Terrorism: What the Next President Will Face

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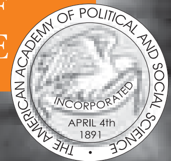

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A Counter-radicalization Strategy for a New U.S. Administration

By
KARIN VON HIPPEL

The U.S. government needs a new, two-pronged approach to counter radicalization in many parts of the world, particularly when confronting the "enabling environment." Those inhabiting this environment include potential sympathizers in the Arab and Muslim world who may not themselves use violence but either endorse the arguments and platforms of the terrorists or are intimidated into silence. This wider community needs to be won over so that they oppose terrorism in their neighborhoods, cities, and states and, critically, in the virtual world, where many of the battles are taking place. Appealing to the enabling environment may be the only way in the long term to isolate terrorists and end terrorism. This two-part approach includes (1) a prioritized development strategy (with an emphasis on good governance, anticorruption, and social service provision) and (2) innovative tools and new partners to implement and disseminate it.

Keywords: radicalization; development; enabling environment; development; counterradicalization

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, U.S. citizens discovered to their horror just how negatively they were perceived in the Arab and Muslim world, and not just by the terrorists. Over the next seven years, the scale and depth of anti-American sentiment would only get worse as al Qaeda morphed into an "organization, network and movement" (Ranstorp 2007). During this period, polls conducted by the Pew

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Global Attitudes Project have shown increasingly negative attitudes toward the United States in the Arab and Muslim world. In Turkey, for example, 52 percent had favorable views of the United States in 2000; by 2007, this figure dropped to 9 percent. In Indonesia during that same period, America's "favorability" rating went from 75 percent to 29 percent (Pew 2007).[1]

More disturbing still, these critical views are often coupled with sympathy for al Qaeda in its constituency. In 2004, a team of researchers from the University of Jordan found that al Qaeda was viewed as "a legitimate resistance movement" by about two-thirds of the national samples in Jordan and Palestine and by 41 percent in Egypt (Hamarneh 2005, 73). In fact, al Qaeda affiliates have been far more effective in the "battle of ideas" than has the United States—and consequently have expanded the movement—precisely because they are better at targeting the "enabling environment" (Richardson 2006).[2]

Those inhabiting this environment include potential sympathizers in the Arab and Muslim world who may not themselves use violence but either endorse the arguments and platforms of the terrorists or are intimidated into silence. This wider community needs to be won over so that they *oppose* terrorism in their neighborhoods, cities, and states and, critically, in the virtual world, where many of the battles are taking place. Appealing to the enabling environment may be the only way in the long term to isolate terrorists and end terrorism.

According to O'Leary and von Hippel (2005), "sensible antiterrorism policy targets the relations between insurgents and their constituents." Recent experiences in Northern Ireland and Greece (and now even in parts of Iraq) demonstrate that this strategy works. In April 2005, for example, the sisters of murdered barman Robert McCartney launched a successful and peaceful campaign against violence, which forced Sinn Fein to admit Provisional Irish Republican Army involvement and helped bring the killers to justice. In Greece, the British police worked closely with the Greek authorities to design a public information campaign that contributed to the elimination of the November 17 terrorist organization. Such responses can be symbolically significant and prove to be the "tipping point," encouraging others to counter violence in their communities.

If the U.S. government wants to infiltrate, tackle, and tip the enabling environment in a comprehensive manner using "soft power" tools, it should embrace a two-pronged approach for countering radicalization. First, it needs to develop a prioritized development strategy; and second, it requires innovative tools and new partners to implement and disseminate that strategy.

A Prioritized Assistance Strategy

A dedicated U.S. government foreign assistance strategy to counter radicalization in the Arab and Muslim world should put emphasis on macro-reforms in two key areas: (1) support for good governance and anticorruption programs and

(2) improvements in social service provision. These *global values* need to be publicly recognized as being just as important to the Arab and Muslim world as to Western societies, as confirmed by numerous polls and focus groups in Muslim-majority states (e.g., National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI] 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). Significantly, the al Qaeda movement and a number of nationally based Islamist political parties score high both on perceptions of accountability and in successfully providing social services, in sharp contrast to most national governments, which underperform in both areas throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Corruption and cultures of impunity

Thus far, it appears that the al Qaeda movement has been able to find a more receptive environment for expanding its reach and influence when the local government is perceived to be corrupt by many of its inhabitants, or of favoring one group at the expense of others. Bin Laden has excoriated the profligacy of the "corrupt Saudi state." He is viewed as virtuous by many because he sacrificed the opulent lifestyle he was born into, and instead dedicated his own personal wealth to the "cause" of ordinary Muslims. The Taliban were enabled in their successful military takeover of most of Afghanistan from 1996 through 2001 because they were perceived by ordinary Afghans to be noncorrupt, unlike the many Afghan warlords who ruled the country by fear and extortion in their various fiefdoms.

NDI focus groups in Morocco found that support for the Justice and Development Party (PJD), an Islamist political party and the largest opposition party, was based on the public perception that it is noncorrupt. All other parties were viewed as corrupt and of lying to voters during elections (NDI 2007c, 1). Indeed, the popularity of al Qaeda in Arab states is partly based on the perception by the publics in these same states that "administrative and financial corruption . . . [is] prevalent in Arab societies" (Hamarneh 2005, 49).

In Lebanon, Hezbollah's increasing popularity among the Shia population can also be attributed to the view, as explained by one Shia resident, that "it is the only party that provides security and services while remaining transparent" (NDI 2007b, 8). When the Union of Islamic Courts took over most of southern Somalia from mid-2006,[3] a large percentage of the Somali population welcomed its brief rule for the same reasons. Finally, the United States is concerned about increasing Islamic extremism in Bangladesh, and for good reason: Bangladesh ranked at the bottom of Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Index. The four hundred bombs that exploded nearly simultaneously on August 17, 2005, in sixty-three of the country's sixty-four districts could be considered one of the most coordinated terrorist attacks in history.

Cultures of impunity are not only potentially more sympathetic to the al Qaeda movement, but correspondingly, they are easier for extremists to penetrate. Local authorities can be bribed to allow illegal goods to transship through their territories; and terrorists can often find sanctuary, establish bases, and conduct other illicit activities.

What can be done to help other governments become more responsible and accountable to their citizens? First, the U.S. government needs to seriously rethink the current policy of publicly advocating democratic reform in the Middle East and North Africa while providing support for autocratic regimes, a policy that is greeted by accusations of hypocrisy and double standards in the Arab and Muslim world. Second, interventions to improve accountability and transparency in developing states need to be designed to maximize "what the market will bear" and what is appropriate for that particular place—from the most corrupt and autocratic to states where the government controls very little outside the capital city.

In some instances a local or national authority can be persuaded to embed external auditors in the government to ensure accountability over donor funds, as in the World Bank's Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project[4] or the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) in Liberia. The local media and watchdog groups can also be encouraged to monitor donor contributions and other public funds in some countries, while more creative options will be needed for states that will not allow such interference.

At the macro level, it is vital to help rebuild government capacity in all weak states to prevent such penetration. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has recommended that improved governance, "including financial, security and justice systems . . . will help prevent support for terrorism" (OECD 2003, 5). Good governance reforms can implant transparency and accountability mechanisms into public institutions, and need to be underpinned by rule of law reforms.[5] In addition, improvements in the delivery of social services—a second global value—would also make significant inroads in countering the enabling environment.

Social service provision

While the direct connection between poverty and terrorism has been mostly debunked since 9/11 (e.g., Krueger and Maleckova 2002; K. von Hippel 2007b), it is also becoming clear that social service provision by extremist groups has significantly broadened the appeal of the al Qaeda movement and nationally focused Islamist political parties, particularly among the poor. In fact, many of the more successful Islamist political parties have a social service wing, whereas secular political parties do not.

A number of scholars and practitioners argue that extremist groups provide charitable services to expand their political power base. They point to Hezbollah or Hamas or the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia as successful examples of explicitly linking the two. A variation on this argument posits that many of the more radical Islamic organizations purposely link assistance with politics because the two are an inextricable part of their overall worldview, identity, and purpose (help for the poor is indeed core to all religions). Whatever the motive, it is clear that many of the affiliated charities fulfill a number of critical state functions in

places where the state does not. An end result can be that they succeed in replacing the state in some instances, thus realigning community loyalty.

In cases where an extremist nongovernmental organization (NGO) is the only service provider and a beneficiary refuses to wear a head scarf, for example, she may not get any service whatsoever. One often hears stories of young women removing their head scarves as soon as they leave an NGO-funded school, but nevertheless these pressures can transform societies over time (e.g., Flanigan 2006).[6] In addition, this aid monopoly can result in members of the public being reluctant to speak out against terrorist acts in their communities or to help government authorities locate suspects.

Thus, it is often simply the dearth of government-provided services or international donor support that makes some people and communities vulnerable and susceptible to extremist ideology. The sad fact is that the extremist charities get very little competition from national capitals and Western donors in many fragile, weak, and even autocratic states. The religious appeal may not be the primary draw for many recipient families, but the lack of alternatives for schooling or health care fuels extremist movements' growth.

Gerber and Mendelson (2007) found similar results in their surveys in the North Caucasus region, explaining, "Whoever gets there first and delivers social goods—the Russian government, the West, or radical Islamists—will shape the political trajectory of this region" (p. 5). Given that many developing states do not have the capacity to provide basic services for their inhabitants today and may not for the foreseeable future, Western assistance providers need to take a deeper look at their own approaches and funding mechanisms, and elaborate creative alternatives, especially when dealing with the "poor performers."

In more specific terms, when choosing programming areas, the emphasis should be placed as much as possible on local priorities, given that successful outcomes require buy-in by the local community (e.g., Cragin and Chalk 2003, 7).[7] In Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon, for example, focus groups found that the main priorities were education, jobs, and community (NDI 2007c, 2007a, 2007b). In other countries, health care or rule of law reform may rank higher. The important point is to meet needs, and not just provide services. One area, however, that consistently ranks high on all lists is youth and education.

Youth and education

Youth bulges in many developing states form the backbone of the enabling environment. For example, in Jordan (a country with half the population under the age of twenty-five) a 2005 poll found that "negative sentiments [about America] are particularly strong among youth and non-elites, who disapprove of U.S. policies, [and] are skeptical of American intentions in the region" (Hamarneh 2005, 10-11). In Morocco, focus groups revealed that young people were disenchanted with political parties, except for the Islamist PJD party, "whose Islamist agenda and conservative discourse appeals to young educated participants' sense of cultural pride" (NDI 2007c, 3). The demographic trends in

developing states, including most parts of the Arab and Muslim world, indicate that donors need a concerted focus on youth when designing assistance packages.

In both North and South, adolescent boys are typically the age group of concern for police, and also vulnerable for recruitment. Early interventions can be an important element in a counterterrorist (and counterradicalization) strategy. The emphasis on youth should therefore focus on better ways to educate and engage tomorrow's leaders, which could include improved public education, university scholarships, employment training, media programs, after-school extracurricular activities, or even regular discussions in schools with respected community leaders.

In poor parts of the world, general educational support is also required. In many developing countries with Muslim populations, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Somalia, poor parents cannot afford to educate their children. In some instances, they opt to send their children to extremist *madrasas* because they are heavily subsidized or free of charge. In addition to free tuition, children also receive food, clothing, and books at no cost to the family. In Pakistan alone, according to an International Crisis Group (ICG) report, more than one and a half million children attend madrasas (ICG 2002, i).

It has become apparent, however, that children who attend the more radicalized madrasas are taught a violent worldview and to despise "corrupting Western influences" from an early age (e.g., Davis 2002).[8] In a number of these schools, according to Ali Riaz (2005, 20), "Children are taught that Muslims all around the world . . . are under siege from sinister forces which they must fight to the death." It is primarily in the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) where these schools have been used to promote a political agenda—unlike in the Arab world, where they do not play such a role (most of the Muslim Brotherhood movement emerged from the secular universities in Egypt) (Anzar 2003, 17-18). Increasingly, Indonesia resembles the Indian subcontinent model, rather than the Arab one, as do parts of East and West Africa.

Not all madrasas have an extremist agenda, and many also teach secular subjects. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that very few of these students will become terrorists. At the same time, those who attend the more radical schools gain few practical skills to prepare them for working in modern society (Stern 2001). Thus, they will likely populate the enabling environment.

What can be done to counter this process? It is important to tailor reforms depending on the particularities of each place. An estimated 30 percent of the Taliban—al Qaeda's Afghan hosts—were educated in extremist madrasas, yet many of the known al Qaeda terrorists themselves, such as those who committed the 9/11 attacks, were not, and instead had advanced scientific and technical degrees and were educated in Europe and North America. Support for quality public education could therefore be one way of attacking root causes in parts of the world where poor parents have no other choice but the madrasa system.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors have been promoting educational reform in several of these countries, though the programs are not funded as well as may be required (e.g., Curtis 2007;

Barton and Cohen 2007; Abdalla, Raisuddin, and Hussein 2004; Benoliel 2003). Flexibility is essential for success. In some places, the emphasis should be on training teachers and assisting with their salaries (Barton and Cohen 2007, 20, 28). In others, it may make more sense to work with existing madrasas and encourage them to expand their curricula, as the European Union has done in parts of Pakistan, rather than build new schools (Smith 2002, 8).

Expanding curricula may not always be possible, however. Uzma Anzar found in his discussions with the heads of some Pakistani madrasas that even when they tried to introduce secular subjects in schools, they were forbidden by their Kuwaiti and Saudi funders from doing so (Anzar 2003, 19). At the very least, these schools should be given some competition in the same region, and national governments should be encouraged to monitor curricula more closely and improve overall public educational standards (see also Templar 2005, 9).

Most Western donors now recognize the importance of good governance, accountability, and social service provision in terms of reducing support for terrorism and have publicly dedicated some of their programming to achieve these goals. Yet they are not integrating or prioritizing their strategies as closely as is required, despite the numerous coordinating bodies that purport to harmonize donor strategies. The U.S. government should take the lead in advocating a concerted focus on a smaller number of priority areas among OECD donor states and multilateral institutions.

Even in situations where coordinated priorities are set, the programs offered have had a disappointing overall performance. Is the ground simply infertile, or are we using the wrong tools and choosing the wrong partners for foreign assistance? The answer, in fact, is that many appropriate techniques, tools, and successful practices from diverse fields may have been overlooked, are poorly understood, or need to be adapted to a different set of circumstances. If they can be harnessed properly, U.S. foreign assistance could have a serious multiplier effect and succeed in countering radicalization.

New Tools and Appropriate Partners

User-driven innovation tools

One way of improving social service delivery is by systematically applying new research approaches from management sciences, industry, and Silicon Valley—particularly the focus on “user-driven innovation” (E. von Hippel 2005). Such an approach could help counter radicalization by solving many development challenges and accelerating change in fundamental ways.

New technologies are impacting public and private spheres in all parts of the world, yet too few of these form part of the development toolbox. While Web 1.0 was primarily about passive monitoring of the Internet, Web 2.0 has been defined as synchronous communication, based on tools such as open-source software, mashups, and wikis. Web 2.0 has consequently unleashed numerous opportunities

for user-driven innovations, information sharing, and now even product manufacturing. These advances facilitate lateral thinking and innovation in unprecedented ways by opening up problem solving and search to the global community.

The al Qaeda movement has unfortunately learned how to harness Web 2.0 to generate support, share tools of terror, spread fear, and expand the network. Why can the foreign assistance community not use these same tools to enhance aid effectiveness and give al Qaeda more competition in the virtual world as well?

It is not only the Internet that has revolutionized societies all around the world—the intense surge in use of mobile phones and their increasing affordability in many developing states have also generated inventive ways of doing business, empowering the poor to fight poverty on their own terms. Cell phones provide daily price information on food exports for subsistence farmers in poor countries, such as Burkina Faso and Mali. They are used as debit cards, and they now transfer funds to places traditional banking systems cannot reach, as in many parts of Afghanistan or Somalia.

Indeed, innovations in the remittances "industry" provide an appropriate example of a user-driven innovation that has flourished over the past four decades due to globalization, with funds now reaching all corners of the globe—even war zones and refugee camps. A study of formal and informal transfers reported that migrants sent more than $300 billion home in 2006, a figure larger than overseas development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) combined, which in the same year totaled $271 billion (Orozco 2007). Even this $300 billion figure may be too conservative: experts reckon that the real aggregate figure may be two to three times higher due to difficulties in gathering data, particularly on informal flows (World Bank 2005).

The impact of remittances on developing states has been significant. In a number of countries, remittances constitute more than 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP); in other places, even more (such as Guinea-Bissau, where remittances account for almost half of GDP [Orozco 2007]). Funds remitted are used primarily for daily subsistence, but they are also used for loan repayment and investments, and increasingly, collective remittances are used for development projects (e.g., Mansoor and Quillin 2006). Interestingly, it appears that these funds are rarely misdirected and misappropriated due to the close family and kinship ties involved in their transfer, and often the transfer fees from some community-run services are lower than those provided by traditional banks. In general, these flows are more stable than other types of capital flows, and in times of crises at home, they tend to increase.

Some donors and international institutions have started to focus on the development impact and potential of remittances.[9] Yet their planning and programs have not been altered to the extent necessary to account for these vast flows of funds or to facilitate and leverage them for maximum impact (see, e.g., Kent, von Hippel, and Bradbury 2004). In 2005, Colin Powell remarked about remittances, "There is no effective multilateral mechanism in the world today to handle these issues" (p. 32).

The most sustained attention to remittances has focused on the negative aspect and potential contribution that informal systems allegedly make to terrorist

financing. Thus, whenever the U.S. government has shut down a remittance house, as it has done on a number of occasions since 9/11, rarely is this accompanied by a concomitant attempt to ensure that the families dependent on these financial flows are compensated through other means. Ignoring the spillover effect only creates more anti-American sentiment, not to mention harming livelihoods, while new remittance houses inevitably spring up within days to cope with the surge in demand.

The goal should be threefold: first, help money transfer companies (the formal name for the *hawalas*) become more transparent; second, elaborate new ways to facilitate collective remittances for development (without undermining local initiative); and third, improve access to credit for people in fragile and weak states. While some companies may channel funds to terrorists and use complicated codes to hide their activity, the vast majority are established and maintained to help family members survive and even prosper. There is no reason to believe that they would not be receptive to some form of assistance, particularly given their fear that they will be shut down by U.S. authorities.[10] Moreover, it is also possible that traditional assistance providers could learn from such innovations as the speed, efficiency, and accountability mechanisms that remittance systems use.

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Innovations such as remittance systems have been transforming developing states independent of foreign assistance programs. While mainstream development agencies may be aware of some of these practices and advances, they are ill equipped to integrate or work with them effectively, and thus seldom factor them into policy and programming at the macro level. Donors and implementing partners instead need to learn how to identify what the most advanced users are already doing at the edge of the target field or in adjacent fields, and then build on and leverage these solutions through techniques already in use in a number of other sectors.

A user-driven approach is also appropriate for a focus on youth. Young people are far more adept with and less intimidated by new technologies than their elders and can serve as mentors to their elders as well as to those currently excluded by the digital divide. Advances such as the $100 laptop, which include virtual libraries with more than one thousand books and audios in local languages, are aimed at the younger generation in poor countries. Beyond support for new Wi-Fi stations, donors can encourage children and teens in the United States to mentor their counterparts from the developing world through school twinning and virtual debates, using Web 2.0 tools. Encouraging open public discussion in many parts of the world will not only help generate new ideas and solutions but also mitigate the widespread impression in many developing states that the U.S. government imposes and dictates policy rather than listens.

A user-driven approach requires greater flexibility, a behind-the-scenes role, and risk taking. Nowhere is this more critical than in choosing the right partners.

New partners

One place to start would be adopting a new approach to Islamic charities. Islamic charitable assistance is not a new phenomenon, but international efforts to understand its impact and scope are only at a preliminary stage (Alterman and von Hippel 2007). Islamic charities rarely coordinate with Western donors and their implementing partners (mostly international NGOs), and their activities are almost never included in needs assessments by those same organizations. Estimates of funding spent on humanitarian and development assistance by Islamic charities over the past four to five decades place the total distributed at more than several hundred billion dollars. These funds are largely contributed by wealthy Saudi and other Gulf Arab individuals and by many Muslims in Europe and North America, through their annual *zakat* and other donations (Wechsler and Wolosky 2002; Harmer and Cotterrell 2005).

Western agencies have several reasons to develop better relations with Islamic charities, and not just because of the significance of the funding and their reach (e.g., improvements in coordination and collaboration can help prevent duplication and overlap of programs and ensure that funds go where they are most needed) (K. von Hippel 2007a). Better communication and information flows can help encourage dialogue with moderate and nonviolent, fundamentalist groups. It could also potentially inform Western-funded NGOs about alternative business practices.

Indeed, some argue that Islamic charities may be better at service provision than many Western agencies because their work is more closely aligned with local needs and because of the common religious and often cultural heritage. In addition, these charities often work in a more discreet fashion—delivering assistance "on the quiet"—in line with Islamic law, which stipulates that aid should be given in a way that does not humiliate the recipient (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; K. von Hippel 2006). In Lebanon, for example, focus groups revealed a

direct connection between Hezbollah's popularity and their successful empowerment programs (NDI 2007b, 5). Some Western NGOs may also work in a similarly sensitive fashion, yet this is not always the case, nor is it necessarily so with the growing cadre of private contractors financed by the U.S. government to provide development and humanitarian assistance in a number of conflict zones.

In some parts of the world, Islamic NGOs may be the only organizations that are able to work in a conflict zone. This is the case in Chechnya, where Islamic Relief UK has been operating for some time, and in Spinboldak in southern Afghanistan, where—with the exception of Médecins Sans Frontières—Islamic NGOs were the only ones found working in 2002.[11] The greater field presence of the Islamic charities may give them a better understanding of the evolving situation on the ground and help to build trust with local communities.

Islamic charities are often the first to arrive on the scene in a disaster or war zone. In the aftermath of the Pakistani earthquake, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (the parent organization of Lashkar-i-Taiba, one of the groups fighting in Kashmir and an ally of al Qaeda) was an early provider of relief (Lancaster and Khan 2005). After the Israeli bombing of Lebanon in July and August 2006, Hezbollah-sponsored charities bulldozed bombed-out areas and provided cash to families that had lost their homes, while international agencies and the Lebanese government were slower off the mark. Given Islamic charities' nimble nature, they may be more successful than Western charities in capacity building and developing sustainable social services.

Experts may disagree over how or even whether to engage with the more radically inspired charities, especially those that may also promote violence. A more nuanced approach, developed by the UK Charities Commission, could be adopted by U.S. authorities for monitoring Islamic (and indeed, all) charities in a more "targeted, intelligent way," where feasible (Shaw-Hamilton 2007, 19). James Shaw-Hamilton (2007) explained the range of options available to the UK Charities Commission: "requiring information and answers from those associated with a charity, freezing bank accounts (in whole or in part), removing individual trustees, handing over management of the charity, transferring its assets to another charity, and closing it down" (p. 19).

The best way to deal with the increasing divide between the United States and most parts of the Muslim world should be through more engagement, not less. And even with the most extreme charities, such as those affiliated with Hamas or Hezbollah, a complete cut in relations between these groups and U.S. authorities only serves to empower and elevate them in their own communities. It makes sense for the United States to harmonize and accelerate work with Islamic charities when possible, to learn from potentially more successful practices, and to leverage and facilitate assistance in broader ways. In addition, greater collaboration is critical to help destitute people in areas inaccessible to Western organizations. Finally, in those instances where there is concern about extremist ideology being promoted alongside aid, the groups in question need competition by Western donors to lessen their appeal.

Conclusions: Communicating the Strategy

A new counterradicalization strategy needs to be subsumed under the larger issue of U.S. foreign assistance reform. The major recommendations in this article—good governance, social service delivery, user-driven approaches, and more appropriate partners—apply equally to countering radicalization as well as to countering poverty and building democracies in many parts of the world. More specifically, a successful U.S.-led counterradicalization campaign will require a robust communication strategy to ensure that it is understood and disseminated properly. Public diplomacy can drive a wedge between the terrorists and their constituencies, but only if it is grounded in responsible policy and practices.

Three major messages will need to be broadcast, alongside better programming.

Message 1: Emphasize global values. The strategy needs to be inclusive. Values such as justice, diversity, tolerance, transparency, democracy, charity, community, and human rights are not exclusive to the Western world (e.g., NDI 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). They are global values and need to be publicly redefined and recognized as such. The United States should take the lead role in advocating, promoting, respecting, and practicing these principles. As noted earlier, perceptions of accountability and provision of basic services have contributed to the popularity of the al Qaeda movement and nationally based Islamist parties in many parts of the world. The United States needs to regain its moral authority and leadership in these critical areas.

Message 2: Be flexible and use a mix of tools. The strategy needs to have surge capacity. Successful policy will rigorously capitalize on the "mistakes" of the jihadi. The deepest mistakes occur when operatives kill their own constituents. Surgical counterterrorism (which need not be militarist) should focus on opportunities to generate revulsion and change minds when al Qaeda attacks "its" people. One of the many disagreements within and between the loose affiliation of networked groups that make up the larger al Qaeda movement is over the killing of civilians and, in particular, Muslim civilians. In almost every attack that has taken place since the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Africa in August 1998 by al Qaeda or its affiliates, large numbers of Muslim civilians have been victims. Public awareness campaigns should therefore be designed to exploit these schisms. Such campaigns will require good local knowledge and the use of revolutionary communications concepts, as well as low-tech and no-tech options to improve information sharing and best practices, from Web 2.0 open-source technologies to social networking tools, cell phones, radios, and even the tea house.

Message 3: Make a commitment. The strategy needs to be long-term, not only to demonstrate that the U.S. government can deliver on promises, but also to impact several generations. In weak and fragile states, donors need to develop and implement programs with long-term funding cycles rather than, as is now typically the case, for six months or a year. The U.S. government must be able to

adapt to compete with the al Qaeda movement, which has taken a long-term view, encompassing many generations through its indoctrination strategies (e.g., madrasas and other charitable work).

This article proposes a new way of targeting the enabling environment and demonstrating that the U.S. commitment to ending poverty is sincere, to counter negative perceptions in key parts of the world. For example, one poll noted that majorities in five Arab states agreed with a statement that read, “The U.S. aims to dominate other countries by offering foreign aid” (Hamarneh 2005, 58-59). If developed and implemented appropriately, such a counterradicalization strategy would weaken and isolate al Qaeda and its offshoots and imitators, as the core and broader constituency would stop regarding al Qaeda operatives as legitimate soldiers of the Muslim nation. Afterward, the terrorists would become much more vulnerable to informants and standard policing surveillance, while communities would invest in and help to build their own futures. British academic Fred Halliday (2004) has described the ideology of al Qaeda as one that “thrives on its intoxicating incoherence.” The job of the next American president is to ensure that it is no longer intoxicating, but that it remains incoherent.

Notes

1. It needs to be pointed out here that the publics in these countries do distinguish between “America” and “American foreign policy,” as depicted in the polling results.

2. This term was coined by Harvard professor Louise Richardson, who also uses the term “complicit society.”

3. The Union of Islamic Courts controlled most of southern Somalia from June 2006 until December 2006, when they were driven out by Ethiopian troops.

4. This was designed to reduce conflict and support poverty alleviation by instituting mechanisms to ensure that oil revenues were properly accounted for and used for development projects, benefiting both countries, though recently Chadian President Idriss Déby allegedly diverted funds for arms purchases. The success of this project is therefore unclear at this stage.

5. A number of excellent NGOs implement rule of law projects, such as the American Bar Association’s Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI), which supports legal reform in Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East; and the Public International Law & Policy Group.

6. Also author interviews in Lebanon, Yemen, Kosovo, and Algeria.

7. This can be done through regular surveys, polls, and focus groups, among other activities.

8. For example, Craig Davis, who was researching Afghan education, found this example from a fourth-grade math puzzle: “The speed of a Kalashnikov bullet is 800 meters per second. If a Russian is at a distance of 3200 meters from a *mujahid*, and that *mujahid* aims at the Russian’s head, calculate how many seconds it will take for the bullet to strike the Russian in the forehead?” These violent examples were supposedly edited out of the textbooks in 1992, but during Davis’s field research, he found that the unedited versions were still in use in 1999 and 2000 among Afghan refugees in Pakistan and also in Afghanistan. He concluded that a major theme of these textbooks, for grades 1 through 6, was the promotion of violence for the sake of Islam (Davis 2002).

9. Albeit belatedly—it was not until 2004 that the G8 put remittances on its agenda. This includes the U.S., UK, and German development agencies; the Inter-American Development Bank; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the World Bank; the Ford Foundation; the Macarthur Foundation; the Rockefeller Foundation; and the Inter-American Foundation.

10. This author heard similar sentiments when interviewing at Somali remittance houses in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Italy in 2004.

11. Similar to the way Western NGOs operate, Islamic NGOs divided the work for the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps between them.

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