islam itself. Furthermore, the United States has not yet learned how to use today's tech-

Weaknesses in public diplomacy leave a credibility gap that has limited the effectiveness of other instruments.

enforcement actions, capacity building, and systemic improvements to safeguard the United States and global financial systems. There are a number of areas in which stronger cooperation between the United States and its partners could spur significant further progress: shared definitions of terrorists and terrorist organizations, joint training, deterrence of terrorists' major donors, closure of Muslim charities that support terrorism, and the constriction of cash smuggling and money laundering channels.

The area where the United States has faltered the most in its war on terror is public diplomacy—a capability gap that has limited the effectiveness of other instruments. With the United States' image badly bruised over Iraq and detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib, maintaining the alliances and partnerships developed since September 11 has, in some cases, become challenging. Yes, as President Bush has noted on

nologies to win the battle of ideas. Radical extremists cleverly use the Internet and DVDs to promote their ideology, but the United States' efforts in this area remain sluggish and outdated.

What is needed is a major overhaul of the United States' diplomatic tools, starting with US diplomats. Today, Foreign Service officers are encouraged and required to take part in public diplomacy efforts. Few of them, however, have received the necessary training in foreign languages, public speaking, and message development. (The General Accountability Office reports that 30 percent of language-designated public diplomacy posts are filled with officers who lack the required language skills.) Many officers also lack experience in the Muslim world, limiting their understanding of both the nature of the threat and the cultural and historical roots of the Muslim extremist problem we face. The institutions

and offices dedicated to public diplomacy also must receive the resources and authorities that they need to do the job. After a sharp decline in funding over the past eight years, federal spending for public diplomacy is once again on the rise. But US government resource allocation in this area does not come close to matching our ambitions.

The United States also should identify and cooperate with opinion leaders and media outlets in foreign capitals to promote a free press and American values and counter the dizzying array of conspiracy theories about US policies and motivations in the war on terror. Washington also should maximize the use of international broadcasting to the Muslim world broadly. Efforts to date—including US government-sponsored Radio Sawa, Radio Farda, and Al Hurra—have been uneven in their reporting and weak in how they are

ure to do so could produce unintended consequences that do not serve US interests.

US cooperation with international partners is also a critical component of combating terrorism. Despite a long list of achievements, international cooperation currently is plagued in some cases with mistrust and deep divisions over counterterrorism strategy, threatening its overall efficiency, effectiveness, and cohesion. We must counter international perceptions that the US-led war on terrorism is tied almost exclusively to Iraq and Afghanistan and is largely anti-Islam.

Allocating more resources toward nonmilitary means of fighting terrorism and focusing on what drives people toward extremism also would help the United States win back the support of its international partners and help counter the overarching threat. For example,

While the US shouldn't change policy to improve public opinion, it should use public diplomacy to help assess the likely effectiveness of policy options.

staffed. Furthermore, these stations and other US public diplomacy efforts lost considerable credibility in late 2005 when it was revealed that the Pentagon was paying Iraqi reporters to write pro-American stories.

Of course, even the best-designed and most generously funded public diplomacy programs will fail if the policies that they promote are unsound or unclearly articulated. To that effect, the United States must publicly demonstrate its commitment to human rights and to the degree possible make its policies and strategies transparent and open to debate. While the United States cannot and should not change policy course solely to improve public opinion, the US government should use its public diplomacy tools to assess the likely effectiveness and impact of its policy options, including through consultation with foreign governments. A fail-

since 2002 the United States has spent approximately six billion dollars on supporting the Pakistani military but less than a billion dollars on educational reform and economic assistance in that country.¹ Given the role of the schools and high unemployment in driving the radicalization of many young males, one has to question the long-term viability of the proportion of hard and soft power that we are using in Pakistan. The United States must match its capabilities to its strategy by investing in critical nonmilitary instruments of national power. From agriculture to education to justice, US civilian agencies need more robust, deployable capabilities to build capacity in weak or failing states where terrorism might find a home.

To its credit, the United States has promoted democratization as one of its core nonmilitary

¹ An estimate from Frederick Barton, director of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

instruments in the war on terror. After five years, though, it is hard to point to concrete examples of progress, due to a lack of a recognizable, integrated strategy; a heavy emphasis on Iraq and Afghanistan; poor analysis of the possible consequences; and limited or unclear benchmarks. (Both Brookes and Smith would cite Lebanon as a success, but Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran now seriously threaten it.)

The concept itself, however, is not without value. Democratization remains essential to combating the roots of radical extremism, particularly in weak and failed states. But without the proper planning, capabilities, and resources, elections that are forced too soon, such as those in the Palestinian territories, can actually work against US objectives. While countries' paths to democracy differ vastly, it could be argued that democracy promotion should be "evolutionary" rather than "revolutionary"—promoted as societies develop an enabling environment of legitimate political parties, civil society institutions, anticorruption measures, and a free media. Conversely, the United States should be cautioned against resisting democratic reform indefinitely in the name of short-term security gains.

Finally, the United States needs to build a foundation of international cooperation that extends well beyond the war on terror, one that focuses on the other pressing challenges, including nonproliferation, energy security, climate change, and global health issues. It will also require the United States to redouble its efforts today to foster strong and committed partnerships with friends and allies that can meet the challenges of tomorrow.

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