COMBATING AL-QAEDA AND THE JIHADIST IDEOLOGY

– AN IN-PROGRESS REVIEW OF THE US NATIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

In the four years since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has attempted to craft a national counter-terrorism policy to defeat al-Qaeda and related jihadist terrorist groups and protect the homeland. In crafting this strategy, it must be clear whether the intent is to eradicate al-Qaeda and similar groups or reduce their potency to the point at which they can be addressed as a law enforcement issue. Once the end state is envisioned, it must be determined how successful we have been in our counter-terrorism strategy since 9/11 and what the metrics should be to gauge future success. In balancing the various elements of a national counter-terrorism strategy, how do we achieve synergy, vice individual task accomplishment?

An effective counterterrorism strategy against al-Qaeda must feature three elements. The first of these elements is a hard counter-terrorist component, focused on military, law enforcement and interdiction of terrorist financing. Its immediate focus should include: combating al-Qaeda as the flagship group, destroying the safe-haven that these terrorist groups are using as bases of operation, capturing or killing the key leadership and its lieutenants, identifying and interdicting the sources of terrorist financing and attempting to address terrorism at its roots.

The second (and most essential) element is the need to protect the United States from further catastrophic terrorist attacks, including the potential terrorist employment of weapons of mass destruction. This element also includes the mechanics of restructuring the intelligence community and redefining the roles and missions of federal, state and local authorities in the protection of critical infrastructure.

The third element is a transitional counter-terrorist (or soft power) component, designed to combat the ideology driving jihadist terrorism and to engage the Muslim nations from which many of these terrorist individuals hail, in democratization and transformation efforts. Most difficult to combat is the ideology behind this new dimension terrorism since its roots are currently intertwined with the many problems in the Middle East,

particularly US support for Israel, American military presence in Muslim countries in the region and the spread of fundamentalist Wahhabi ideology.

None of the above listed elements are either novel or revolutionary. Considerable progress has been made in the hard counter-terrorism arena and protecting the homeland, but particularly with the latter, there are still significant gaps. The element of soft (or transformational) counter-terrorism needs the most work and progress has been hampered by the protracted war in Iraq – a situation that has also diverted precious resources from the hard counter-terrorist effort. Unfortunately, these elements are currently not always working in sync and thus we are unable to achieve the synergy we require for a focused fight. These elements cannot work in isolation, as their constituent components – intelligence, military capabilities, law enforcement and diplomacy – are functional areas that cut across the spectrum. This paper will attempt to provide and in-progress review of each element and offer recommendations for coordinating a more cohesive national counter-terrorism strategy.

Let us be clear, an effective strategy should focus on combating the al-Qaeda network, its offshoot organizations and other groups supporting the jihadist ideology, vice waging a "global war on terrorism" – terrorism is not an enemy, it is a tactic. To clarify this point, we must have a firm understanding of the nature of the threat al-Qaeda poses and distinguish it from the classical Euro-terrorism of the 1970s and 1980s.

HARD COUNTERTERRORISM

> The struggle against international terrorism is different from any other war in our history. We will not triumph solely or even primarily through military might. We must fight terrorist networks, and all those who support their efforts to spread fear around the world, using every instrument of national power – diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, financial, information, intelligence and military … Our goal will be reached when Americans and other civilized people around the world can lead their lives free of fear of terrorist attacks.[1]
> *National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism*

The events of 9/11 visibly demonstrated that terrorism perpetrated by jihadist groups represents a new and real threat against the American homeland, requiring cooperation at the federal and local level to protect against it. Unlike a number of its European allies (Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain and Turkey) the United States had no prior experience of waging a protracted counter-terrorist effort (particularly not against a foreign terrorist organization), and thus had to craft a new strategy. The quote above clearly illustrates President Bush's long-term vision for how this strategy will fall into context with the overall national security strategy. The successful coordination of the elements of a hard counter-terrorism strategy (military options, law enforcement and disrupting sources of terrorist financing) combined with focused intelligence and special operations capabilities will be critical in establishing a functioning strategy.

The classical terrorism of the 1970s (which was largely Euro-based) was viewed as a political act designed to influence, persuade and gain a certain amount of sympathy from a target audience, often a different intended audience than the unfortunate victims of the attack. The aims of the attacks were to harm specific individuals, but not to cause mass casualties, for fear of alienating support for the cause. As such, terrorism was often handled as a law enforcement issue, as laws were broken in the commission of terrorist acts. The attacks of 9/11, however, committed by a non-state armed group against soft targets within the US, were designed to cause death on a catastrophic scale – a new dimension of grand terrorism. For the first time, a non-state actor was able to commit violence on a scale that previously was the exclusive domain of nation-states.

Al-Qaeda encompasses the combination of an ideological and asymmetric component here-to-fore unfamiliar in the international environment. The ideological component of this threat is based on Wahhabist (Salafist) inspired jihadism and its asymmetry is characterized by catastrophic in scale terrorist attacks against unsuspecting civilian targets. The terrorist threat facing the United States consists of two elements: al-Qaeda (a stateless network of terrorists) and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world.

The ideological component of this new dimension is centered on an Islamist jihadist political and religious strategy to replace the current secular governments of predominantly Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Gulf states) with theocracies, which would form the core of a new Caliphate spanning from the Maghreb to Southeast Asia. The vision of the jihadists is to restore the purity of Islam, as it existed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century as a counterbalance to the United States and the West. Bin Laden draws upon a long tradition of intolerance within a stream of Islam, which flows from Ibn Taymiyyah through Sayyid Qutb and his ideology depicts America as the font of all evil, the "head of the snake". In order for al-Qaeda to fulfill its destiny of Caliphate establishment it must topple the secular leaders of states such as Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Cutting off the "head of the snake" implies breaking the US support for these leaders, thus making their countries ripe for conversion to theocracies. The tactic al-Qaeda has chosen is to attack the US presence in region (East Africa embassy bombings and the USS Cole) and at home.

Since 9/11, al-Qaeda has also undertaken attacks in Bali, Istanbul, Riyadh, Madrid and London, in an effort to weaken international support for the US effort. Al-Qaeda's modus operandi features unprecedented and seemingly unrestrained levels of violence perpetrated against non-combatants, with the terrorist group seeking to achieve almost millennial effects of destruction and loss of life. For Osama bin Laden, the attacks of 9/11 represented acts of religious devotion, conducted in the name of Allah and according to his wishes. The enemy was the infidel and its opposing ideology of Western cultures, specifically the United States. This type of religious motivation and messianism, coupled

with a millenarian world view (that is inextricably linked to producing mass casualties) is what characterizes al-Qaeda and their Jihadist affiliates from the previous brand of classical terrorists (national, social-revolutionary and Maoist) that dominated the political landscape of the last decades of the Cold War.

The jihadist threat currently consists of three levels: the al-Qaeda and Egyptian Islamic Jihad nexus and its leadership of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri; jihadist groups with close ties to al-Qaeda, such as the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSCP) and the Indonesian Jamaat Islamiyya; and sympathetic groups with likeminded ideologies (but not previously linked to al-Qaeda), such as the Moroccan terrorists who perpetrated the 2004 Madrid bombings or the foreign terrorist elements fighting alongside Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq. All of these three circles share in the strategic goal of al-Qaeda.

Accordingly, the method of confronting, combating and defeating this new dimension of international terrorism will ultimately have to be waged outside of the accustomed construct in which the respective opponents are state actors with defined centers of gravity who are subject to the rules of diplomacy and conventional warfare. This situation has caused a rethinking of US security policy in attempting to weigh retaliation options against a foe able to cause grievous damage, but falling outside of the parameters of a defined state actor. Transformational change and adaptive leadership were needed to confront this new threat against the United States, modifying the traditional state-to-state conflict resolution model to adapt addressing asymmetric threats. The issue of waging a war against a trans-national threat was a new challenge that would redefine the strategic considerations of sovereignty and governance. Acting decisively would be key in terms of war aims and strategy.

The first element of an effective counter-terrorism strategy against jihadist trans-national terrorism must be the application of hard power in the form of military and law enforcement action and choking off terrorist financial resources. What was immediately clear was that the US was facing a trans-national, non-traditional and religiously/ideologically motivated foe, which was supported by a network of state and

non-state sponsors and operated from a sanctuary of a gray-zone state, non-responsive to international norms and controls. Such was the case with al-Qaeda in Taliban ruled Afghanistan. Operationally, the first obvious goal in striking this terrorist adversary was to deprive him of his sanctuary and operational support base and attack their leadership; tasks well within the means of the US special operations community, supported by tailored conventional forces. This was demonstrated during the coalition operations in Afghanistan in late-2001.

Operations of the complexity of 9/11 require infrastructure and resources for planning, staging, rehearsing and executing. Taking down the terrorist "Disneyland" of Afghanistan has done much to deprive al-Qaeda of its traditional base of operations. Upon accomplishing this task, the focus must shift to denying the ability for al-Qaeda to stage in Western Pakistan and along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border; southern or western Afghanistan; the Arabian Peninsula, particularly Saudi Arabia and Yemen and the Horn of Africa, extending from Somalia to Kenya to Southeast Asia; from Thailand to the Southern Philippines to Indonesia; and in European cities with expatriate Muslim communities.[2] Al-Qaeda has responded to four years of attacks by the US and its allies by dispersing its surviving veterans, exporting its ideology to Muslim communities in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and South Asia, crafty use of the internet to spread its message and by encouraging attacks by autonomous organizations. While many of the top leadership have been killed or captured and cells disrupted, there appear to be no shortage of recruits to take their place.

Targeting al-Qaeda was a challenge, different from what US and coalition forces had previously faced. Al-Qaeda can be categorized as an asymmetric warfare threat that is highly irregular and decentralized in its approach, organization and tactics. Al-Qaeda employs its tactics to bypass the superior conventional military strength of the US. Its organization and operations are masked by deception, denial, stealth, and intelligence tradecraft and are profoundly affected by the information, communication and transportation technologies providing them with global reach. Al-Qaeda recognizes no fronts or distinctions between military and civilian targets. Although Bin Laden and

Zawahiri frequently invoke the name of religion in their operations, these actions are marked by unlimited violence and wanton disregard for the sanctity of human life espoused by recognized religions.

The conceptual key is to view al-Qaeda and its associated jihadist groups as the military arm of a global insurgency, rather than as a monolithic terrorist group. Al-Qaeda has morphed into splinter groups on five continents, making it more difficult to penetrate and like a virus, it has evolved and adapted to the US effort to combat jihadist terrorism. Al-Qaeda is now a global phenomenon, with links to Jamaat Islamiyya in Southeast Asia, GSPC from Algeria, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's network in Iraq. Unlike classical Euro-terrorist groups of the 1970s-1980s, such as West Germany's Red Army Faction or Italy's Red Brigades, solely killing or capturing a handful of its top leadership cannot eliminate al-Qaeda. Bin-Ladenism has now spread and permeated other regional groups, encouraging them to engage in a strategic struggle. The threat now posed by al-Qaeda has also now come to encompass a broader array of Salafist jihadist terrorists.[3] The operational elements either founded by al-Qaeda or inspired by bin Laden are all self-activated and encouraged to develop, resource and conduct operational terrorist activity, regardless of whether they have pledged allegiance to bin Laden. Zarqawi's alignment with al-Qaeda is perhaps the best example of the franchising of the terrorist organization. This decentralization appears to represent a power-down approach from a central leadership paradigm to smaller, more independent acting terrorist units.

As such, al-Qaeda has fundamentally transformed and now consists of three circles. The first circle constitutes the surviving al-Qaeda leadership surrounding bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri and the pre-9/11 shura. The counter-terrorism implications of this circle are that they must continue to be eradicated, and any effort to engage in dialogue for the purposes of behavior modification is pointless. As bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam stated: "The rifle and jihad alone. No negotiations, no conferences, no dialogues." They hold true to the belief that the struggle will end only upon the dawn of a new Caliphate.[4]

The second circle is comprised of terrorist groups that share some of the transnational ideology of al-Qaeda, movements born out of local conflicts that now operate both locally and globally, specifically the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) and the Indonesian Jamaat Islamiyya (JI). The counterterrorism implications to address this circle indicate a three-pronged approach: apply hard counterterrorism pressure to the terrorism element within these political movements; engage the political branches to foreswear the use of terrorism as a tactic; and attempt to address the underlying grievances that gave rise to the movement and its terrorist element – political, economic, social.[5]

The third circle represents the least definable and potentially most enduring terrorist threat we may face in the future. This circle is comprised of jihadists who consider bin Laden as their role model and standard-bearer and act in his name, but may indeed have little or no contact to al-Qaeda – essentially "bottom-up" or freelance franchisees of al-Qaeda. Counter-terrorist efforts to defeat this circle should focus on arresting its growth, by discrediting the ideology that is its rallying call.[6] This goes into the essence of winning the battle for ideas and addressing the struggle within Islam itself – between moderate and radical Muslims. In the Middle East, the Saudi Arabian peninsula and Pakistan, it speaks to undertaking political reforms with the aim of achieving better and more responsive governance. In Europe, it speaks to better integrating Muslim immigrants and promoting inclusion, rather that ghetto-ization. Al-Qaeda's objective is to federate while decentralizing, attempting to make mainsteam in the Muslim world an ideology that previously existed only on the radical fringe. An effective counter-terrorism strategy should seek to divide and marginalize this effort, by discrediting the jihadist ideology and by offering alternatives to young men who might be attracted to a life of terrorism.

Since forces were deployed to Afghanistan in October 2001, the implementation of a US counter-terrorist strategy has taken on definitive shape. First, the Taliban government was ousted and replaced by an Afghan government elected by the Afghan citizenry. Next, counter-terrorist training has been conducted in the Philippines, Yemen, and

Thailand and a number of other nations which might be susceptible to jihadist terrorist influence. Regardless of whether it is al-Qaeda or a spin-off terrorist organization that conducts and attack (in Bali, Madrid or London) these actions serve to galvanize other to jump on the jihadist bandwagon.

The hard operational counter-terrorism strategy of combating al-Qaeda should be regarded on two planes – a war to be waged using the armed forces and an international police/law enforcement action. A case can be made that it qualifies as a war because the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were not your average terrorist hit and run attacks, but aimed at the very heart of the US system and its economy and designed to cause catastrophic loss of life and devastating impact on the economy. Indeed, al-Qaeda press releases to al-Jazeera have confirmed their stated aim to inflict mass casualties, in the millions. If you accept Clausewitz's definition that the purpose of war is to break the enemy's will, then al-Qaeda has adopted this maxim in its efforts against the US, albeit on an asymmetric battlefield.[7] It is also a law enforcement issue, since in the commission of the terrorist act, laws are often violated – indeed, the bombing itself is a criminal act.

Disrupting terrorist financing

The disrupting of terrorist financing is an integral component of the hard counter-terrorism element. The fact remains that al-Qaeda and its associates need funds to operate, even in the most frugal environments, and in the process of raising and moving these funds, the group often leaves itself susceptible to exploitation. Al-Qaeda has been successful in using the established banking system, dubious Islamic charities, shadow economies, criminal activity, and extortion to raise funds for their terrorist operations. Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has been successful in interdicting and disrupting the links to these sources of financing through bilateral and multi-lateral international law enforcement and intelligence cooperation. These efforts have dried-up the considerable sources of revenue that al-Qaeda relied upon prior to the 9/11 attacks. In general, terrorist attacks executed by al-Qaeda were relatively inexpensive (9/11 cost an estimated $500,000), but the support infrastructure of maintain bases in Sudan and

Afghanistan were far more extensive and costly to operate. Continued law enforcement and intelligence cooperation will continue to deprive al-Qaeda of these bases of operation and financial sources of support.[8]

Al-Qaeda had a variety of sources to finance its activities – to raise, place, layer and invest funds – involving a mixture of ideological, religious, criminal and business resources. In the 1990s, al-Qaeda relied heavily on operating in Afghanistan and the Sudan, subverting their respective mechanisms of society and government and using their feral cities as bases for operation. Building al-Qaeda's support network was one of bin Laden's principal endeavors and he used legitimate and established financial institutions while simultaneously exploiting the informal financial sector, including Muslim indigenous communities, charity organizations, financial front organizations and the *hawala* system.[9] Bin Laden's financial network ensured the long-term well being of the organizational aspects of its cells and it operated like a foundation. Personal fortune was augmented by various al-Qaeda legal and illicit activities: front companies, charities, drugs trade, extortion, donations by wealthy contributors, and money laundering

Al-Qaeda is not structured to operate in isolation and requires these Muslim hosts as satellites for its financial, technical and logistical support mechanisms. Al-Qaeda's financial and business committee (comprised of professional accountants, bankers and financiers) manages the group's funds across four continents. In a variety of Middle Eastern countries, al-Qaeda receives public (but well disguised) support from Islamic philanthropists and foundations, notably in the Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In developing countries, al-Qaeda's infiltration strategies involve the distribution of goods and services to local Muslim communities, using these contributions as a quid pro quo for safe haven and support. In Western countries, al-Qaeda uses the Muslim communities to secure contributions for needy Muslims abroad, and in the process of building the soliciting and channeling mechanism for fund raising, it is able to use the resultant contacts to mine for potential recruits.

Intelligence and security services of Western nations working the al-Qaeda problem have never before encountered a system as sophisticated, robust and efficient, drawing comparisons to the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), which funneled funds to the anti-Soviet jihad, while maintaining contacts with other terror groups. To move its funds from source to recipient, al-Qaeda money managers clandestinely disguise the true identities of both parties, washing these funds through a variety of front or charitable organizations, using a similar, albeit more complex mechanism, as other terrorist groups like Hamas or the Tamil Tigers (LTTE).[10]

Money laundering and other forms of terrorist financing have summoned the highest levels of intergovernmental cooperation in the war against terrorism. Post 9/11 measures to control terrorist financing include: UN Security Council resolution 1373; US Congress International Money-Laundering Abatement and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act; the Financial Aid Task Force (FATF) Eight Special Recommendations on Terrorist Finance established by the G-8; and cooperative initiatives by the EU and the Organization for European Cooperation and Development (OECD). In the year following 9/11, over $115 million in suspected terrorist assets were identified and frozen, yet in the subsequent year, only an additional $23 million were seized. Greater scrutiny on the part of governments and financial institutions has caused al-Qaeda to move their assets from conventional banking systems to decentralize the bankrolling of its operations. The terror group has now diversified its financial base and shifted its assets into more convertible and easier to conceal commodities, among them diamonds and other precious stones.[11]

Cooperation among governments and financial authorities in the US, Europe and Asia has been steadily improving. However, Arab governments have been less forthcoming, particularly on the issue of investigating charities, since charitable giving is a basic tenet of Islam. Islamic financial institutions are therefore less willing to scrutinize the activities of client depositors who represent Muslim charity organizations. After the May 2003 Riyadh bombings, Saudi Arabian cooperation in cracking down on suspected sources of terrorist funding intensified, with the realization that jihadist terrorism was threatening the Kingdom. One example of this is the dissolving by Saudi authorities of

the Haramain Charitable Foundation in mid-2004, implicated in financing al-Qaeda to the tune of $30 million per year. Haramain has often been described in intelligence circles as the "United Way" of Saudi Arabia, and has provided financial service to al-Qaeda in at least 20 of the lending institutions branches. By mid-2004, the Saudi government had brought all Saudi-based charities under government control.[12]

As a result of the US and international crack-down on terrorist money laundering, al-Qaeda has attempted to diversify its holdings and shift funds into less detectable, more transportable and readily convertible commodities, such as semi-precious and precious stones. The loss of Afghanistan as a safe-haven (and source of emeralds) forced al-Qaeda to find alternative areas, which featured a mix of state and non-state actors interacting in money laundering, arms trafficking and the sale of illicit gemstones as a convertible currency. One such accommodating player was Charles Taylor's Liberia, illustrating that the linkage between failed (or borderline) states offers terrorists the ability to move money, drugs, arms and other commodities, raising the necessary capital to conduct terrorist operations. The apparatus of government, however suspect of corruption, nonetheless provides an increased ability to smuggle, using the mechanisms of state – false visas, diplomatic credentials, shipping registries and aircraft clearances.[13]

Like a large organized crime syndicate, al-Qaeda requires at its disposal the ability to move funds internationally, using the established banking system, the *hawala* remittance system and informal means such as couriers. Simultaneous and coordinated terrorist attacks of the type witnessed in Madrid (March 2004), London (twice in July 2005) and Sharm al-Shaykh (July 2005), may have been committed by locally raised terrorists, but clearly bear the imprint of al-Qaeda and its top leadership. This requires command and control communication and the transfer of operational funds. International cooperation in law enforcement investigations, intelligence exchanges and the disrupting of terrorist means of financing are critical tools in uncovering and preventing future attacks.

Intelligence reform and its effect on counter-terrorism strategy

National intelligence capabilities are an essential force multiplier, playing an integral role across all three elements of a counter-terrorism strategy. Intelligence serves as the eyes and ears of the military and law enforcement strike capabilities for hard counter-terrorism operations. Intelligence also provides the informational interface to coordinate homeland protection and allows decision-makers to have the best possible information in crafting a long-term public diplomacy and transformational counter-terrorism strategy. Prior to 9/11, much of US national intelligence focused outward, analyzing conventional force threats and countries with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities and potential. Despite the robust structures and plentiful funding, these intelligence organizations were unable to provide advanced warning allowing the country to anticipate and protect against the 9/11 attacks.

The Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 has done much to realign national level intelligence agencies to make the Intelligence Community more responsive to the executive branch. The creation of a Director of National Intelligence and an intelligence analysis fusion center in the form of the National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) was written into law with the rationale that these entities would better protect the nation from catastrophic attacks.

Additionally, three national level post-9/11 reviews of intelligence support to national decision-makers have illustrated that human intelligence (HUMINT) was the discipline that required a tighter alignment at the national level, both from the standpoint of collection and analysis. HUMINT is a scarce resource, both in terms of collectors and dedicated analysts. Currently, strategic HUMINT resources are divided between the CIA's Directorate of Operations (DDO) and the DoD's Defense Intelligence Agency. Organizationally, the DDO collects HUMINT derived information to support the national level decision-maker, while DIA performs and analogous function for the DoD elements. Although as collection elements in the field, CIA and DIA collectors complement each other in support of the warfighter, nationally there is a bifurcation of effort. Collection

requirements, collection operations and collection analysis are often insufficiently deconflicted, either resulting in a duplication of effort or in information gaps.

One recommendation to solve these organizational coordination problems is to consolidate all CIA/DDO and DIA strategic HUMINT elements under one national HUMINT agency and director (analogous to the national SIGINT director). Only in this way can there be a fused collection and analysis effort to support the struggle against jihadist terrorism. Such a proposal will surely elicit a strong response from DIA and the Services, who will insist that a loss of a dedicated DoD strategic HUMINT capability will erode support to the warfighter. Currently, neither the Services nor the Unified Commands are currently well served by a floating (non-dedicated) DIA HUMINT force, which is repeatedly surged to support the crisis of the day. By strengthening the (US Code) Title 10 funded TIARA (Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities) assets in the Army and the Marine Corps, to include expanding counter-intelligence, interrogator and linguist capabilities, support to the deployed warfighter will be enhanced. This will be furthermore reinforced by attaching strategic HUMINT teams to the J2 (intelligence) element of the deployed Joint Task Force.

The HUMINT case officer force should be consolidated at the national level and coupled in a unity of effort with NCTC analysts and collection managers to create synergy against the jihadist terrorist threat. Both CIA and DIA case officers already attend combined operational training, providing both with the identical level of operational competence when they reach their initial units of assignment. Likewise, operational pooling of counter-terrorist analysts already occurs at various nodes. Therefore, creating a combined and dedicated HUMINT counter-terrorist analyst pool would be feasible. The most logical place for this consolidation of strategic HUMINT is under the CIA as the national HUMINT agency. Whereas this suggestion may have previously been considered as a loss of a strategic asset for DoD, under the reorganization of the Intelligence Community under the Director of National Intelligence, it now makes eminent sense.

Military capabilities to combat terrorism

Historically seen, during the past three decades in Europe, counter-terrorism has often been conducted using law enforcement capabilities and the judicial system. Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain have decades of experience fighting either sectarian, ideological or separatist based terrorism, both home grown and sometimes supported by outside states. Primarily, this terrorist threat was addressed by a combination of police investigative work, subsequent arrests and prosecution in the courts. The two London terrorist attacks of July 2005 again highlighted that the bulk of the operational hard counter-terrorist effort falls into the domain of law enforcement. Occasionally, specialized military elements like Germany's GSG-9 or Italy's Carabinieri were used to reinforce police efforts. In Northern Ireland, the British Army reinforced the local Ulster police forces in combating IRA elements.

The US experience, however, is different for two main reasons, having to do with threat perception and structure. Until the al-Qaeda attacks made it painfully evident that terrorists had both the will and capability to strike within the United States, neither a domestic nor a foreign terrorist threat against the country was taken seriously. Additionally, the federal structure of the US placed law enforcement functions at the state and local level. Unlike many of its European counterparts, the US has no internal security service.

Current US policy is to fight terrorism abroad, disarming the threat before it has a chance to make it to US soil. To accomplish this, US counter-terrorism policy is heavily reliant upon assets found within the Department of Defense (although the Department of State is still the lead agency for coordination the government's counter-terrorist strategy). Particularly special operations forces (SOF) are the arrows in the quiver that appear best suited to combat this asymmetric threat. The Bush administration is considering the realigning of the command and control relationships governing counter-terrorist activities, as they currently exist between DoD and the CIA. While covert operations have previously been solely under the purview of the CIA, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld would like to increase the latitude of his special operations forces to participate

in a range of counter-terrorist activities related to intelligence gathering and apprehending individual terrorist suspects in foreign countries. The proposal reexamines the roles played by the CIA and DoD in combating terrorism. If adopted, the plan would permit SOF to operate against terror groups in countries where the military has not been active, including in friendly countries, which has usually been the turf of the CIA.[14]

If this plan were adopted, US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) would be designated as the warfighting command for all counter-terrorism activities, with Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), being responsible for conducting clandestine counter-terrorism operations using Delta Force and Navy Seals. JSOC is a joint headquarters serving as the unified command structure for the employment of joint special operations and training as well as to conduct US counterterrorism operations and a variety of special reconnaissance and intelligence missions. A unit called Task Force 11, composed mostly of Delta Force soldiers and Navy SEALs, conducted a considerable portion of the hunt for senior Taliban and al-Qaeda members in Afghanistan.[15]

Combat actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated that the issue of asymmetric warfare will again have to be factored into a permanent part of the military structure and doctrine. For the first time since the Vietnam War, asymmetric warfare is tying down more US military resources than any potential conventional threat. This is not to say, however, that the entire focus of the current defense transformation effort should shift solely to combating asymmetric threats, as the deterrent function of conventional strength needs to be resourced due to the continued existence of conventional foes. Therefore, the force and doctrine gap that currently exists between effectively fighting conventional and asymmetric threats needs to be addressed. One proposal to address this is in redesignating the US Army Special Forces as being responsible for asymmetric threats, and thus charged with monitoring the hundred plus terrorist groups and insurgency movements worldwide, proposing a course of action to the national leadership whenever a threat to US interests appear.[16] Specifically, Delta Force and Navy SEAL Team 6 should have the responsibility for conducting offensive efforts against terrorist organizations threatening US interests. Clandestine and covert

military intelligence activities should be restructured to respond in a direct support mode to these SOF, rather than be held in general support at the DoD level. Additionally, the "water's edge" issues between the CIA and DoD regarding ownership and conduct of covert operations (the US Code Title 10 vs. Title 50 issues) should be resolved in Congress, eliminating future turf battles on the subject.

Prior to 9/11, these special operations assets were rarely used to hunt down terrorists responsible for taking American lives. Despite numerous Presidential Decision Directives issued in the aftermath of terrorist attacks against US interests in the 1990s, there was reluctance on the part of both the executive branch and the Pentagon to implement these and carry the fight to al-Qaeda. Several self-imposed restraints may have kept these special operation capabilities sidelined and deliberately not employed in an aggressive strategy. International terrorism during the 1990s was still largely regarded as an issue of criminality and not an issue of national security, thus not presenting an issue of clear and present danger to our national interests. The Somalia experience of October 1993 also left decision-makers with a sense of risk aversion regarding in cases where the national interest and desired endstate were less than clearly defined.

These attitudes have been considerably modified due to the lessons learned in the employment of special mission capable units in combating al-Qaeda since 9/11. As well, the historic argument regarding the legal authority of using SOF to conduct covert operations has been overcome by the superb cooperation of the SOF community and the CIA in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. The issue was once again addressed by the 9/11 Commission, which recommended transferring all authorities for the conduct of covert activities to DoD. This recommendation, however, was not part of the 2004 law that provided for the reorganization of the intelligence community.

Countering one of al-Qaeda's centers of gravity – its top leadership – was initially an effective counter-terrorism tactic. Positive strides have also been made in the law enforcement and intelligence communities in apprehending suspected terrorists and the organizations and mechanisms that provide funding to terrorist organizations. Both the

military and law enforcement tactics against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan resulted in the death or apprehension of a sizable number of this terrorist organization's key leadership, ultimately weakening command and control and the ability to plan and conduct catastrophic attacks of the scale of 9/11. The United States has worked hard to engage the international community in this struggle against this terrorist threat, with some key successes. In addition to the seizure of suspected sources of terrorist funding, in March 2004 the European Union signed a declaration on combating terrorism, pledging to improve coordination in law enforcement and intelligence efforts and enhance the implementation of previously agreed upon measures to counter the terrorist threat.

PROTECTING THE HOMELAND

The second element (and *sine qua non*) of an effective US counter-terrorism strategy is the essential task of protecting the homeland. The 9/11 attacks illustrated that the Achilles heel of America is that the preponderance of US critical infrastructure is not controlled by the federal government and is difficult to defend, often presenting an inviting target. The current debate about protecting America weighs offensive and defensive options, with the former being addressed by the National Strategy for Countering Terrorism and the defensive options being addressed in the National Strategy for Homeland Security, which focuses on six key areas: intelligence and warning, border and transportation security, domestic counter-terrorism, protecting critical infrastructure, defending against catastrophic threats, and emergency preparedness and response.[17] This section will address, what has been accomplished and how is it functioning.

With strong bipartisan support, President Bush created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consolidating 22 agencies, unifying their federal functions in a single agency dedicated to protecting the US from terrorism, and making the countering terrorism the top priority for both intelligence and law enforcement agencies.[18] Although DHS has existed for three years, considerable gaps still exist in coordination and communication between the capabilities of national level agencies and those found at local and state levels – bugs that are being addressed by a recent reorganization announced in July 2005 by Director Michael Chertoff. These gaps include: the role of the FBI in working counter-terrorism issues inside and outside the US; coordination of border security, Coast Guard and immigration challenges; the use of US national intelligence capabilities internally as well as externally; and how to harness the capabilities of America's armed forces, specifically the Reserve Component in effectively dealing with this type of asymmetric threat.[19]

In calculating the potential outcome of the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden no doubt was aware of both the physical damage inflicted on critical infrastructure and the psychological effects it would have. Bin Laden may have attempted to exploit this seam in critical

infrastructure protection, particularly in studying the lessons learned from Ramzi Yousef's attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993. During an October 2001 interview with the Arabic language network *al-Jazeera*, he commented that the attacks of September 11 generated billions of dollars of losses to Wall Street, in the daily income of Americans, in property destruction and a drop in the number of airline passengers.[20] Even with the realization that this scale of damage was caused by conventional (if asymmetric) attacks, the possibility of a terrorist WMD attack against American critical infrastructure would have even greater implications. The threat of a dirty bomb smuggled into a major port could cause a shutdown in shipping and ground transportation to and from the port, having dire consequences for commerce and the economy. A protracted interruption lasting several weeks would have a global effect, perhaps even resulting in a recession. Given bin Laden's experience with the futility of confronting US military might in Afghanistan, attacking critical infrastructure networks in the United States would offer an effective means of conducting asymmetrical warfare and exploiting his adversary's weaknesses.[21]

The focus of DHS is to repair the weak seam that exists between those areas under the control of the federal government and those homeland security tasks for which state and local levels are responsible. Previously, there was an absence of a framework to ensure for uniform application of standards nationwide. The creation of the United States Northern Command will provide for an integrated homeland defense, coordinating the support of the armed forces and federal, state and local governments.

A recommendation to further enable the integration of homeland defense would be to establish a national grid, dividing the nation into a series of regional districts of responsibility that resemble the organizational protocols and functions of the Federal Reserve System. The Fed was created in 1913 to lessen the risks of disruptions to financial markets and was organized around the principle that effective oversight requires drawing upon the expertise of private representatives within each respective sector of 12 regional banking districts and 25 branches. Not purely hierarchical in structure, the regional districts perform the function of collecting information of conditions at the local

level, forwarding these to a pool of advisors at the national policymaking level. The Fed retains a certain degree of autonomy from the executive branch, in that it reports directly to Congress. A similar system for homeland security might include a board of governors of the states, a dozen or so security districts and 80-100 local and metropolitan branches. Instead of totally relying on Federal and State funding, there would also have to be an element of self-funding at the local level, since critical infrastructure in private/corporate hands needs protection. The self-funding nature of this responsibility would share the burden for security across a broad section of American society, while the official structure would provide for a link between the local and federal level.[22]

Several existing components of the department of Homeland Security could work in close cooperation with this proposed structure. The former functions of Immigration and Naturalization, Secret Service, Border and Customs all have the ability to function effectively at the federal and state and local levels. Mechanisms such as the Container Security Initiative (CSI) could be grafted onto this Federal Reserve type structure. Under CSI, the US Customs Service deploys its officials to ports worldwide in order to monitor shipping manifests and inspect cargo bound for the US. Working with US allies in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, this program is aimed at attaining point-of –origin cargo security for the 5.7 million containers shipped annually to US ports.[23] Finally, the President agreed to a creation of a National Security Service under the auspices of the FBI, which would centralize the various intelligence, counter-terrorism and counter-espionage currently being conducted by separate agencies of the Department of Justice.

It is at the local and municipal level that the challenges for critical infrastructure protection are the greatest. The most affected locale of the 9/11 attacks, New York City still considers itself as a top target for jihadist terrorist attacks, due to its high visibility facilities, like the New York Stock Exchange. While the city works in close contact with New York State and federal agencies to ensure critical infrastructure protection, the New York Police Department's 35,000 uniformed officers, supported by approximately 15,000 firefighters and emergency medical service technicians, represent the frontline defense against further terrorist attacks. To help protect this critical infrastructure, New York

City authorities have emphasized cooperation along three key pillars. First and foremost, is the acute public awareness that the city is and remains a target of jihadist terrorism. Travelers on the city's subway and mass-transit conveyances have been sensitized to report suspicious activities and parcel or unattended baggage – a previously unheard of phenomenon. The second pillar is an overt police presence, featuring NYPD units regularly staging robust operations at high value targets within the NYC area. Using what they call "Atlas" and Hercules" teams, this highly visible demonstration of random vigilance has a two-fold effect: to reassure the public through police presence and thwart possible target surveillance operations by potential terrorists, causing them to shift their focus to softer, less well patrolled targets. Finally, the city has forged partnerships between NYPD, the Port Authority and the private sector, with NYC counter-terrorism analysts providing advice to public sector on risk analysis, incident preparedness and consequence management. This is furthermore reinforced by the use of new surveillance technology on bridges, overpasses, subways and other high-risk public sites, which is also covered by police patrols.[24]

Risk analysis must also include an assessment of threat capabilities and future operational tactics. Al-Qaeda has regularly changed its attack modalities after every major series of attacks against US targets. The 1993 attack against the World Trade Center was carried out using a truck bomb, a tactic borrowed from the success of Imad Mugniyah's Hizballah bombing of the US Marine Barracks in Beirut in October 1983. The East Africa embassy bombings were an adaptation on that theme, yet employing near-simultaneous vehicular borne bombs, several hundred miles apart. Al-Qaeda switched to sea borne attacks when it attempted to sink the USS *Cole* in Yemen October 2000. The attack modalities then changed to hijacked aircraft employed as cruise missiles during the 9/11 attacks and then to adapting attacking metropolitan mass transit systems in Madrid (March 2004) and London (July 2005). As target countries have reacted to its previous attacks and attempted to harden vulnerabilities, so too has al-Qaeda adapted its attack modalities. To truly be effective, counter-terrorism analysis and preparedness measures must be innovative and imaginative, examining and considering all potential terrorist

attack modalities, and tailoring protection to prospective targets based on a dynamic threat and risk model.

Considerable improvements have been made to safeguard commercial air travel after 9/11. Yet while billions have been spent on improving aviation security, the Madrid, London and Sharm al-Shaykh bombings of July 2005 demonstrated that attack modalities could be varied to strike where we either have not anticipated or are not fully able to cover at this juncture. The terrorist groups will continue to target unsuspecting civilians going about their daily activities – in mass transit, public events or perhaps cruise ships. Large urban areas appear to be the favorite venues, due to the large concentration of personnel and the density of media coverage once an incident has occurred. By far, the most dangerous scenario would be if a terrorist group was able to target a major urban center with nuclear, radiological, biological or chemical weapons.

Preventing WMD terrorism

The threat of terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) must be an integral part of the homeland security strategy, and the essential part of this is worrying about chemical, nuclear, biological or radiological materials falling into the hands of terrorist groups. The same millenarian ideology that led to the 9/11 attacks and would indicate that this terrorist group could conceivably desire to acquire WMD capability. Documents captured in al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan revealed al-Qaeda's desire to develop a WMD capability. While it is inconceivable that any state currently possessing WMD capabilities would willingly cooperate with jihadist terrorist groups in this endeavour, lax security over fissile, chemical or biological weapons material is a topic of concern. International Atomic Energy Agency director general Mohammad El Baradei stated: "There has been an increasing interest by terrorists in acquiring nuclear weapons. I cannot say 100 percent that it hasn't happened." While it would be very difficult for terrorist groups to weaponize fissile materials and create a nuclear weapon, the threat of a jihadi nuclear attack must be taken seriously and would be within their vision of causing catastrophic political and economic damage against the United States.[25]

The world avoided a nuclear holocaust during the Cold War, but may now face a new threat posed by a terrorist group seeking to employ nuclear weapons. The threat from nuclear weapons comes less from rogue states firing missiles towards the US (as these as these would be subject to retaliatory strikes), than from terrorist groups acquiring nuclear devices.

The threat posed by al-Qaeda using chemical or biological weapons is not as dire. Chemical weapons are messy and difficult to accurately dispense and deliver, in ensuring effective coverage of a target area. Biological weapons, while easy to produce, once released are difficult to control and vector. Chemical and biological attacks, while technically within the realm of the possible for a terrorist group with al-Qaeda's, are nonetheless quite complex to conduct effectively, as the history of Aum Shinrikyo's 1995 Sarin attack on the Tokyo subway illustrated. The largest problems lie in the delivery and vector control of pathogens. Anthrax is widely available, but difficult to mill to deliverable and lung absorbable quantities. Small pox, while highly contagious, is difficult to find, cultivate or effectively disseminate in a controlled vector fashion.[26] Thus, terrorists gaining control of nuclear materials pose the gravest risk, due to the potentially high casualty rates.[27]

This threat could be preventable by emphasizing a doctrine of three "No's":

- No loose nukes – secure all nuclear weapons and weapons-usable materials. Tighten control over nuclear weapons and material. Currently, 90 percent of existing fissile material outside the US is located in Russia. In 1997, Russia admitted that it lost control over 84 of 132 "suitcase nukes". Given present funding rate, it will take 13 years to bring this arsenal under control. Pakistan and North Korea are also potential sources for fissile materials. Use diplomacy among the states in the present nuclear club and apply a gold standard of accountability.

- No new nascent nukes – no new national capabilities to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium. In answer to Iran's nuclear weapons aspirations – denuclearize by offering a carrot and stick approach

- No new nuclear weapons states – draw a bottom line under the current eight nuclear powers, taking strong international stances to prevent additional states from acquiring nuclear weapons capability, particularly North Korea.[28]

Nuclear terrorism is thus a preventable issue. It is predicated on acquiring nuclear materials, the vast majority of which is a finite quantity under the firm control of a few governments. The production of new nuclear material is beyond the technical capabilities of terrorist organizations. The majority of nuclear materials and weapons outside of the US are located in Russia, including 95 percent of warheads, 90 percent of highly-enriched uranium and half of the available weapons grade plutonium. Security of these materials is essential to prevent them from falling into terrorist hands. Under the Nunn-Lugar Amendment, the US has pledged $10 billion over the next ten years to help Russia secure its arsenal and nuclear materials, out of a total budget of $20 billion promised by G8 member states at the June 2003 Evian Summit.[29]

Securing the Russian arsenal is a necessary step on the road to accountability of fissile materials and nuclear weapons. However, as many as forty other countries either current have nuclear weapons, are striving for this capability or are in possession of materials, which if bought or stolen by terrorist groups, could lead to the production of a terrorist nuclear weapon. Among these, North Korea represents a potential source of proliferation for these materials and has demonstrated not only non-compliance with myriad weapons control regimes, while selling ballistic missiles to a variety of customer states. Iran, with its nuclear research program could be particularly receptive as a source of nuclear materials desired by al-Qaeda or other jihadi groups. In this case, public diplomacy by key European nations (Germany, Britain and France) and the United States could serve as a carrot and stick arrangement to induce Iran to provide positive control over these

materials in exchange for trade incentives. Rogue actors such as Pakistan's nuclear program father A.Q. Kahn, who has sold his knowledge to a number of prospective customers, must also be controlled. Finally, the regimes established many years ago to prevent proliferation and control nuclear weapons, such as IAEA and NPT, must be reinforced and resourced and allowed to accomplish the task for which they were created.[30]

In a three-step approach, these materials could conceivably be secured and safeguarded, preventing them from falling into terrorist hands. First, all governments possessing nuclear materials in the form of highly enriched uranium and plutonium should safeguard these materials to prevent their sale or theft. Second, there should be a concerted effort to ensure that no new nuclear materials able to be weaponized are produced. Particular focus should be on the elimination of both Iran's and North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions and on curbing their production of fissile materials. Finally, excess stocks of these materials should be identified and destroyed, preventing their proliferation. One step in this direction would be to reinvigorate the Nunn-Lugar program in Russia, since this is where the lion's share of these fissile materials outside of the US exists.[31]

Many of the changes listed above have resulted in organizational improvements at the federal level that will ameliorate homeland defense and harden it from terrorist attacks. Reforms within the intelligence community will further complement these changes. However, a 100 percent coverage against terrorist attack is not possible, which the attacks in London, Madrid and Egypt have again demonstrated. Commercial air travel has been the largest immediate beneficiary of the taking the security situation seriously, but other methods of mass conveyance have not yet been reinforced to that degree, nor have other public venues, such as popular tourist attractions. The key to improving homeland security rests upon a realistic risk versus threat analysis, public awareness, and integrated law enforcement and intelligence cooperation at all levels – federal, state and local.

SOFT COUNTER-TERRORISM

The third and most complex element of an effective counter-terrorism strategy must be transformational in nature, seeking to discredit the ideology that drives many in the Arab world to support jihadist terrorists. The appeal of modern jihad and terrorism is rooted in a war for ideas in the Arab world and a struggle for the heart of Islam; one involving socio-economic, political, and cultural traits. There are several sources of anger, manifesting themselves particularly among the young Arab males – factors that may contribute to their desire to join a terrorist organization or become a suicide bomber. The first source of this anger and discontentment is directed against the United States, who the jihadis blame for propping-up not only Israel, but also secular leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Secondly, they are angry at the leaders of these countries and for the repressive regimes they have created and a system of bad governance, which the jihadis cite as their justification to use of terrorism as a tactic to bring about change. Thirdly, the young adults of the Middle East have been particularly impacted by the economic dimension of the situation and are faced with poor economic prospects for the future. In the face of increasing poverty and collapsing cities, political unrest is fomented through the failures of many Middle Eastern governments, which are overwhelmingly unelected, unaccountable and corrupt.

Factors of discontent

Within this bleak economic and political landscape, the phenomenon of Islamic discontent can be grouped into four concentric circles. From inner to outer, these groups are: 1) Jihadist Salafis, such as the followers of al-Qaeda and like-minded groups; 2) Salafis, those who believe that direct imitation of the Prophet and his teachings should be the basis of social order (also referred to as Islamic fundamentalists, Unitarians or Wahhabis); 3) Islamists, a broader category which includes those who believe the faith should be central to the social and political order, but open to interpretation; and 4) discontented Muslims, who are unhappy with the existing social order and state of the world. Through an understanding of these concentric circles, the goal in counterterrorism policy should strive to split the Jihadist Salafi group from the others, isolating and

discrediting it, while offering dialogue and incentive to the other circles, to redress the sources of anger.[32]

An objective of a hard counter-terrorist strategy is to decapitate the leadership through a combination of military options, law enforcement efforts and choking off its finances. The complementary objective entailed in a soft counter-terrorism strategy must be to deprive al-Qaeda of its flow of recruits, not only in the Middle East, but also in Europe. To effectively accomplish this, we need to know what it is that motivates young Muslim men to willingly join a terrorist organization that makes no bones about the fact that it is in the business of deliberately targeting and killing innocent civilians. What in the religious ideology motivates young men to sacrifice their lives for a calling, the reward of which can only be collected following a suicide mission? The root causes for some of this motivation lie in the politics of the Middle East and the social, economic and political situations that seem to hold little promise for a prosperous future. Perceptions of US support for repressive regimes do more to drive these young men to the jihadist cause more readily than do issues like economic malaise, shame over Arab backwardness or the problems involved with the male population youth bulge.

The absence of democracy in large Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, combined with the accompanying sense of being deprived of participation in defining the future, is a strong draw to the jihadist cause. Zawahiri, even more so than bin Laden, has been able to convey this message to Muslim youths and he has done so since his early days with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s. The Arab Middle East is the most challenging region in which to affect societal reform and eradicate the roots of jihadist terrorism. Political repression in Egypt and Saudi Arabia has prevented political Islam from taking root in those societies as a potential alternative to the present regimes. At the same time, it has resulted in an exportation of this ideology to allow jihadist terrorism to trans-nationalize. Increasing population growths (predicted at 25 percent over the next ten years) coupled with flat or merely marginal increase in economic output will exacerbate these problems.[33] US actions in the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq will prove to be an obstacle in maintaining a viable and lasting counter-terrorism coalition

involving Muslim countries. The outcome to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the outcome of the democracy experiment in Iraq will considerably influence the amount of support the US can gain in any effort to counter al-Qaeda's growing appeal in drawing new recruits.

Addressing the sources of jihadism in the Middle East

A key element in combating jihadist terrorism is in countering the ideological support from which it draws its strength and seeming legitimacy in the Muslim world. The jihadist ideology of bin Laden is not a novelty and is potentially as persistent as Communism was during the Cold War. Since religion constitutes the bulk of al-Qaeda's stated reason to attack the US, it should be addressed in counter-terrorist policy and strategy. Sayyid Qutb, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's role model, was the Calvin of Muslim reformation and the Marx of the transformation of Islam into a totalitarian ideology. Qutb's "Sign-Posts on the Road" can be seen as the Islamist version of the Communist Manifest and was almost as prevalent as the Koran among those training in al-Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan. To counter this, one must respond ideologically to Qutb, taking serious the intellectual drama within Islam.[34]

The seeds of the jihadist ideology have their roots in three pivotal events that occurred in 1979: the Iranian Islamic revolution, which posed a threat to the Saudi dominated Sunnis for primacy of the Muslim world; the seizing of the Grand Mosque of Mecca by Wahhabist radicals claiming that the al-Sauds were insufficiently religious; and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a country inhabited primarily by Muslims. The outcome of the events is that Wahhabism was kicked into high gear in terms of global and regional proselytizing. On the ground in Afghanistan, this translated into the Saudis and the Reagan administration spending billions of dollars to train and equip tens of thousands of religious fighters to lock the Soviets into protracted asymmetric warfare – a religious struggle as a proxy battle of the Cold War.

Resurgence in Islamic political activism was largely financed and spread by the increase in oil prices in the 1980s. Saudi oil profits allowed Wahhabis to build mosques and

finance Islamic NGOs. These platforms are now being used to foment virulent propaganda and as safe-houses to resource/plan/conduct terrorist activity. We must discredit this Jihadi abuse of Islam, but we need to have moderate Muslim states and organizations spearhead the effort. The number of separatist movements in the Islamic world are growing, some of which have merit. Radical Islamist organizations will attempt to harness these movements and regionalize their localized conflicts. The US should take these movements seriously, as they may hold a key to our counter-terrorism efforts, and should seize the initiative to shape the environment.[35]

There are multiple ideologies upon which terrorism is based: religious radicalism, political repressions and group/individual psychology. Modernity, rather than just the aim of instilling democratic values, may be the most important force in defeating the support for present wave of terrorism in these countries. This involves not only ameliorating the material conditions, but also transforming the beliefs and philosophies. While the combination of modernity and democratization holds promise in succeeding, it is also confronted with a considerable opposition from religious fanatics, attempting to sway the general population. These religious fanatics are currently able to influence in the short term and modernity seems to be falling behind. This could potentially yield the catastrophic results of Islamist takeovers in one or more countries in this volatile region. The challenge for the US and it allies, particularly those in the Islamic world, is to support the forces of modernity both materially and with active political diplomacy while diminishing the power of the radicals, employing a blend of soft power and public diplomacy.[36]

Europe may be on a field of jihad just narrowly behind the US, because of the political and operational support several European countries have provided in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The London and Madrid bombings may be indicative of a high price that some of America's European allies have paid. Western Europe is now home to over fifteen million Muslims. Compared to the three million Muslims living in the US, the European density per capita is more that twice as high, yet Europe is not able to afford the counter-terrorism resources that the US can. Political constraints on EU member

nations limit the kind of integrated approach that the US single federal jurisdiction permits.

Outside of the Arab Middle East, young Muslim immigrants in Europe have different reasons for wanting to join the jihadists. Despite a variety of government programs in the UK, Germany and France to extend rights and benefits to the respective minority Muslim populations, there is an ever-growing feeling of disenfranchisement. Lack of assimilation and integration are creating a condition that allows for a universalized spread of radical sentiments among European Muslims.[37] Islamic cultural centers and mosques are serving as the hub for spreading this sentiment and for recruiting volunteers for jihadist armed groups among European Muslims. EU civil rights laws and sensitivities regarding historical legacy or religious persecution have tied the hands of law enforcement and intelligence organizations in attempting to penetrate these Islamic community organizations. Attempts to bring about a mainstreaming process within these Muslim communities will ultimately be a national challenge that will occupy the affected European countries. However, this does not discount a potential EU debate among the major European nations involved, in terms of sharing lessons learned regarding assimilation and integration techniques, beyond just law enforcement cooperation. Therefore, a close bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation on counter-terrorist issues is of benefit not only for US security from terrorist attacks, but also for European nations. Many of these linkages have still not been formalized and codified. The US must thus rely on strong, but nonetheless ad hoc bilateral linkages that cut against efficiency and institutionalization.[38]

Combating the jihadist ideology

The US has only begun to create the necessary institutions, structures, and strategies to meet the goals of winning the battle of ideas against the jihadist ideology. Clearly, the US cannot hope to globally defeat jihadist terrorism by itself. We must better integrate all instruments of national power and then coalesce these with those of our allies and the countries we are trying to influence. As such, we must adopt comprehensive operational plans that de-legitimate terrorism, require cooperation and compliance of

extremists clerics in the Muslim world, help moderate Muslim voices in Islam's civil war, and disrupt and attack terrorist networks. Rather than a short-term hard counter-terrorism approach against a specific group, this transformational tactic must be a protracted effort to win the war of ideas.

Any "war" on terrorism is unlikely to succeed strategically if the focus is solely placed on attacking and disrupting the offending terrorist organization. Despite the initial military and law enforcement successes against the al-Qaeda network, new recruits are being brought on board and indoctrinated faster than we can ever kill or apprehend them. Thus we must prophylactically aim to stem the flow of willing adherents into these terrorist organizations. Al-Qaeda has succeeded in not only building a terrorist network beyond that of the European or Middle Eastern pendants of the 1970-1980s, but it has also created and ideology that has transcended bin Laden's Afghanistan roots or the aims of Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad (formerly Muslim Brotherhood). This ideology must be discredited to stem the flow of potential members and supporters. As Fascism, Nazism and Communism required multi-faceted approaches to defeat, similar strategies will be required to deflate the wind from the sails of this jihadist terrorist ideology. The first step must be to support the success of models of modernity and self-determination in the Muslim world. While many of the countries within the Muslim world will not be amenable to adopting a US or European style democracy immediately, they neither wish to be dominated by Muslim extremists of the likes of bin Laden or Zawahiri.[39]

In the battle to win the war of ideas, care needs to be taken in applying the right metrics to gauge success. This is particularly true in racking-up the body counts of the culprits at the top of the terrorist organization. While in the short run it may appear desirable to have bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, or al-Zarqawi's head on a platter, this "dead or alive" attitude may have infinitely less appeal with our allies, especially in the Muslim world, than it does in the heartland of America, where the wounds of the 9/11 attacks are still raw. The more important goal is to get the Muslim world to view bin Laden and his terrorist colleagues as a scourge on their own societies and create a local and regional

impetus for his capture. If bin Laden and his collaborators were to be captured by the authorities in a Muslim country and put on trial, and afforded the best defense attorneys available, it would do more for the efforts of counterterrorism and for public diplomacy, than were he killed by a special forces team in the hills of Afghanistan. Declaring the hunt against bin Laden and his group of fellow terrorists in terms of a global war, as well as placing in ever increasing bounty on his head, has unwittingly elevated his status in the minds of those sympathetic to his cause as one who defied the American superpower and got away with it.

In an October 16, 2003 memo to his staff at the Department of Defense, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld states:

> "Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the *madrassas* and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us? Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' costs of millions. . . . Is our current situation such that 'the harder we work, the behinder we get'?"[40]

This memo reveals that there was a lack of strategic thinking in prosecuting the war on terrorism and a particular frustration in the ability to determine metrics of success. While the US was successful in killing or capturing a large portion of the al-Qaeda organization, the group has been successful in replenishing its leadership structure, attracting recruits and building a support and financial network that spans Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Indeed, in the aftermath of the military actions in Iraq, the fight against al-Qaeda and war on terrorism is being perceived by many in the Muslim world as a war on Islam, which will not help us in getting robust support from countries with large Muslim populations.[41]

Since the end of WWII, the US has done little to promote democratic reform in countries in the Arab world, save for supporting autocratic regimes, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, for purposes of furthering US national interests in region. A recent shift in this trend has occurred, accelerated by the attacks of 9/11. Even before this event, however,

the US began pursuing three different approaches, aimed at introducing the idea of democratic reforms: bolstering civil society; promoting economic development in states friendly to the US; and reacting to its opponent with a variety of economic, diplomatic and military sanctions. Principal among those countries funded for good governance programs is Egypt, also home to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad. After Israel, Egypt is currently the second largest recipient of US economic and military aid, receiving almost $2.2 billion annually as a direct result of the 1978 Camp David peace agreement. Egypt receives $1.3 billion in military aid alone, with no political strings attached.[42] This represents a considerable source desperately needed hard currency, while serendipitously providing leverage that could be used to convince Egypt to initiate security sector reforms and democratization of its armed forces. Saudi Arabia as well is the recipient of billions of dollars of US defense aid, but as its economy is much more stable, a similar lever would have less effect. However, the US could harness its relationship with the al-Sauds in terms of soft power to discredit jihadist ideology by convincing Saudi Arabia to strive for education reforms and the expansion of secular institutions of learning at all levels, cease the funding extremist religious groups and dubious Islamic charities involved in providing funds to terrorist organizations and actively combating existing al-Qaeda and jihadist cells operating in the Kingdom.

Stated US policy is to promote democratic values in region. This diplomatic effort, however, has been adversely impacted as a result of the situation in Iraq and perceptions of how the war against jihadist terrorist groups has been waged. These problems, combined with the historical support for Israel, have inhibited the ability for Arab activists to espouse American ideals and still retain credibility within their communities. However, the real reason that the promotion of democratic civil values has failed in Egypt and Saudi Arabia is that these governments have refused to address the basic obstacle to change in the region – flawed institutions. The institutions of government that comprise laws, decrees, regulations and other political rules of state exist, are designed to protect the authoritarian regimes currently in place, rather than guarantee the rights of their citizens to freedom of speech or political choice.[43]

The US should adopt an incentive based approach to implementing democratic reforms in Egypt and Saudi Arabia; a non-intrusive palate of benefits that the respective governments could market to their constituents as their own indigenous product – a local and distinctive brand of ideas that would be more appealing rather than a "Made-in-the-USA" model. One such approach is the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) announced by the Bush Administration in 2003, which was also accompanied by an increase in the US foreign aid budget. MCA is a democracy promotion initiative that would award financial aid packages to countries that meet sixteen categories of progress towards good governance, rule of law, public education, health care, and economic transparency. Coupled with security sector reform initiatives and democratic control over armed forces and police and intelligence institutions, the MCA has the potential for becoming a powerful new tool of soft power for promoting democracy in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and others in region.[44] A possible goal would be to strive for the guiding principles that accompanied that 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe, which introduced the concepts of national self-determination, democracy and free market economies to countries previous run by communist dictators.

A consequent counter-terrorist strategy must focus multiple elements of hard and soft power in a coordinated fashion to combat this brand of mega-terrorism. Hard power such as military force needs to be supported by international intelligence and law enforcement cooperation. In terms of a complementary strategy of transformational (or soft power) counter-terrorism, the support for jihadist terrorists must be eroded in the Islamic world. The United States, its partner nations in the Middle East and South Asia must actively appeal to Muslims to denounce intolerance and support for terrorist organizations ostensibly acting in the name of Islam. A possible goal would be to strive for the guiding principles that accompanied that 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe, which introduced the concepts of national self-determination, democracy and free market economies to countries previous run by communist dictators. In addition to this informational campaign, international financial institutions must expand their support for development efforts in economically challenged nations, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan,

Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen. Not only the market, but also educational and human rights must occur in these regions in an attempt to break the self-defeating cycle of economic misery and seeming political hopelessness. The US should tailor a strategy to engage key Muslim nations in supporting stability and the rise of more responsive governance, especially in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iraq.

To facilitate this more effectively, the US role towards the Middle East and the Islamic world needs to be re-examined. We appear not to have a well-defined policy and are exercising a mono-dimensional view of power; only relying on the type of military might over which the US has hegemony. There is an overemphasis on reaching for hard power as the only tool in the toolbox, to the detriment of soft power (co-opting and attracting). The application of hard power is relatively straight forward, while soft power requires harder-to-measure qualities such as diplomacy, economics and public diplomacy. The mixture of hard and soft power was effective in winning the Cold War, but is being sold short in the war on terrorism, a struggle that has ultimately been made tougher as a result of undercutting soft power elements. Perceived US unilateralism and employing coalitions based on mission needs, vice seeking support from international organizations, has not portrayed a benevolent image of US policy in the region. Sadly, the reservoirs of good that the US filled following World War Two, with its multi-lateralism and unselfish support for aiding less fortunate and broken nations, have given way to a feeling of ill will and resentment for US policy.[45]

The biggest impediment to relations between the US and the Islamic world (especially in the Arab Middle East) is a perceived lack of US understanding of the issues of connectivity towards the Muslim world. US defense and diplomatic structures are not configured to take a holistic approach to dealing with this Muslim world. Most significant core issue in US relations with the Muslim world is the Middle East peace process, which is central in the perception of all Muslims. The peace process between Israel and the Palestinian people is the potential catalyst for change to the Middle East equation. There is a widespread feeling that only the US is in a position to mediate and

that this moment in time may represent the last opportunity for the US to save face, in the aftermath of the Iraq incursion.[46]

We need to examine what the future security arrangement of the Middle East and South Asian region should be. After 100 years of European colonial rule and Cold War bipolar security arrangements, these regions are now in disarray and their inhabitants are confused and unable to determine their respective security arrangements. Historical US interests focused on resources, access and trade and allies. To reverse this trend, the US needs to help foster change in the areas of political, social and economic reform. The key to finding a solution lies in legitimate governance; where it exists, there is no fertile ground for terrorism. There is a need for an open Islamic dialogue among Islamic scholars and statesmen to discuss the challenges facing Islam and the Islamic world and their solutions.[47]

CONCLUSION – MAINTAINING THE STRATEGIC FOCUS IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

The US needs to reexamine its strategy for defeating al-Qaeda and jihadist groups. By declaring that we are fighting a war on terrorism, we are viewing the conflict purely through a tactical prism. Instead, this struggle should be viewed on all three levels of war: tactical, operational and strategic. Al-Qaeda's center of gravity is the need to have a readily available supply of angry young Muslim men to use during its operations. The anger is fueled by the discontent with the problems of the region and the apparent lack of solution and its hatred is focused at America. Operationally, bin Laden uses radical Islam as the vehicle to motivate this hatred into action. The US must target al-Qaeda's operational and strategic centers of gravity. Failed or incapable states are force multipliers to this center of gravity and continue to be a problem to security, since they not only provide terrorist groups with safe-havens, but also with a steam of willing recruits. Unstable states such as Somalia, Sudan and several of the countries within the Pan Sahel region of Africa potentially can offer refuge, base camps, training facilities and other support for al-Qaeda and jihadist terrorist groups. The US must get involved in these areas and make it harder for these terrorist elements to gain a foothold.[48]

Several assumptions can be made about al-Qaeda and jihadist terrorist groups almost four years after the attacks of 9/11. Based on past behavior and performance and the damage the organization has sustained during three years of counter-terrorism efforts by the US and those nations participating in fighting jihadist terrorist groups, the following statements can be made about al-Qaeda:

- Al-Qaeda will continue to attempt to undermine the authority of the current secular oriented regimes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan, with aim to topple these and replace them with Islamic theocracies. Al-Qaeda and related jihadist groups will not of their own volition forswear using terrorism to achieve their goals.

- Hard counterterrorism alone – targeting these groups and their financial support – will not eliminate the movement nor protect from future large in scale terrorist attacks. Conclusive victory in the classical sense is probably unattainable and the metric of success will be difficult to gauge. The jihadist ideology of al-Qaeda can only be delegitimated by support from countries with large Muslim populations, especially in the Middle East. To accomplish this, a transformational approach to counter-terrorism is necessary.

- Al-Qaeda will continue to support Abu Musab al- Zarqawi and his foreign Islamist activities on behalf of groups operating in Iraq insurgency, aimed at derailing democracy-building efforts. Fighting this insurgency will tie down critical resources (intelligence and SOF) needed to fight al-Qaeda globally. Additionally, Afghanistan and Iraq deployments of US and allied forces present lucrative targets.

Al-Qaeda has metastasized into a jihadist terrorist network of networks following the loss of their base of operations in Afghanistan. Despite considerable attrition of their pre-9/11 leadership and cadre, al-Qaeda is harder to locate and target as a result of this transformation and global spread. Nonetheless, its long-term resiliency depends upon recruits and mergers of purpose with affiliated groups to propagate its views and perceptions such as: the West is implacably hostile to Islam, violence is the only language that the West can understand, and that jihad is the only option in achieving its strategic goals. The strength of al-Qaeda today rests on its ideological capability to inspire and its organizational capacity to operate on multiple levels: its top cadre of Afghan trained veterans able to conduct planning and execution of complex operations against the U.S and other strategic targets; lesser al-Qaeda trained operatives able to conduct limited attacks; local initiators able to carry out attacks such as Bali and Madrid; linkages to other like-minded jihadist groups; and most importantly of all, serving as a motivating and unifying ideology. To remain operationally successful, al-Qaeda will need to maintain the ability to identify and exploit US and allied vulnerabilities, effectively employ deception and sound intelligence tradecraft, and continue to refine its

asymmetric hallmark tactic of suicide terrorism. The tactics used in this terrorist campaign are attacks against the US and her interests and against those countries cooperating with the United States in this global war on jihadist terror.

Thus, the clear and immediate threat we face for the foreseeable future is from al-Qaeda and those groups cooperating with it against the US and those nations involved in the counter-terrorism effort against jihadist terrorist elements. The US should focus on structuring its national counter-terrorism strategy around the synchronization and coordination of three elements. A hard counter-terrorist strategy is the first required step at the national and international level to locate and target these groups and disrupt and interdict their sources of support and recruits, as well as choke-off their sources of financing. The US and its allies have had some success is accomplishing this task. Protecting the homeland from the possibility of another catastrophic attack (particularly from a terrorist WMD strike) is the second element of this strategy. This will require a comprehensive array of national defensive measures and international cooperation in non-proliferation regimes, information sharing, diplomacy and law enforcement collaboration, and must be carefully orchestrated to prevent turning the nation into a fortress America, and violating the values and civil liberties we so cherish. The restructuring of homeland defense and intelligence has done much to help the country prepare to defend itself from such attacks. Finally, soft counter-terrorism is the third element in the national counter-terrorism strategy, aimed at discrediting the jihadist ideology by creating conditions that would offer alternatives to those angry and empowered young Muslim men who would seek to join terrorist organizations. It is precisely in this area that the least progress has been acheived, since it requires broad-ranging changes in the social and political structures within the Muslim world and a reshaping of attitudes. Clashes within Islam are colliding with political events such as the Israeli-Palestinian situation and the US war in Iraq. These clashes are diverting potential transformational efforts that could help to solve some of the root causes that sustain support for jihadist terrorism.

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