Restoring America's Good Name:
Improving Strategic Communications with the Islamic World

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Executive Summary:

A dramatic shift in priorities and programming is necessary to enhance and improve America's efforts at public diplomacy and strategic communications with the Islamic world. Restoring the world's trust in America's word and rebuilding the shattered foundations of understanding between the United States and the world's Muslim states and communities is a critical pillar of success in the war on terrorism and therefore must be a top priority for the current and future administrations. Unfortunately, America's efforts at strategic communications since 9-11 have not been sufficiently rooted within an overarching, integrated strategy (in part, reflecting the fact that an overall national strategy that takes full account of the complexities involved in combating terrorism is still a work in progress). The result has been informational programming that has (1) lacked priority or been misdirected, (2) lacked nuance in dealing with diverse regional and issue areas, and (3) not reached out to the "swing" audiences necessary to marginalizing and rooting out violent extremists.

For America's efforts at strategic communications to be effective, the U.S. government must move beyond understanding the problem as simply a matter of better public relations. Shaping the views and attitudes held by foreign populaces towards the United States and its policies is more than just trying to reverse steep losses in some global popularity contest; it must be a continuing process that directly affects America's relationship with populations and civil societies around the world and with the groups and governments they influence. How America speaks and engages with the outside world, and with what elements in that world, creates the environment in which our policies operate and helps determine the success or failure of American foreign policy.

With specific regard to the Muslim world, while better strategic communications and public diplomacy cannot substitute for better policy, they can help America reconnect with the range of moderates and reform-oriented Muslims who share an interest in transforming the region and fighting radical militants. Better strategic communications can even help engage the region's conservatives to join the effort to defeat violent extremism. The goal of such a campaign is to marginalize the radical militants, reversing the present trend in which it is America's voice that is the one marginalized. Moreover, with the spread of bin Ladenism having taken on the characteristics of a diffused, decentralized, transnational Islamist insurgency, it is necessary to place a special focus on the interface between traditional means of public diplomacy and the role that the U.S. military can play in the effort as well.

The Missing Strategy

The deep and rapid deterioration of America's image in the Islamic world is one of the greatest challenges the United States faces in conducting the war on terrorism. Polling inside the Islamic world indicates that as much as 90% of the populace in certain countries holds anti-American sentiments. The erosion of American credibility in the region effectively denies American ideas and policies a fair hearing. In turn, the negative lens through which the United States is viewed means that our actions are often interpreted in a manner that reinforces the propaganda efforts of our adversaries. Winning the war on terrorism depends subtantially on winning the war of ideas; unfortunately, by most available metrics, we are not winning that war.

The challenges in this domain were actually laid out in a highly self-critical private memorandum issued by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to his senior staff in 2003 and subsequently leaked to the media. While the media focused on his admission of a "long, hard slog" being the state of affairs in Iraq, contrary to the overly optimistic predictions made earlier, more significant were Rumsfeld's questions on whether we are "winning or losing the Global War on Terror." He described how his department had yet to enact a "bold," measurable, or systematic plan to win the war on terrorism, despite being two years and two ground wars into the fight. Rumsfeld's memorandum described as most troubling the manifest absence of a strategy to deal with the severe antipathy toward the United States, observing that failure in this area effectively keeps a terrorist supply pipeline flowing:

> Does the U.S. need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The U.S. 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"?[2]

The significance of this missing strategy is heightened by the fact that Rumsfeld's memo did not yield immediate results. It took more than a year before DoD was able to establish a National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP-WOT) that would be able to link overall strategic thinking to the forces that must implement it. More importantly, as long as it took, at least DoD was progressing faster than the rest of the U.S. government. In the period since Rumsfeld's memo, there still remains (at the time of writing in summer 2005) no broader strategy document that brings together the overall strategy for USG and facilitates integrated, inter-agency strategic planning and execution.[3]

Many thinkers term the situation facing the United States not as a set of discrete attacks and conflicts, but rather as a long-term conflict, akin to the Cold War, much of it taking place in the realm of ideas, but still with a decidedly tangible security aspect.[4] If this is a valid comparison, then measured according to a Cold War time line, the state of development of our strategy is circa, as we still struggle with the fundamental questions of who and what we are facing in this conflict and what should be the nature of our long-term response.

The importance of communications to this strategy is critical to overall national security now, and in decades to come, especially because the much of the threat seems to be coming from

terrorists who seem to be acting in decentralized, self-inspired fashion. However, our present security concerns extend beyond the present militants in Iraq or terrorists inspired by Al Qa'ida; it is also with a longer-term issue of grand strategy that may be feeding a wider threat of tomorrow. The United States—and the world—may be standing on the brink of emerging fault lines, or a "Clash of Civilizations" as Samuel Huntington has warned.[5] The widely-held view in the Muslim world that describes the war on terrorism as a "war on Islam" is perhaps most illustrative of this problem. More than some lost popularity contest, the deepening divide between the U.S. and the world's Muslim states and communities is a critical impediment to success on a breadth of vital issues, ranging from running down terrorist groups, their leaders, and supporters, to the expansion of human development and freedom, whose absence steers the next generation of recruits to radicalism. A failure in this effort will not just damage America's standing in the long-term, and therefore its ability to lead effectively, but also widen the scope of those that would seek to harm the U.S. in the coming decades.

Why Our Communication Matters

Striving to be a respected and moral world leader has certainly been central to the goals of U.S. foreign policy over the last fifty years, for both realists and liberals alike. Other schools of foreign policy thinking equally recognize the importance in maintaining global esteem. For example, even if one is to take an imperial view of the U.S. role in the world, successful empires lead by popularity and persuasion, not just imposing their will by the power of military force. Or, if one takes a values-based assessment in connecting American morals to its foreign policy, few Americans would take pride in being hated, but would rather want to see the United States respected as a world leader.

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It is important here to distinguish public affairs from public diplomacy and strategic communications. In the international context, public affairs is "the provision of information to the public, press and other institutions concerning the goals, policies and activities of the U.S. Government."[6] It is basically reactive, typified by the image of a spokesperson answering media questions or coordinating "messages for the day". By contrast, public diplomacy is proactive, long-term outreach towards other states and their peoples, aimed at building understanding of and support for policies. As long defined by the United States Information Agency (now part of the Department of State), public diplomacy is those activities which seek "to promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad."[7] A classic case from the Cold War is the effort to engage with European leaders and public on the decision to locate intermediate range missiles within Europe (which over time moved from being viewed as provocative to being understood as matching and balancing Soviet deployments). In an ideal world, these activities are enveloped within an overall program of strategic communications, which undertakes a comprehensive set of outreach mechanism aimed at long-term goals of transforming beliefs and attitudes, so as to create an environment more conducive to policy success.[8]

Such programming can never be effective when tasked with communicating bad policies, but even good policies can be hamstrung by an inept public diplomacy effort. These activities shape the context in which American policy operates, and thus can either be an aid, a hindrance, or of no effect at all. More importantly, public diplomacy is a major tool through which the United States can harness what Joseph Nye, the dean of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, has described as one of America's greatest assets and a cornerstone of American influence across the globe, its influence through "soft power."[9] Soft power is "the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals." It is the most efficient and effective means of power, as it does not require the use of force or huge financial expenditures to achieve or sustain policy goals.

Foreign good will has a direct value to the pursuit of our own national security, something that was understood by the crafters of our Cold War strategy, particularly as exemplified in the design of such programs as the Marshall Plan, Voice of America, and the Peace Corps. Good will deepens alliances by creating reservoirs of understanding and appreciation of mutual interests that allow those alliances to endure beyond temporary disputes. Most importantly, good will saves the U.S. government from fighting a series of uphill battles, contrary to our professed respect for democracy, to persuade allied or client governments to align themselves with the United States against the democratically expressed opinion of their general. The very real policy blowback from failing in such matters was illustrated during the lead-up to the Iraq war. The Turkish public's distrust in American intent prevented the United States from opening a true second front in the war and resulted in delays in troop levels during the start of the occupation which may have been crucial in permitting the incipient insurgency to take root.[*]

Unfortunately we now face a communications challenge that seems to dwarf any in U.S. history, at a time when our reserve of soft power has dwindled precipitously. As opposed to prior ebbs and flows of U.S. standing in the world, the present situation may be evolving into something more intrinsic. As discussed to exacting detail in the previous chapters, relations between the world's sole superpower and one of the world's largest and most strategically located religious communities—the approximately 1.4 billion Muslims—stand at issue for the long-term, with potentially disastrous consequences for both.

While the past several years have been marked by American military success in overthrowing autocratic, oppressive regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, they have also seen political and diplomatic failure, exemplified by the deepening tensions between the United States and the wider Islamic world, including Muslim communities in Europe and Southeast Asia. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, polling across the Islamic world has found a steep decline in esteem for the United States in general, and for U.S. foreign policy in particular.[10]

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[*] The 4th Infantry Division was absent until after the war and thus the United States was unable

to bring the war home to core Baathist supporters through an immediate, heavy presence in cities

that have since become the focal points of the insurgency.

Some in the American body politic have argued that such trends should be ignored, or even are something to be proud of. Such thinking is shortsighted and dangerous (and ignores not merely the lessons of history but also the thinking of strategists ranging from Machiavelli to Mao). Until the chasm between the United States and the global Islamic community is significantly bridged, it will continue to thwart our attempts to secure the homeland and prevent the success of our foreign policy. At the same time, local attitudes towards ourselves and our adversaries are key factors as to whether violent radical movements flourish or not. Indeed, terrorist groups have often been highly responsive to local opinion at the tactical level; the frequent changes by Hamas in its operations and tactics are illustrative.

Geopolitics is not a popularity contest, but it is dangerous to disregard international public opinion to such a degree as to assist indirectly in the recruitment and growth of radical, anti-American groups through either behavior that inspires anti-American hatred (like the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal) or the absence of a cohesive public diplomacy strategy and apparatus as is argued for here. In the wake of the shock of the 9-11 attacks and their self-evident violation of all moral and religious codes of conduct, the United States should have been able to isolate Al Qa'ida from the broader public in the Islamic world, and thus cut it off from the support and recruiting structures that would allow it to thrive. Instead, we have become isolated, and inversely seen the stature of bin Laden and Al Qa'ida rise.

The present situation is troubling. While the U.S. and its allies have seized a portion of Al Qaida lieutenants and assets, the movement remains vibrant and its senior leadership largely intact. More critical, though, is that its popularity is greater than ever, its ability to recruit individuals and affiliate organizations to its agenda unbroken, and its ideology spreading across a global network present in places ranging from Algeria and Belgium to Indonesia and Iraq. Of greatest concern is its evolution into a wider, decentralized movement, which appears to have maintained its potential to strike at American citizens and interests both at home and abroad continues. As the Madrid and London attacks reveal, its capabilities may even be growing and we may be witnessing the transformation of the threat of Al Qa'ida to the threat of Al Qa'ida-ism.[11]

This evolution of the primary threat from a specific organization into a networked movement is important. The attacks from Bali to Morocco to Madrid to London all reveal that the threat has devolved from being highly centralized to becoming self-organized, self-inspired and cellular. That is, instead of a 9-11 type attack which was tightly orchestrated from camps in Afghanistan and took as long as 5 years to conceptualize, we are seeing the proliferation of self-forming cells, inspired by al Qaida-ism, but made up of small groups of friends and family that are difficult to infiltrate, and only loosely linked with the organization itself. Such groups' attacks may not be as spectacular as a 9-11, but they can be just as disturbing to the target populations and are even cheaper than the notably inexpensive 9/11 operation. (It is thought the explosives used in the July 7, 2005 London subway bombings can be purchased for around $10,000 on the black market.) The hallmark of such net-centric groups is that the sum of their threat is greater than their constituent parts.

It is important to note, however, that the "War of Ideas" in this global insurgency is not a battle already lost. The polling of attitudes within Muslim communities finds many nuances and subtle bright spots. For example, while anti-Americanism has surged in the last few years, the United

States stands in an interesting position of not being hated for our values, but rather because of the perception of how we conduct ourselves, as Mark Tessler ably demonstrates in Chapter 2. While there is great anger with our policies, esteem for American values of freedom and democracy, as well as American education and technology remain relatively high.[12] At the same time, fears about the repercussions of Islamic extremism and frustration with the tactics of violent radicals are on the upswing in many Muslim states.[13] At the same time, we must be clear that this subtle turn cannot be viewed as a success for any American government agency to take credit for, as most analysts feel the source of this turn is "primarily the actions of the terrorists themselves." [14] Neverthless, a nascent backlash among Muslims against extremist ideology and tactics could indicate openings both to improve respect for the United States and to defuse tacit support for radical militants.

Thus, as we look to our strategy in the future, the lessons gained by the bipartisan 9-11 Commission (chaired by former Governor Thomas Kean and former Congressman Lee Hamilton) are instructive. In discussing "What can we do in the future to prevent similar acts of terrorism?" one of the three key focus areas the commission identified was to "prevent the continued growth of Islamic terrorism," specifically through efforts to "…communicate and defend American ideals in the Islamic world through much stronger public diplomacy to reach more people including students and leaders outside government." The report went on to say, "Our efforts here should be as strong as they were in combating closed societies during the Cold War."[15] Likewise, in the 2005 National Military Strategic Plan for the War on terrorism, one of the three pillars of action (lines of operation) that DoD commanders are directed to pursue is "countering ideological support for terrorism."

To accomplish these objectives, a far more strategic approach to communication is necessary as part of U.S. policy towards the Islamic world. The United States must complement its programs or anti-terrorism and engagement with a public diplomacy and strategic communications effort that demonstrates its commitment to the values of democracy and human rights, and support for the forces of progress in the Islamic world , all with the goal of undermining the factors that aid radicalism. An integrative strategy, which weaves communications into the policy-making process, will make U.S. efforts more effective by standardizing messages, maximizing inter-agency coordination, and generating genuine dialogue between the United States and civil society in the Islamic world. Perhaps an adaptation of the lyrics from a famous Bing Crosby song from the 1940s—a time in which the United States faced a great global challenge, but had a greater better image around the world—best sums up the needs of U.S. as it deals with the Muslim world in its communications: "We must accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative."

What Have We Done?

In a January 2005 interview with CNN just prior to his second inauguration, President Bush acknowledged that declining U.S. popularity in the Islamic world would be one of his greatest challenges in the subsequent four years. However, the problem, according to his depiction, was merely one of poor public relations. He said, "The propagandists have done a better job of depicting America as a hateful place, a place wanting to impose our form of thought and our

religion on people. We're behind when it comes to selling our own story and telling the people the truth about America."[16]

This dual response illustrated the problems U.S. strategic communications have faced since 9-11, and why efforts so far have been largely unsuccessful. The evidence of unprecedented levels of anti-American sentiments in the Islamic world is undeniable and has therefore pushed the issue of America's public diplomacy to the top of the agenda. Restoring the world's trust in America's word and rebuilding the shattered foundations of understanding between the United States and the world's Muslim states and communities is a critical pillar to success in the war on terrorism and therefore must be a top priority for the current and future administrations.

Unfortunately, America's efforts at strategic communications since 9-11 have too often been understood in the context of public relations. More importantly, when it comes to actual programming and implementation, they have not been sufficiently rooted within an overarching, integrated strategy. In part, this reflects the relatively minor role to which the problem of strategic communications was relegated in the February 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism,* a conceptual shortfall that is only now being addressed in a systematic way. The result has been public diplomacy and related programming that has: (1) lacked priority or been misdirected, (2) lacked nuance in dealing with diverse regional and issue areas, and (3) not reached out to the major 'swing' audiences necessary to marginalizing and rooting out violent extremists.

As has been exhaustively documented in chapter 2, the rapid turn against America in the region is striking. King Abdullah II of Jordan, one of closest America's regional allies, warned in April 2004 that U.S.-Arab relations were the worst he had ever seen them in his lifetime. These sentiments have been echoed by a legion of independent public voices. A wide array of public opinion surveys confirm a similar pattern across the Arab and Islamic world: a dramatic rise in anti-American sentiments and loss of the confidence of mainstream Muslims in a period in which their actions and views are of great importance to our national and security interests.

Association with America was once seen positively in many respects; it is now largely viewed negatively, and is an economic and political liability. While the statistics are highly illustrative, anecdotes can be even more telling. A leading Kuwait-based conglomerate formed in the 1960s adopted the name *Americana*—a thinly veiled attempt to leverage off of the positive image of the United States in the region. The company is now, however, stuck with the name, and recently began an advertising campaign, designed to disassociate itself from the United States. Its new slogan is "Americana: 100% Arab." Similarly, the fast-food giant, McDonald's, ran a campaign in the Arab world pledging a percentage of each sale to Palestinian charities.

These trends were only reinforced by the stories of abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison and other prisons in the U.S. detention system, which presented the worst face of America to the world. Such mistakes were not just contrary to codes of conduct, but had a reverberative effect by reinforcing the propaganda put out by radicals; indeed, the fact that these incidents were proven true provided oxygen to radical attempts to sell claims of even worse abuses so as to bolster their narrative of a conspiratorial and inherently anti-Muslim United States.[17] Moreover, not only have the abuses tarnished the image of the United States, they have also made life more difficult for

local moderates and reformists who used to look to the United States for support. For example, the governments of Indonesia, Libya, Sudan, and even Israel, have all cited the Abu Ghraib abuses as an excuse for their own questionable human rights practices.

The present challenge is to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality that has characterized policy towards the broader Islamic world, especially in the strategic communication sector. Senior officials have frequently spoken of the need for democracy and reform across the Arab world and of the need for public diplomacy to overcome rising anti-Americanism. However, there has been a repeated failure to deal with these issues on a dedicated basis and adequately fund public diplomacy programming. The priority of the issue has not been matched by actual strategy development and implementation.

Efforts to respond to spiraling anti-Americanism have been half-hearted at best. The bipartisan Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy issued a sweeping indictment of the decline in American public diplomacy capabilities, and offered a range of practical steps that could be taken. Rather than seizing the opportunity, the Bush administration declined to request sufficient additional funding and has shown little interest in implementing the commission's recommendations. Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), who called for the advisory commission, has described the administration's response as "lackluster" and "disappointing."[18]

There are multiple metrics for measures of activity and attention. Perhaps the easiest is funding. Public diplomacy had already suffered from steep budget cuts in the 1990s, and since 9-11 many of the remaining options to ensure that America's voice is heard within the region (including American institutes, student visas, and exchange programs) have been severely curtailed. The Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy argued that an effective public diplomacy strategy would require a massive increase in the funding and staffing of programs on the ground throughout the region. Instead, these programs have languished. Despite bipartisan support, spending on public diplomacy programs remains deeply under-funded, especially in comparison to the scale of the challenge. Overall public diplomacy funding in FY 2004 was $539 million, of which only about 27% percent being dedicated towards the Muslim world, primarily through cultural and education outreach.[19] This share of funding is not remotely consistent with the centrality of global Islamic communities to the key national security issue facing America today.

Another measure of seriousness is bureaucratic attention. Faced with evidence of America's collapsing image abroad, President Bush wisely created the position of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, demonstrating the important need for high-level attention to the issue. However, the publicity that was given to the establishment of the position soon proved to be unmatched by serious commitment to filling and supporting it. When Under Secretary Charlotte Beers resigned in March 2003, the position was left unfilled for 9 months – during the Iraq war and its aftermath, the single most important period for U.S. public diplomacy since the days immediately following 9-11. Beers's eventual successor, Ambassador Margaret Tutwiler, resigned the post after less than six months on the job. As a result, for most of the Bush Administration's first term, there was no one clearly and consistently responsible for crafting America's public diplomacy strategy. Nearly a year after Tutwiler's resignation, the President has announced that his former campaign advisor Karen Hughes would be taking over the position. This naming of a personal confidant of the President clearly illustrated that the position

is important to the U.S. government, but even so it took yet another four and a half months from the time Hughes's nomination was announced until the nominee, the Administration, and the coordinated sufficiently to hold confirmation hearings. Now that Hughes is in place, the true test will not be the actual appointment, but 1) the level of activity (both here and abroad) carried out by the appointee and her office and 2) the support that the programming she seeks to put together gets from the leadership structure.

Outside of planned programming, the United States has frequently failed to take advantage of opportunities that presented themselves and has shown little to no interest in actual dialogue and engagement with moderate Muslims. For example, when a summit of over 150 top U.S. and Muslim world leaders and opinion-shapers—including leading business executives, civil society activists, government ministers, and news editors from over than 35 countries– met in Doha, Qatar, in January 2004, the United States was the only major government that did not send a senior political official. Moreover, even U.S. Central Command turned down an invitation to send an officer to speak to the group, even though it presented an opportunity to explain U.S. military operations in the region to key influence leaders whom CENTCOM had been unable to reach through its own briefings. The Bush administration was even criticized by the pro-Republican journal *Weekly Standard* for not seizing this opportunity.[20] Nonetheless, the episode was repeated again the very next year, when a follow-up U.S.-Islamic world leaders summit was held. Once again, not one currently-serving senior leader from the American administration made the effort to speak to this influential audience from across the Muslim world.

The manner in which the United States engages and communicates is also important. In the Islamic world (and elsewhere) the United States is widely perceived as lecturing without listening, and often viewed as arrogant and uninterested in the opinion of others. The administration's rhetoric is heard as lacking sympathy for Arab and Muslim concerns, leading to unfortunate and unintended misunderstandings. Even leaders within the U.S. policy structure note that America's voice has been unclear or muted at a time when dialogue and engagement with potentially friendly members of civil society in the Muslim world are a strategic necessity. For example, Christopher Ross, the State Department's special coordinator for public diplomacy in the Arab world, notes, "we must listen to the world as well as speak to it. The failure to listen and to provide more avenues for dialogue will only strengthen the stereotype of the United States as arrogant."[21]

How the United States interfaces with the rise of new media in the Middle East is a tragic illustration of the shortcomings in our public diplomacy strategy. The breaking of state monopolies on the news, particularly by satellite news channels, has provided an opportunity to reach the general public in the region with immediacy in a way not previously available. After 9-11, the Bush administration recognized the importance of such news media and made the point of sending officials to speak on Al Jazeera to explain the administration's positions. This is an opportunity that has, however, been insufficiently exploited. The administration's media outreach campaign lacked stamina and has since been essentially abandoned, thus yielding more air time to voices that condemn the United States and fuel the fires of conspiracy theory.

Worse, the administration has compounded its problems by frequently lashing out at the satellite news channels, Al-Arabiyya and Al-Jazeera, that are most popular among Arabs (Jazeera has

some 35 million viewers, while al Arabiya has some 20 million).[22] It has declared these stations as major problems for U.S. efforts in Iraq and for the war on terrorism, and has pressured the Qatari government to compel Al-Jazeera to make editorial changes. The efforts have backfired, as the channels now identify themselves as being locked in a public conflict with the United States (gaining further viewers), while the pressure tactics pursued by the United States have undermined its own rhetoric in support of a freer press in the Arab world.

> While the content on Arabic-language satellite news channels is often genuinely troubling, these channels are not the cause for American problems in Iraq and the region. Indeed, experts and public opinion polls agree that the expression of anti-American opinions on the Arab satellite media is more than anything a reflection of existing Arab sentiments.[23] In fact, while Al-Jazeera is often singled out by the Bush Administration for fostering anti-Americanism, it was long seen in the Arab world as being too pro-Israeli and pro-American, because it was the first international Arab station in the region to regularly bring on Israeli guests and cover the Israeli parliament. In any case, polling has shown that there is no evidence that those who often watch Arabic satellite news channels like Al-Jazeera are any more likely to have negative perceptions of U.S. foreign policy than those who do not.[24]

The Bush administration's vocal public criticism of Arabic satellite news channels and its attempts to pressure these stations to make editorial changes have only exacerbated America's image problem in the Middle East. America appears hypocritical when it speaks of the merits of freedom of the press while it asks friendly governments in the region to influence the editorial content of the satellite news channels. The United States should endorse and encourage a free and professional media, even when such media is critical of the United States.

This does not mean that the United States should tolerate hateful speech or the distribution of lies in the Arab media; in fact, it should be more consistent and focused in combating inaccuracy and incitement. The failure to cite specific footage and broadcast dates in lieu of broad claims by senior U.S. leaders undermines the accusations. For example, at a 2005 summit of defense ministers in Southeast Asia, Secretary Rumsfeld accused Al Jazeera of airing videos of terrorists beheading hostages. The station claims it has never done so. The truth is clearly one or the other and specificity would prove the point. Similarly, the administration has been injudicious in its use of labels such as "incitement," often reacting to a report broadcast read on Al Jazeera more vociferously than virtually the same report broadcast on one of the region's state television networks. This inconsistency has eroded the perceived legitimacy of U.S. criticisms. In short, the United States has not been able to distinguish between hate speech and political opposition in its outreach to those who channel the news and influence opinions, nor make clear to Arab journalists and editors the importance of this distinction.

In one distinct area of energy and activity in strategic communications, the United States has invested significant sums in creating American government backed media outlets, Al Hurra television and Radio Sawa. Unfortunately, this effort was largely misguided, and indeed, was contrary to the advice of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. Besides taking the bulk of new funding in the public diplomacy domain, these stations have reinforced the view of many in the region that the United States is interested not in free media but only in pro-American

media. More importantly, there is no evidence that the two outlets have altered people's beliefs on the ground--which were never shown to be linked to the sources from which people get their news anyway—nor even that they have swayed the information market in any way. Al Arabiyya and Al Jazeera remain the most viewed news channels. For example, surveys in Saudi Arabia found that while Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya are regularly watched by 82% and 75% of households (as in the U.S., households watch multiple channels regularly), only 16% regularly watch al Hurra. In the United Arab Emirates, only 11% of young UAE nationals regularly watch al Hurra, as compared to 52% for al Jazeera. Only in Iraq is Al Jazeera not in first place; Al Iraqiya has the best broadcast footprint and is watched by 74% of respondents. Al Hurra comes in at 6%, hampered by the fact that only 4% of those polled in Iraq consider it trustworthy.[25]

Moreover, al Hurra and Radio Sawa may have had another, little monitored effect. Each interview an American official does for al Hurra (which they are more likely to do because of the U.S. government affiliation), is one less interview he or she is likely to do for another outlet, as there are only so many minutes in a busy day. Thus, the stations have further drawn American officials away from appearing on Arabic-language stations that have enormously larger audiences. The end result is that U.S.-government operated news outlets in the Arab world take up a considerable portion of the allocations for public diplomacy, yet have yielded few significant positive results. Given the less than stellar payoff, the failure to make similar efforts towards the far greater number of Muslims who live outside the Arab world may reflect a lack of nuance in U.S. efforts, but at the same time, may be for the best.

Another serious shortcoming with U.S. strategic communication efforts is their failure to engage with the core "swing" audiences that are the most critical toward defeating radicalism. The political spectrum across the Muslim world is quite diverse. In addition to the widely varying regional contexts and concerns (for example, while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overshadows any discussion of political reform in the Arab world, Indonesians care more about U.S. policy on Aceh than they do about Palestine), there are also widely differing interest groups and demographic sectors within each area of the Muslim world. These range from reformers (who push for increased democracy) and moderates (main-stream Muslims who are generally disposed to support a gradualist approach to amending the status quo in countries like Jordan and Egypt) to conservatives/Islamists (who support a far greater role for Islam in society, and thus could be disposed either towards vocal support for democratic reform or for militant anti-Americanism) and radical activists (who advocate a regime overturn and the implementation of full Sharia, and may even provide direct support to terrorists), and ultimately the terrorists themselves (who undertake violent action).

No description of such divisions is perfect, but what is important is to understand that there exists a market segmentation within the populations to which the United States needs to speak in the Muslim world. As an illustration, the rough rubric used by the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication broke down society in the Islamic world into five segments relevant to public diplomacy: Group 1 is composed of regime retainers, including members of the army and the bureaucracy; Group 2 consists of the professional and business class; Group 3 includes workers and small business owners; Group 4 is formed of establishment, non-militant Islamic activists; and Group 5 is composed of militant radicals. In each group, there are often widely divergent interests and perceptions of the world and for each group the optimal means of

communications are different as well.

All of these segments of the Islamic world, with the exception of militant radicals, need to be engaged, but in different ways. Thus, if one is to use the Defense Science Board typology, at the core of any U.S. public diplomacy strategy must be efforts to engage groups 2-4, who make up the "swing voters" (if one is using a political election parallel) in any effort to defeat radical forces. This means outreach not only towards moderate, often secular, reformers, but also towards conservatives and non-militant Islamists, who form the majority of society and carry far greater local credibility that most Western-oriented reformers.[26] Indeed, the conservative segments of society are quite significant. In Jordan, Egypt and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, about two thirds of Muslims feel that society should be governed only by Islamic law, while in Lebanon and Syria the figure was one third. Positive engagement with moderate reformers may be thought of as key to building a successful coalition for progress, but outreach to conservatives is necessary to curb militant inroads into their ranks.

Unfortunately, U.S. strategic communications has often failed to appreciate the diversity of opinion within and between countries, and worse so, held both reformers and conservatives at arms length. While reaching out to like-minded reformers is simply a matter of increased support and attention, the critical challenge is how theUnited States will deal with the rising power and popularity of Islamist groups. These groups not merely are far more influential than any other constituencies in local civil society, but share a world view that is often at odds with U.S. policies and values. However, the groups may be thought of as akin to the Socialist parties and labor unions of post World War II Europe. The United States certainly may not be able to persuade them to push for American policies overnight, but it can and should engage and communicate with them in an effort to prevent their cooption by the other side.

Unfortunately, the United States has so far steered clear of the tough challenges involved in engaging such groups and frequently made the fundamental mistake of assuming that an Islamist group is inherently violent and al Qaida oriented. Failing to appreciate the diversity of groups and ideologies in the Muslim world could have the same strategic consequences that the lumping together of the "Red Menace" did in the early Cold War, the mistaken assumption that the Soviets, Red China, and anti-colonial nationalism were all the same groups pursuing the same interests that was not fully disentangled until Nixon's trip to China. At the same time, to compare the limited amount of activity in this sector to the scale of the efforts that surrounded the Marshall Plan would almost be insulting.

In sum, if the present trend-line continues, the United States will be viewed by the Muslim world primarily through a discolored lens that emphasizes the perceived American threat. The context for American foreign policy will only be made more challenging and the ranks of Muslim extremists will grow. If the proposed solution is only better public relations efforts to help "sell" America, and the problems of priority, focus, and nuance are not dealt with, then the terrible dynamic presently set in place will only worsen.

Recommendations for Success: Reversing the Trend

By failing to pursue effective public diplomacy, the United States has largely conceded the field in the war of ideas in the Islamic world to the radicals. To win this war, the Administration must clearly recognize the importance of America's voice and good standing as an element of its power and influence in the world. What is needed is a major, integrative initiative in public diplomacy and strategic communications to bridge the divide between the U.S. and the set of Muslim states and communities (ranging from Algeria to Indonesia, and including Muslim minority communities extending from Europe to India).

The importance of such strategic communications activities and the "War of Ideas" is not just a diplomatic matter, but essential to winning the present war we are fighting. The global war on terrorism is not a traditional military conflict made up of set-piece battles, but rather made up of a series of small wars and insurgencies in places ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to Pakistan, Egypt and even England, where the U.S. must sway a broader population from hostility to support if it ever wants to oust terror cells and shutdown recruiting pipelines. As the newly revised foreword to the famous U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars manual (which sought to update it for the 21st century and the GWOT—Global War On Terrorism) notes, "Small wars are battles of ideas and battles for the perceptions and attitudes of target populations."[27] Within these wars, it is non-kinetic tools (as opposed to fielded weaponry) that make up "…the fire and maneuvers of small wars. They frequently are the main effort simply because of the criticality of the functions they perform."[28]

Enabling America to engender better relations with the Islamic world strengthens national security, but it requires more than federal pocket-change. The task must be designated by the President as an issue of the highest national security importance. It should also be integrated into the policy-making apparatus; public diplomacy officials cannot simply be seen as a "clean-up crew." The tactics in the new approach should be innovative, and, at the same time, the campaign as a whole must be self-critical, regularly evaluating it own performance, and ready and able to change accordingly.

Five broad principles must guide the strategy to influence foreign publics and broaden "dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad":
- There must be an integrated approach among the various U.S. government agencies, so as to maximize efforts and resources, and speak with a credible voice.
- The effort must be conceptualized as a dialogue, maximizing jointness of projects and participation with foreign constituencies.
- The United States must reach out to the diverse set of regional players and constituencies, including conservatives, rather than "preaching to the choir."
- Strategies and programs must be nimble and responsive.
- The investment in the programming should reflect its strategic priority.

Integrate the Effort to Maximize the Effect. An integrative communications strategy is required, both across our agencies and across the divide between the United States and the region, so that the U.S. voice is amplified and resonates.

Within the executive branch, far better coordination is needed. The Administration should seriously consider a range of organizational options. At the high end of these would be a formal

Public Diplomacy Coordinating Structure, as proposed by the Council on Foreign Relations' independent task force on public diplomacy. This structure, similar and parallel to the National Security Council, would coordinate more cohesive public diplomacy activities across federal agencies. At the low end would be the expansion in responsibilities of the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach to include coordinating the range of interagency public diplomacy activities (In the past, the position followed a very public affairs type outreach, coordinating "messages of the day," while the need is for a comprehensive and long-term strategy.). This position could then serve as the umbrella for subordinate regional coordinators who would coordinate U.S. Government public diplomacy, public affairs, and information operation activities for each region, helping to bring together and coordinate the various State, military, and CIA efforts. The intent of such structural change must be not only to provide better visibility to the issue at the White House level, but also to ensure that lessons learned through dialogue in public diplomacy inform the foreign policy-making apparatus. In terms of viability and workability, the latter is the quickest and easiest to implement and thus should be enacted in the short-term, but bureaucratic exploration can be made of the broader structure.

Two Way Communications Opens Doors. The aim of a successful public diplomacy strategy must not simply be to inform; rather, it should seek to actively engage important communities in the world and shape the context in which they experience "America." When facing an uphill battle in which America's good name is looked upon with bias, how to establish credibility and demonstrate respect for the other side will be key. "Dialogue," as King Abdallah of Jordan said at the 2003 World Economic Form, is "the key to the door." When the U.S. plans its public diplomacy activities without its allies in foreign constituencies, it misses an opportunity to strengthen the effectiveness of its programming investments.

Thus, as listening begets listening, it will prove more effective to plan joint programming, in which citizens and officials from the United States and Muslim countries participate in both the activities and as the target audiences, where possible and appropriate. The principle of dialogue and the maximization of jointness in planning and execution of programming seeks to accomplish two tasks:
(1) By involving and thus integrating the audience into the exercise, it makes it far more likely that the messaging will be positively understood and accepted.
(2) It creates feedback loops that better inform policymakers (and offer metrics), as well as improve the ensuring public diplomacy efforts that follow.

In order to yield maximum effectiveness and create a self-sustaining program, it will be useful to coordinate such efforts with local institutions and organizations. These local groups should be identified by local U.S. embassies, which will have a better sense of who is viewed as credible and who is not. The U.S. government must be sensitive to the particular security and political backlash challenges that such groups will face. At all times, it must seek to be an enabler, not a driver. That is, at times the United States must be willing to take a back seat in the short-term when it comes to setting mandates or getting credit, in order to yield the maximum long-term consequences

Engage the Full Spectrum. A needed shift in strategic thinking is the realization that much as the military attempts to shape battlefields in which they operate, the U.S. government can and should attempt to shape the political environment in which it operates. Compared to traditional diplomacy, which focuses only on dialogue between governments in pursuit of their respective national interests, public diplomacy is the business of communicating with non-state, civil society actors and the general public. The goal is to interact with and build support for two proximate reasons. First, they have an ability to influence our national security and prosperity directly either as allies or adversaries in the effort to strengthen American security. Second, civil society actors also have the ability to influence our national security and prosperity indirectly through their influence on their own governments' actions. In the long term, such efforts should seek to help support the structures and institutions needed within the wider Muslim world to weather the political, social, and economic challenges of the future, recognizing that failure to do so only reinforces the frustration and anger that radical groups feed off of.

While moderates and reformers represent America's natural core allies in the region, we should not shun conservatives as we engage in dialogue across the Islamic world; in fact, we should take extra steps to include them. Conservatives are the "swing voters" in this critical effort. They may seem to represent the most convenient potential allies for the radical militant extremists, but in fact they must play a crucial role if Al Qaida and other radicals are to be marginalized. Our adversaries realize this and, indeed, when Al Qaida releases video or audio tapes, it is clearly the conservative segment of society that they are trying their hardest to sway. America thus needs to respond, if it ever hopes to neutralize this segment of society as a potential support group for the radical militant extremists. Excluding non-militant conservatives from the process will only alienate them further; skillfully including them in dialogue, alongside moderates and reformers will reduce the chances that they will be recruited by radical militants for either direct or rhetorical support, and even strengthen the efforts of our reformist allies. We should be willing enter into dialogue with any group that is willing to both renounce violence and respect a diversity of views. When we lump such groups together with radicals and refuse to engage with them because of Islamist ideology, we then aid our true foes.

Read, React, and Change. On the ground, especially in predominantly Muslim regions, public diplomacy efforts should be more responsive to local micro-developments. Like a U.S. political campaign, changes in public opinion should be tracked on a regular basis, and strategy and tactics should adapt accordingly, as close as possible to real time. Additionally, the nature of on-the-ground public diplomacy should shift away from one-direction communications toward dialogue. This will not only further mutual understanding, but also increase public confidence in the bona fides of American public diplomacy activities.

The Programming Should Match the Importance of the Task. As noted earlier, overall, the funding levels for public diplomacy are minimal, with $539 million budgeted for public diplomacy in FY2004, of which 27% (about $150 million) is spent in the Muslim world.[29] This is a negligible amount for something that has been identified by the new National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (not to mention the various other reports, including the bipartisan Congressional Advisory Commission, the bipartisan 9-11 Commission, etc.) as one of essential elements for success. If strategic communications has been declared to be a core tool,

then the budget should reflect it. While comparing expenditures on strategic communications with what is spent on the other two strategic pillars (homeland security and operations to attack terrorist networks) would be somewhat simplistic, it is nevertheless obvious that what we are spending on strategic communications does not match the priority that our evolving strategy supposedly places on it. Developing truly effective programming would requires a significant budget re-calculation, potentially of an order of magnitude.

At the same time, agencies engaged in various international activities and outreach (from State to the National Institutes of Health), should be required to ensure that the percentage of their outreach programming towards the Islamic world reflects the present strategic importance of this region. As discussed later, bureaucratic inertia has led many programs to still focus on Cold War or post-Soviet needs. This extends beyond the executive branch. For instance, the Congressional Fellows program brings in 50 young leaders each year to spend 10 months working in Congressional offices. In 2003, only one of the 50 was from the Islamic world (Egypt).[30]

Specific Initiatives to Strengthen the U.S. Relationship with the Muslim World

The success of any program will rely on a centralized vision and strategy as outlined above, matched with localized and agency-specific implementation, as discussed in this section. The development of these strategic goals and programs should be carried out at the senior levels of the National Security Council and appropriate executive agencies, with input from other interested parties, including legislative bodies, universities, think tanks, and friends in the Islamic world. Advice solicited from bi-partisan boards of experts and should be built into policy, rather than cast aside, as happened with the wealth of reports ranging from the Congressional commission to the CFR report. In order to ensure both high-level support and the durability of the strategy, the ultimate findings should be embodied in a National Security Presidential Directive. This document would identify our strategic agenda toward building positive relations with Muslim countries and movements through strategic communications.

With the strategic goals established, policymakers could then develop a more systematic approach to ascertain how far short the United States now falls from this target state, and what exactly is required to attain it. This analytical and planning process will also elaborate tangible courses of action in the most important issue areas (e.g. alleviating the intensity of anti-Americanism in certain core states, increasing levels of cooperation on anti-terrorist activity). In other words, the objective is not only a methodological approach to evaluating our successes and failures, but also a guide to steer the right course in the future.

The top priority must be to restore America's credibility and to rebuild the shattered foundations of trust. Both style and substance matter. This means changing the style of communication with the Islamic world.   Many Muslims say they find the style and tone of communication used by senior American officials arrogant and patronizing; taking greater care in this area could have an immediate impact. As an example, the empathic and measured tone that Secretary of State Rice took after the alleged Quran desecration incident was an example that should be repeated. It is also necessary for U.S. leaders to adopt a less confrontational and hostile attitude towards the Arab media, seeking over time to bolster its professionalism rather than constantly to castigate it

for perceived bias. As already mentioned, staffing the office of under secretary of public diplomacy and better integrating it with the range of U.S. government programming is a clear need. With the appointment of Ms. Hughes to lead the public diplomacy effort, one hopes the post may now have the recognition that is required. But the test will not be in the appointment of, but what happens next. The effort will need a full rethinking of roles, strategy, and expansion of budget if it is to be able to begin to surmount the challenges it faces.

Finally, Presidential effort is needed to ensure the resources necessary to establish a significant American presence on the ground to reach out directly to civil society and individual Arabs and Muslims. As the Defense Science Review Board wrote on the need to upgrade strategic communication in 2004 "only White House leadership…can bring about the sweeping reforms that are required," also noting "nothing shapes U.S. policies and global perceptions...more than the President's statements."[31]

An overall strategy must also be willing to be creative and open new initiatives. Several specific efforts that merit deeper exploration and potential implementation are discussed below. While implementing these recommendations, the above five core principles need to be embraced in each of these tactics:

Creating and deploying America's Voice Corps. Perhaps the most shocking finding in the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy report was that the State Department then had only five Arabic speakers capable of appearing on behalf of the government on Arabic-language television. Presidential support is needed for the rapid recruitment and training of at least 200 fully fluent Arabic speakers trained in public diplomacy skills—about 10 fluent speakers per Arab country. A cadre of fluent Arabic speakers could establish a regular and productive presence in the Arab media as well as in two-way dialogue on the ground with members of civil society. Ideally, America's Voice Corps would develop appealing and popular personalities who would become prized guests for Arabic-language talk show hosts. It is important to remember that most Arabs are Muslim, but most Muslims are not Arab. As a result, is it equally important to train speakers in the other languages used. Speakers of Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish, number over 500 million, and reside in strategically important countries such as Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Establishing American centers in every major city in the region. After World War II, the U.S. launched dozens of "America Houses" across Germany that served as focal points to build democracy and build a German bond with America. Situated in town centers, they also served as focal points for the community. After forty years under American stewardship, many of these centers were transformed from American entities into German NGOs called German-American institutes.[32]

Youth are a critical audience in a war of ideas that involves countries with high percentages of population under the age of 25 and may last for generations. The frustration that Muslim youth feel with the status quo could be harnessed into a progressive demand for reform; the United States must play a role in developing and articulating a real alternative to offer this next generation.

To that end, a revitalization of American youth centers and libraries throughout the region is needed. A goal that reflects the Marshall Plan like significance of the task at hand would be establishing at least one public American center in every major city in the Muslim world. A similar approach today, creating jointly run local Indonesian-American, Iraqi-American or Moroccan-American institutes in major cities across the Muslim world would both create a more local sense of ownership and reduce security concerns. They should be staffed in part by members of the America's Voice Corps, and should be a major distribution point for translated works from the American Knowledge Library Initiative (discussed below).

These American centers should offer state of the art English-language training programs, seminars, discussions, and a wide selection of current periodicals, newspapers, and literature. They should also offer free Internet access and moderated programs that promote direct exchange with Americans through the use of modern information technology. American centers should provide not just a window into American life, but also enable open, critical political dialogue on issues of local and international concern, helping to spur the values of political discourse.

It may be objected that the security situation in the Islamic world is simply too volatile—that any center providing such easy access to locals would be an easy target for terrorists. It is undoubtedly true that some of them would be targeted; sometimes we would lose our investment and, more importantly, people would lose their lives. But if we are serious about engaging the terrorists on their turf instead of on ours, we must calculate the losses to be incurred in using this weapon in the battle of ideas against those we would incur if we fail to do so. Additionally, the concept of jointness in activities and programming would give a sense of local ownership, meaning that the attacks would be interpreted as attacks not merely on American interests, but also on local interests and citizens, potentially backfiring on the terrorists.

Implementing the American Knowledge Library Initiative. The Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy pointed out the dearth of translations into Arabic of major works of American literature and political theory. While certain U.S. embassies do undertake translations of books into Arabic, the scale is miniscule compared to the need. The absence of widely available translations means that many Arabs are cut off from direct contact with American history, political ideas, literature, and science. A project to translate 1,000 books a year would soon make such works widely and inexpensively available. Partnerships with Arabic publishers (such as through a consortium of Arab and American publishers with the government providing support in start-up costs such as payment of rights and translation costs) could aid public acceptance in the region and enable us to leverage existing distribution channels and marketing capacities. The American Centers proposed above could also aid in the effort by hosting book groups and discussions of the translated works. Again, the same point concerning the vast number of non-Arabic-speaking Muslims also applies to this translation effort.

Creating a non-partisan center for strategic communication. A positive step to energize action would be the creation of a center for strategic communication, as endorsed by the Defense Science Review Board. One concept is a hybrid organization, modeled after the RAND Corporation, established as a tax exempt foundation with private citizens, government, non-governmental organization, and business leaders on its board of directors. The center would be

established for three purposes: (1) To develop self-initiated public diplomacy and communications programs; (2) To provide analysis to decision-makers; (3) To be contracted by the government to implement public programs where appropriate. Creating a bit of distance in the relationship between the U.S. government and the public diplomacy programs—similar to that offered by the National Endowment for Democracy—could strengthen the credibility of the center with those suspicious of U.S. government motives. The Center would at once be independent, but at the same time the NSC's Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communication and Strategic Communication Committee members should provide program direction.

The Center should also be governed by an independent board appointed by Congress with the NSC's Deputy National Security Advisor an ex officio member of the board, which in turn, would appoint the Center's director. As part of its program implementation, the Center should have a budget allocation for two key areas outside of normal operations and programs. The first would be an initiative for intensively gathering public opinion data in a systematic fashion (rather than relying as at present on the changing universe of public organization polls, –which often ask different questions of different populations in different years). This effort would not generate data for data's sake, but rather allow rigorous program monitoring and evaluation. At the same time, the center should have a modest budget for research and development. This would allow experimentation to be made with programming to see what works and doesn't before full deployment, rather than developing huge programs and becoming invested in them bureaucratically only to discover after the fact they aren't useful.

Privatize al Hurra and Radio Sawa. The overt association with the U.S. government of the two principal U.S. broadcast media operating in the Arab-speaking world effectively delegitimizes them in the eyes of most Arabs. Moreover, it is difficult for the United States to challenge the practice of government control of media in the Arab world if the U.S. government itself is running government-funded media. The United States has invested significantly in creating state of the art facilities for these stations; now is the time to let them compete in the Arab media environment on their own. America should have a voice in the region, but this voice will best be heard if people understand whether it is coming from a governmental or non-government source--not the muddled arrangement that is the perception today. Indeed, more collaboration is needed with the private sector, which can often be a more credible messenger than the U.S. government itself, as endorsed by the Defense Science Review Board, and the privatization of al Hurra and Radio Sawa are a good place to start.[33]

Creating C-SPANs for the Islamic world. At the same time, there is still the need for credible media. Sources of general, unfiltered information are sorely lacking in the Islamic world, even though there is a palpable appetite for them. For example, during the Abu Ghraib crisis, Arabic language news channels provided live coverage of U.S. Congressional hearings and the public watched with great interest. Scenes of American policymakers and military leaders directly answering probing questions from the legislature and media presented a powerful example of democracy in action, and a sharp contrast to authoritarian practices common in the region.

Seeking to tap this interest, Al Jazeera recently launched a new channel, Al Jazeera Live, which features coverage of events that are conducted in Arabic as well as of events that are translated into Arabic from the original languages. But, the channel clearly it has not saturated the

marketplace for ideas and information in either the Middle East or beyond. There are multiple C-SPANs and C-SPAN imitators within the United States, including local cable equivalents that cover state and municipal politics. Similarly, there can be multiple channels that provide live video of public affairs events across the Arab and Muslim world, ranging from legislatures to local events hosted by NGOs to even book talks at the American Centers. By being unfiltered, and ideally coordinated with local organizations, the channels will leap across the credibility gap that has undermined Sawa and Hurra. Here again, there are similar opportunities available for public affairs channels that target the huge number of speakers of other Islamic world languages, such as Farsi, Urdu, Bahasa, and Turkish.

Reaching out to civil society. Public diplomacy in the Arab and Islamic world should be targeted directly towards civil society and wider public opinion. There is a powerful, if thus far narrow, constituency of moderates demanding internal reform; polling shows that media and business elites view the United States more positively than the general public. They should be seen and cultivated as potential allies. The United States should bring institutions of civil society into the reform process and give them the opportunity to express their own views to their own people. This would not only aid those fighting for change within but also bolster our own standing. Such programs must be cognizant of the negative association that too close an alignment to the U.S. can sometimes bring to civil society leaders and ensure to be modest in our claims; i.e. the USG should seek to be seen as facilitating a long-term constructive discussion, rather than imposing its views and picking winners and losers in its outreach. Presidential leadership is needed to make a point of seeking dialogues with a wide range of voices in the region, including even those willing to criticize our policies in a constructive and tolerant manner (indeed, such meetings will carry a higher value-added). The United States must be seen as on the positive side of change rather than an impediment to it.

Bolstering exchange programs. To improve relations we must enlist all means in the toolbox and provide a role for every American who is willing to do his or her part. The administration should increase exchanges of youth and young professionals, incentives for cooperative business ventures, cultural and artistic exchanges, cooperative media ventures, mutual education programs, investment in development, technology, and education initiatives in the Islamic world, and interfaith dialogue. Such endeavors also need not be restricted to the physical realm; the media in the United States and the Islamic world—television, print, and Internet—can be used to multiply the effects of these exchanges. Not only should exchange programs like the Fulbright and Humphrey programs be expanded in size, but other types of virtual youth exchanges need to be developed, which harness the Internet and video-conferencing for multiplicative affects.

Akin to the Cold War programs that built up allies around the world, we must expand our people-to-people interaction with the Islamic world, not place more obstacles in its path. The current visa procedures often impose onerous requirements and delays, such that the U.S. is seen as humiliating rather than welcoming Arabs and Muslims from abroad to visit the United States. These backfire on efforts to reach out to natural, people to people ambassadors who can attest to the reality of American goodwill. We need more efficient and effective visa policies, especially for students, where the goal is quick processing that weeds out the dangers, while providing a clear welcome to the wider set. A premium should be made on an increase in foreign exchange programs to bring Arabs and Muslims directly into contact with American society.[34]

Special attention must be made to integrating official visitors programs across agencies. Awkward episodes of one agency of the U.S. government inviting a visitor from the Islamic world, only to have another mistakenly arrest them and high-profile visa delays need to be avoided, not merely out of embarrassment, but as part of the overall effort at outreach. Examples of this include the case of Ejaz Haider, an editor of one of Pakistan's most moderate newspapers, who was arrested by the Department of Homeland Security agents on visa charges that later proved false. Indeed, Haider was actually in the United States at the direct invitation of the State Department. Those sympathetic to the United States could only conclude charitably that one American hand did not know what the other was doing; unsurprisingly, those less favorably inclined took a darker view, and made sure to publicize their own conspriracy theories. Nor is this an isolated instance, witness the case of Tariq Ramadan. Ramadan, a prominent European Muslim intellectual who had previously been to the United States to address U.S. government audiences in Washington, had his visa was withdrawn mere days before he was to begin a professorship at the University of Notre Dame, with no explanation offered.

Working in conjunction with the other agencies, Homeland Security must establish a systemized approach towards weighing the competing domestic imperatives of zero-tolerance admissions and the dire foreign policy need of maximum outreach towards critical states and communities. A particular need is to develop a rigorous and rapid ability to scrutinize individual, high profile cases, such as leading or well-known figures like Dr. Ramadan, from which a visa decision in either direction will bring great attention. In such cases, visa denials must be truly based on security issues and not simply because some pressure group does or does not like the views of a potential high profile visitor. Indeed, when the United States is willing to host Muslim opinion-leaders that some groups may disagree with, we not only get a chance to engage directly with them and their ideas, but also prove to the world that we are, as we claim, a tolerant and open society, confident in our beliefs and values in a way that other nations that resist open debate are not.

Harnessing Islamic world respect for U.S. education, science and technology. While positive attitudes towards the United States in general and U.S. foreign policy in particular hover in the single digits, U.S. science and technology and U.S. education are often viewed as positive by 80% or more of the population. The implication here is that even in the countries with the most anti-American sentiments, the United States can lead with its most welcome and respected institutions to build direct inroads. But new policy efforts are needed. First, the post 9-11 environment reduced the flow of students from the Islamic world to the United States due to both visa restrictions and fears that the civil rights of Arabs and Muslims would be infringed in the United States. To remedy the situation, student visas must be processed quickly but thoroughly, and the United States needs to do more to convince Arabs and Muslims that they will be free from arbitrary government harassment when visiting the United States. Second, U.S. universities—which polling data universally shows are greatly trusted and respected—should be encouraged and funded to create joint programs with universities in the Islamic world—to create American studies centers, for student video-conferencing, and to strengthen our own Islamic world studies centers through participation of students and teachers from the region. For example, for about $20 million per year, the U.S. could fund a handful of indigenous American studies centers at universities across the Islamic world in places like Jordan and Egypt where the

regimes are friendly to the U.S., but anti-Americanism runs high. Such centers should not be branded as flag-waving pro-American entities, but simply academic institutions where American culture, politics, and history are studied, the good together with the bad. Such efforts are likely to be successful and diffuse the appearance of U.S. intervention if the effort is jointly funded and jointly planned with local government or business leaders.

Harness Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans as a key bridge. America must leverage the strength of its diversity. At a time when the U.S. government lacks both credibility abroad and the local language speakers to represent our views, the distance between our government and the Arab and Muslim American community is stunning. For example, the State Department's office for public diplomacy includes one Arab American but not a single American Muslim on its staff.[35] The same diversity problem is repeated across agencies. The Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, and State should all examine how they can better tap the strengths of these communities, both in programming and recruiting. To be more clear, the administration must move beyond symbolic respect for Muslim rituals, such as once a year convening *Iftar* dinners, to actual programming designed to demonstrate it in fact. For example, Arab Americans and American Muslims can help prepare and even accompany officials when they visit the region, just as political donors and corporate executives often join delegations.

Maximize Presidential Leadership in Public Diplomacy: Finally, Presidential leadership is absolutely vital for successful public diplomacy. The President himself must make it clear that cabinet and sub-cabinet level officials must consider America's standing in the world to be a priority for action. They should make the effort not only to conduct interviews with the foreign press on a regular basis; they should also engage in genuine dialogue, even with those who hold negative views of our government. In other words, public diplomacy must go beyond "preaching to the converted." For example, visits by senior U.S. officials to the region should include meetings not just with government officials, but also with local civil society leaders and reformers, and even conservative leaders who might be susceptible to the rhetoric of the militant radicals. Similar efforts should be made by Department of Defense civilian and military leaders operating at both the Pentagon and regional command level, following the Cold War model of a wide engagement strategy to expand and deepen relationships with U.S. allies and counterparts in what were then "battleground states" in the developing world.

The White House must play a key role in bringing attention to the major issues confronting the Islamic world and the West and in swaying popular views among Muslims. Given the importance of the war on terrorism and the risks of a greater rift between the United States and the Islamic world, the office should be utilized to the maximum extent possible in reaching out to news media in Muslim-majority countries. Likewise, efforts should be made to bring the President into personal contact with reform and civil society leaders, which will help bolster both parties' standing and understanding. In addition, the President should ensure time in his schedule for interviews with news media from the Muslim world.President Bush's May 2004 interview with Al Arabiyya was a good step in this direction, but it only occurred after a major scandal—revelations of the Abu Ghraib prison abuses – and similar interviews have not taken place since. Outreach to news media in the Muslim world must be pro-active and sustained, and not merely linked to damage control after terrible incidents. Nor should the President restrict

himself to Arabic-language news outlets. There are other important outlets in the Muslim world, including the popular and independent GEO TV in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the President should use the bully pulpit to condemn hate speech, including utterances by American policymakers themselves. Immediately after 9-11, the President took a compelling and personal step of visiting the Islamic Center of Washington, the capital's leading mosque, to ensure that Americans and the world knew that the administration understood that Islam was not to blame for the attacks. Unfortunately, the clarity of this message has been lost. A series of anti-Muslim statements have since been made by policymakers and private organization leaders who have been either inside or associated with the administration. Most of these have passed without consequences or condemnation. Bigotry in our midst is not just distasteful, it also directly undermines our security. We live in an era where the world constantly watches to see whether we actually live up to our ideals. At a time when many in the world expect the worst of us, such statements only supports the enemy's propaganda. The President must publicly condemn such statements in specific, disassociate himself from their authors, and hold them liable. That would be a powerful demonstration of presidential leadership and moral authority.

The Military Role

Oft-ignored in discussions of public diplomacy is the vital role that the military can play in helping to restore America's standing. There is often discomfort with this concept on the side of both diplomats and military leaders, but the fundamental fact is that the military's role is to fight and win the nation's wars. In the 21st century, as in the Cold War, not all wars are conventional. Thus, an important realization in the overall National Security Strategy (though not always carried over in implementation) is that the U.S. must shift from state-centric thinking and deal with the new challenges of a new century. Specific to the war on terror, this will require a multifaceted strategy aimed at undermining the structures and support for networked non-governmental organizations. Certainly public diplomacy is not the primary role for the military, but assisting in efforts to meet this latest security challenge is necessary.

The doctrinal mandate for such action is eloquently laid out in the update to the Marine Corps Small Wars Manual, which seeks to provide guidance to officers facing the challenges of 21st century wars and the WOT. "The prevalence of new information technologies and the pervasive presence of modern media, require that we redouble our public diplomacy and educational efforts and begin focusing on shaping the informational dimension of the battlespace. Because small wars are information wars, it is possible that successful shaping operations can be sufficient to accomplish the desired end-state and thus can become "decisive" operations."[36]

Thus, as the military must begin to face the long-term challenge ahead of it in protecting American interests and security, discussions of transformation must be about more than precision strikes and gigabytes. Rather, the military structure must weigh needs and priorities for the GWOT in areas ranging from training to force structure. As an illustration, there remains a great need for expertise in Arabic and other Muslim cultures and languages for soldiers and intelligence analysts (with a significant portion of communications with local populations being mediated through contractors).

This stands in contrast to the crash course mentality that built up great levels of expertise in Slavic languages and cultures in the early years of the Cold War.

Much as presidential leadership is needed to energize action across the U.S. government, leadership within the Pentagon is also required. The questions of how the military can better support and integrate its own public diplomacy, public affairs, and information operations require senior leadership to pay heed to the issue. At the simplest level, it requires that leaders take seriously and implement the very advice they sought from their own advisors, such as the Defense Science Board. At the same time, the leadership must focus on how it can push for and support other agencies to fulfill their responsibilities in this area. Too frequently Pentagon frustration with other agencies' foot-dragging (or its greater funding ability) leads it to undertake programming, with the thinking that "if others aren't going to do it, then we might as well."[37] This can-do attitude is highly laudable, but planners should be careful to ensure that it does not lead the military into areas that may not be the most appropriate in the long-term.

As with the general public diplomacy activities previously discussed, there are a number of activities and initiatives that the military is uniquely suited for that can be explored for consideration. Some (but by no means all) programming concepts include:

Integrate activities into planning. A joke circulating within the military's public affairs field depicts their officers as resembling the fire extinguisher behind glass, to be broken out only after the emergency. This analogy is a bit extreme but does reflect one of the problems in the present institutionalization of public affairs/public diplomacy efforts by the military. Such programs are felt to be secondary to war-fighting rather than as an inherent part of war-fighting, usually considered and coordinated with as an afterthought.

This dynamic is worsened by the fact that minimal consideration is given to the target set (the audience), so that frequently the audience considered in the planning is not the right one. For example, a planner for Operation Iraqi Freedom discussed how the strategic audience he was most concerned with (that is, the audience whose interpretations were most sensitive in shaping limitations on military plans such as targeting air strikes) was "Paris, Brussels, and Berlin."[38] When thinking about how foreign audiences might view U.S. military actions, in the WOT, the swing audience is not the same one as what we thought of during operations in the Balkans in the context of NATO approval. Instead, the key audiences must be the populations of the Islamic world for whose "hearts and minds" we are in competition with Al Qaida and its affiliates, certainly not Europeans residing in the capitals of NATO states *without* troops on the ground.

Senior leadership must recognize this gap and link such efforts into regional strategic planning (visualizing public diplomacy efforts as part of preventative diplomacy and deployments efforts) and most particularly in operation planning. As an illustration, in the run-up to the Iraq war, the military did an excellent job of implementing and discussing with the (American and European) media and public the measures it would take to prevent civilian casualties in combat operations, to the extent that the United States put into place greater measures aimed at saving civilian lives than in any other war in history. But, as with much else, there was no planning in this domain for the post-conflict phase. The result in Iraq was catastrophic. The regional interpretation of U.S. operations turned overnight from one of a quick victory and liberation to one of chaos and

failure, based largely on the inability of the United States to protect the average Muslim civilian on the ground and a failure to adequately explain why. The problem was not just that the chaos happened, but also that the U.S. had no process to discuss the implications of such nor a contingency plan of how to deal with and mitigate the repercussions.

Senior leaders must also recognize that they play an important personal role in the overall strategic communications strategy and implementation. Indeed, the local political context will shape interpretations of much of the audience in the Muslim world (i.e., most live in states where the military plays a dominant role), meaning that they will project their understanding of politics onto the United States. They will often disregard what is said or done by politicians or diplomats and instead focus most on what defense officials and military officers say and do. This puts a great burden of responsibility on senior defense leadership, which is often not understood. For example, the aforementioned problem of post-war chaos was worsened by the failure of senior U.S. defense and military leaders to convey sympathy and concern for the well-being of the Iraqi people during this period, which in turn undercut any benefit from earlier efforts to show that the United States cared more for Iraqi civilians than did the Ba'athist regime. The problem is often exacerbated by the temptation for senior officials conducting press conferences to utter catchy sound bites for the nightly news in the United States. This was perhaps best exemplified by the episode in which a senior official responded that "stuff happens" when asked about the hardship imposed on Iraqi civilians by the post-war violence, crime and looting. More attention must be paid to the way such statements play out with regional audiences and thus backfire on U.S. troops and American prestige in the long-term.[39]

Speak with the same message. As complex as the challenges the United States faces in the area of strategic communications and public diplomacy are, they are only made more complicated by the number of agencies and personnel who operate in this sphere. These range from State Department public diplomacy efforts, USAID activities on the ground, CIA information and psychological operations, military public affairs at the Pentagon, military information operations conducted at all levels from strategic to tactical,), and the various other military activities that could be characterized as public diplomacy broadly defined, ranging from port visits and humanitarian relief efforts to personnel exchanges and training programs. Unfortunately, bureaucratic firewalls and stovepipes often prevent unity of effort across agencies. Instead of the synergy that is necessary for these efforts to have maximum effect, we have a system that is barely coordinated. Indeed, in some conflict zones, the representatives of each of the agencies engaged in strategic communications have never even sat around the same table.[40] This underlines our previous points about how an overarching strategy is clearly needed, one that not only lays out what the various goals and activities should be, but also clarifies the various responsibilities and de-conflicts the various activities and messages.

Develop our own networks for net-centric warfare. Like all exchange programs with foreign audiences, foreign military training and exchanges should be seen as a critical opportunity to expand U.S. relationships and alliances and build up networks of local allies. Despite the fact that association with the United States is viewed negatively in the general social sphere in the Muslim world today, association with the United States. in the military sphere is still considered a positive, career-enhancer, in that those who participate in U.S. military programs typically advance to more senior levels. Therefore, the full value of such programs should be taken

advantage of, so as to ensure that the United States develops close working relationships with the next generation of military leaders in the Muslim world. These not only carry great value in terms of official policy, but also open useful unofficial channels of communication and influence.

Therefore the existing U.S. programs of military to military exchanges and contacts should be reoriented to reflect new strategic priorities. We should be focusing on greater percentages of rising young officers from military forces in the Islamic world, much as we once altered allocations in such programs to reflect Cold War priorities by increasing numbers from Latin America, and as we subsequently reflected post-Cold War priorities by increasing the slots allotted to the states of the former Warsaw Pact.

Unfortunately, the Pentagon has been slow to make this shift, evidently mostly due to bureaucratic inertia. For example, in 2004, there were 11,832 students trained through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. 2,351 (approximately 20%) came from Muslim majority states. These figures become more glaring when broken down. The largest number of students worldwide came from Bolivia (1,807, the equivalent of 77% of the total from all Muslim majority states), whereas the largest number of students from the Muslim world come from two states, Sierra Leone (269) and Turkey (267), that reflected priorities other than the "war of ideas" (Turkey as a NATO partner and Sierra Leone due to commitments in the wake of U.N. and regional peacekeeping operations) .[41] Clearly a far more strategic use of the limited slots can be made in terms of allocation, while there is certainly scope to expand the overall number of students brought to the United States.

Equally, it is time to consider an expansion in the structure and funding of the Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA), presently located in the U.S. at Fort Mcnair. While highly capable, its size and scope of activities is far more modest than the other DOD funded regional security centers, primarily due to a difference in funding structures. For example, NESA has 23 faculty and staff, while the George Marshall Center for Security Studies has 247 and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) has 127. It is time to re-evaluate this structure and explore whether a comparable shift in size and mission might be appropriate for NESA, along with any additional legislative authorities that would permit it to carry out its mission more effectively.

Bolster high demand/low density units to meet current needs. It is well recognized that one of the most valuable capabilities the military has in winning local hearts and minds are civil affairs teams. These units have a multiplier effect in building up local goodwill and establishing U.S. credibility; many believe that their impact on the ground in places like Iraq will be remembered in individual villages for the next generation or more.[42] Yet, for the pure value-added these men and women represent to overall operations, there are simply too few to go around. The units that exist are overstretched and the fact that they are reservist-based means they are at risk of burning out from repeated call ups. This problem was already an issue during the Balkans deployments and has only been magnified by Iraq and Afghanistan commitments. Simply put, thinking about force transformation must take into account which units are of most value to U.S. strategic goals, what commanders in the field need them to do., and how the bang-for-the-buck from these units compares with capabilities offered by traditional, large budget acquisitions.

Formalize public diplomacy activities into the budget. The military actually engages in a wide range of civil military activities that could be described as public diplomacy at the regional and ground level, but too often it is considered as an after-thought or only during emergencies. For example, the Navy only sends hospital ships to key zones on an ad hoc basis, i.e. typically in response to a crisis, such when an earthquake happens and the ship is not committed elsewhere. These types of visits, such as the one during the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, are powerful examples of American goodwill and demonstrable evidence of the positives and professionalism of the U.S. military. Indeed, many credit the aid and work that the U.S. military did on the ground in Indonesia with helping to reverse the downturn in esteem for the U.S. there.[43] Unfortunately, such high pay off programs are not included in long-term planning and not supported by separate budget items. Such efforts are too important to be viewed as an afterthought or a drag on a unit's regular operational budget. Money spent on creating positive proof of the professionalism and good intent of U.S. troops on the ground, which leave a positive long term legacy, should at the very least achieve the same amount of investment as the present psyops/advertising campaigns organized by the military (the Joint Psyops Support Element of the U.S. Special Operations Command has a projected budget of $77.5 million over the next years to spend on creating TV, radio, and print ads to burnish the U.S. image).[44] Exploration should be made of how to recognize such activities as part of counter-insurgency and force protection measures and whether they might be regularized into budgeting (perhaps through the humanitarian operations budget).

Better support public affairs officers. Public affairs officers are often the single point of contact that foreign publics and media have with the U.S. military. Indeed, during operations, many in the foreign media far prefer to deal with them than through diplomatic handlers from other agencies, understandably seeing these officers as a more direct source on what the U.S. military is thinking and doing. We must face the reality that this area is not simply the domain of the State Department. As such, it is absurd that PAOs, who are placed in this critical, front-line role in the war of hearts and minds, are not afforded foreign language and cultural awareness in their training programs. Some of the more enterprising have resorted to paying out of their paychecks for such coursework. This should be a regular, funded component of their professional development and education.

Our hometown (media) is the world. The link between the military and the press has often veered between cooperation, as in World War II, and contention, as in Vietnam. Recently, the military has set up the embedded reporter program as a means to better manage the inherent problems of press operating in a conflict zone. However, the focus of such programs has been understandable, getting U.S. reporters into such slots and reserving only a small portion for foreign media. The merits of expanding access to professional and vetted foreign media is that should be weighed, hopefully also taking into account the new strategic needs of the United States. In addition, their allocation must also be more strategic. Within these programs, the presence of media from the areas that matter most in the war on terror unfortunately has been ad-hoc. To put it another way, it may be more valuable to have a vetted, professional reporter from Pakistan there to see firsthand the professionalism of U.S. troops than a tabloid journalist from Japan. It's even arguably more important than having yet another reporter from the United States. The distribution across services should also be planned out, such that gaps will not occur

as the focus of operations shift. For example, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Muslim world reporters were far more present within Navy units than in either Army or Air Force units.

The Shape of the Global Anti Terrorist Environment

An important element in any development of strategy is to identify the elements of what a successful completion would look like. That is, understanding the "endgame" often can provide useful guides in what would need to be targeted and achieved to reach such a state of affairs. If the U.S. were successful in creating a global anti-terrorist environment, it would have several key characteristics:

A unified articulation of means, ends, and goals. There is a glaring need for the U.S. to articulate an overarching strategy towards terrorism that matches ends, means, and discernable measures. Part and parcel of this is not the issuance of more policy statements, but a grand strategy towards the Islamic world that will shape our often disparate policies. In short, a fundamental building block in the global antiterrorist environment would be an American articulation of a positive vision of its goals towards the Islamic world. This is necessary to not only to help shape our own often disparate policies, but also to present a constructive program of what the United States stands for and offers. The side-effect of building a cohesive, positive vision is that it will also provide an agenda for allies and friends to side with, as well as a programmatic lodestone to contend with other competing visions, particularly by those who seek to tar our policies as being something otherwise.

The U.S. voice is viewed as credible. Obviously, the American voice will only be effective if it is viewed as sincere. This means that it would be grounded in a dialogue that values and engages the Muslim world, not views it as merely an audience for better public relations. Underscoring the programming would be an array of outreach activities that create layers of networks of local partners and affiliates in the public and private sectors. These would not only serve as feedback loops, but also serve to build local coalitions and alliances that will add to our credibility.

At the core of al Qaida-ism's support and popularity has been its ability to draw from (and manipulate), the deep sense of frustration that is felt within the Muslim world over the failing status quo.[45] From authoritarian regimes that fail to deliver effective social services to struggling economies that cannot compete with the forces of globalization, there is a sense in the Muslim world that the region is falling behind.[46] The fundamental challenge for us is that the United States is often viewed as an inherent part of this status quo and blamed for the circumstances in the region. While this often is an unfair characterization, it creates a regional reality that must be dealt with, as it undermines America's efforts to speak on behalf it is polices.

In an ideal global antiterrorist environment, the United States would be viewed as opposing the negative aspects of the status quo and supporting the forces that will aid human development and freedom. Beyond simply making statements, we would make statements that would resonate and be viewed as credible. The vision to be articulated in the U.S. strategic communications agenda must be one that deals the underlying anger in the Arab world that comes from frustration at the comparative lack of opportunity: political opportunity, economic opportunity, and social

opportunity. While this will certainly create challenges with any allied autocratic regimes that cling to past practices, an environment in which terrorist groups are undermined and the U.S. voice is credible would be one in which our policies are clearly understood as located on the side of change in the region, not on the side of a failing status quo. We must identify the U.S. with the positive, supporting prosperity and opposing repression (and not merely through regime overthrow but also through the more difficult challenge of reform).

The U.S. voice is consistent, but also nuanced. In an ideal global antiterrorist environment, the U.S. voice would be recognized not only for its consistency and credibility, but also as having depth of understanding (and empathy) and nuance in how it engages a diverse world. For example, discussions by U.S. officials of the Muslim educational institutions known as madrassas have, at least as heard from outside, operated under the assumption that all are "schools of hate" that must be shut down or reformed. As the previous chapters of this book discuss, this misses the fact that only an extremely small percentage of the madrasas in places like Pakistan are affiliated with radical groups, while in other states, such as Indonesia, they are mostly government-linked and are in fact sources of moderation, while in Arabic-speaking countries, "madrasa" is simply the ordinary word for a school. As a result, when the U.S. discusses shutting down "madrasas," it is viewed as striking against moderates in some countries, education in general in others, and rarely as focusing merely on the radicals. Recognition of such regional nuances and differences should be part and parcel of any U.S. strategy, as it will add to understanding.

At the same time, the United States must be flexible enough to open dialogues with the diverse set of social groups and actors on the ground. This may even mean seeking to gain allies with whom we may differ in worldview, just as the Marshall Plan dealt with socialist-leaning unions in Western Europe and Nixon went to China to divide the Communist Bloc. The United States will ultimately have to accept that Islamist political groups are among the most powerful and credible groups in the Muslim world. While we may not see eye to eye with them on many issues, it is time to open dialogues and work on setting a shared understanding of how we can cooperate to improve the lives of the citizens of their countries, as well as the areas in which we cannot. While the concept of U.S. engagement with Islamist groups may sound anathema to some policymakers, the fact is that the United States has already made such compromises with Islamist groups in Iraq—both old guard Islamist leaders like Ayatollah Sistani as well as new guard figures like Moqtada as-Sadr—to help steer them and their supporters away from violence, providing proof that it can be done, and quite successfully.

Isolation and delegitimization of al Qaida-ism within the global Muslim community. An important lesson from past insurgencies is that the key to winning is not merely to track down each and every insurgent or terrorist be he in Pakistan or England, a nigh-impossible task. Rather such groups are best defeated by isolating and strangling them in both the physical and ideological realms. In this task, the role of the host community is key, and its full support is necessary, both to reject these groups and reveal their presence. If the host community is supportive, or even neutral and thus tolerant of the extremists, then counter-insurgency efforts will fail.[47] If one is to use the metaphor expressed by Mao, of successful insurgents being akin to fish in the sea, then we win not by having to drain the sea, but rather when the terrorist "fish" find the sea poisoned, i.e. no longer hospitable for for their radicalism.

A turning point in the global battle of hearts and minds will be when groups that advocate violence in pursuit of radical aims are not merely condemned for particular incidents, by a slice of the more moderate opinion leaders, but when such groups as a whole (their aims, agenda, and tactics) are viewed as criminals and apostates. It is critically important to note that this shift must come from within the community. The United States can engage with groups and leaders that work towards the goal of isolating the extremists, but the effort will fail if the United States is seen as providing the genesis of such an agenda. Restoring America's good name will assist such efforts, such that the baggage of widespread anti-Americanism will be made less burdensome.

The key to this will not be any push for American interests, but supporting any process of communal self-examination that yields a twofold realization within the Muslim *umma* that (1) extremist groups, especially those conducting terrorist attacks against civilians, are operating in contravention of the accepted practices of Islam and (2) they are doing so in such a way that undermines the well-being of the entire global Muslim community. As such, their activities would not merely be something to explain away (as poor tactics, but proper targeting of an unpopular oppressor) or condemned, but seen as a deliberate choice to not only harm others, but also to break with Islam. This would then entail a full mobilization of opinion leaders against them and a recasting of local and global religious and communal structures to ensure that they do not gain support or infiltrate. The role of conservative clerics and Islamist leaders will be crucial in this. When such a transition happens (and indeed the process appears to be underway among certain communities, such as the Muslim American efforts in the wake of the London bombings), al Qaidaism will wither on the vine.[48] While certain individuals will likely continue terrorist activities, their overall efforts will be akin to what happened with the Red Brigades of Europe or the violent "Militia"/Christian Identity groups of the United States, definitive threats that must be dealt with, but not ones that resonate to any strategic level.

Conclusions:

The first four years after the 9-11 attacks saw an American foreign policy that could in no way be described as meek or ineffective, except in its public diplomacy and strategic communications. From Iraq to Afghanistan, the United States carried out a dazzling array of actions, but still faces a series of complex and demanding decisions in how it engages with Muslim states and communities and communicates its policies towards the Islamic world. What is striking about our most vexing challenges is that they, more often than not, crop up in relation to our policies towards what we usually consider our friends and allies. This makes them more difficult, but also perhaps ultimately more manageable.

With a greater awareness of the challenges ahead, an agenda must be developed to answer these dilemmas. Simply put, there is a glaring need for America to undertake a pro-active strategy that is aimed at restoring long-term security through the presentation of American principles in American foreign policy. A key victory will be when the United States is again seen as living up to its values and, in a region characterized by a failing and stagnant status quo, acting on the side of positive change, whether it is in affording people the opportunities to reach their potential or in ensuring that governance is representative rather than repressive. The tools of public diplomacy and strategic communications can be valuable weapons in the American arsenal. It is not too late to wield them.

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'bottom has fallen out' for U.S. support abroad." Christian Science Monitor, February 9, 2004,

19 "The President's FY 2006 International Affairs Budget," Testimony by Secretary of State Condeleeza Rice to Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs May 12, 2005

20 The Weekly Standard, February 9, 2004.

21 Christopher Ross, "Pillars of Public Diplomacy" *The Harvard Review*, August 21, 2003.

22 Zogby International/Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland. "Arab Attitudes Towards Political and Social Issues, Foreign Policy and the Media" May 2004, available at: http://www.bsos.umd.edu/SADAT/pub/Arab%20Attitudes%20Towards%20Political%20and%20Social%20Issues,%20Foreign%20Policy%20and%20the%20Media.htm. According to a poll conducted by Telhami/Zogby, Al Jazeera is the first choice for international news for a plurality of viewers in Lebanon (44%), Saudi Arabia (44%), the United Arab Emirates (46%), and a majority of those in Egypt (66%), Jordan (62%), and Morocco (54%). It is the most watched station in each country polled. Al-Arabia is second-ranked first choice in the region: it is the first choice for 19% in UAE and under 10% in Egypt (5%), Jordan (7%), Lebanon (7%), Morocco (8%).

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