

Assessing U.S. Strategy in the War on Terror

By
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Al Qaeda and its jihadi allies pose a large threat to U.S. national security. Such a grave menace requires a strong response. Yet the United States has so far waged only a one-dimensional war against al Qaeda, fighting hard on one front when it should be fighting on four. Specifically, the Bush administration has focused heavily on an offensive campaign against al Qaeda overseas while neglecting three other critical fronts: bolstering homeland defense, securing weapons and materials of mass destruction from possible theft or purchase by terrorists, and winning the war of ideas. And the administration has sometimes done too little even on the offensive, instead diverting itself into a costly and counterproductive sideshow in Iraq. The public credits President Bush for toughness on terror. In fact, his administration has pursued a half-hearted war on terror, failing to devote the political and financial resources it requires.

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Al Qaeda and its jihadi allies continue to pose a large threat to the United States. The U.S. ouster of Afghanistan's Taliban government in 2001 and 2002 cost al Qaeda its base and severed its leadership from its operatives and resources across the globe. But al Qaeda has dealt with these setbacks by morphing into a decentralized but highly potent movement that remains capable of great destruction.

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And great destruction is what al Qaeda likely intends. Al Qaeda's leaders have sought to obtain weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the past, and their rhetoric suggests that they would use these weapons if they had them. In 1998, Osama Bin Laden proclaimed that "to kill Americans . . . civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible."¹ A former al Qaeda press spokesman, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, even claimed that al Qaeda had a right to kill 4 million Americans, including 2 million children.²

Such a grave menace requires a strong response. Yet the United States has so far waged only a one-dimensional war against al Qaeda, fighting hard on one front when it should be fighting on four. Specifically, the Bush administration has focused heavily on an offensive campaign against al Qaeda overseas while neglecting three other critical fronts: bolstering homeland defense, securing weapons and materials of mass destruction from possible theft or purchase by terrorists, and winning the war of ideas. And the administration has sometimes lost focus and done too little on the one front where it has been fighting, partly because it diverted itself into a costly and counterproductive sideshow in Iraq. The public credits President Bush for toughness on terror. In fact, however, his administration has pursued a half-hearted war on terror, failing to devote the political and financial resources it requires.

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The United States waged its great wars in the past on every relevant front: military, economic, political, and ideational. During World War II, the United States mobilized its diplomatic and economic power, as well as its military power, to defeat the Axis powers. It also waged a forceful propaganda war to bring the world to its side, even using the talent of Hollywood.³ And it put large effort into postwar programs aimed at bringing former enemy societies to a soft landing. During the cold war, the United States again used economic power (through the Marshall Plan, the Alliance for Progress, and other efforts), waged an intense war of ideas through the U.S. Information Agency and other activities, and mobilized great American military power.⁴

The U.S. war against al Qaeda should likewise be waged on every relevant front with all needed resources. Other policies should be oriented to serve this effort and be judged in part on their contribution to it. Distractions and diversions

should be avoided. The United States should do this because al Qaeda is the greatest threat that the United States now faces, and failure to defeat it could bring immense calamity.

Front Number 1: The Offensive

The Bush administration has focused its efforts on denying al Qaeda sanctuaries overseas—by destroying or deterring regimes that shelter al Qaeda—and on rolling up al Qaeda's global organization through intelligence and police work. The centerpiece of this offensive was the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the ousting of its radical Taliban regime, which had sheltered al Qaeda in exchange for millions of dollars.

The ouster of the Taliban was an important success. It denied al Qaeda secure access to large training bases and destroyed the capacity of al Qaeda's leaders to communicate with their worldwide network by putting these leaders on the run. Al Qaeda's Afghan training bases fueled its vast growth in the late 1990s by allowing the group to produce thousands of highly motivated jihadis. The loss of these bases was a heavy blow to al Qaeda. Likewise, al Qaeda's ability to conduct intercontinental operations was much reduced by its leaders' isolation. Thus, the destruction of the Taliban regime was a major gain for the United States.

Yet even this offensive element of the Bush strategy did not fully succeed because it was underresourced and sometimes poorly led. American forces in Afghanistan had a good chance to destroy the al Qaeda top command at the battle of Tora Bora in late 2001 but bungled the battle, allowing their escape. A later operation, Anaconda, also ended in disappointment, arguably because insufficient American forces were committed. And ensuing allied efforts to stabilize Afghanistan were half-hearted: needed security and economic aid were not provided. As a result the new Afghan government, led by Hamid Karzai, has failed to stabilize the country, and al Qaeda and its Taliban allies have reestablished a strong presence in southern and eastern Afghanistan.⁵ Pakistan, Afghanistan's eastern neighbor, also remains unstable and unable to police its Northwest Frontier Province, allowing al Qaeda free run of the area. The Bush administration has failed to move aggressively to end the Kashmir conflict, which fuels the Islamic radicalism that gives al Qaeda an opening in Pakistan. In short, the Bush administration has failed to stabilize both Afghanistan and Pakistan, leaving al Qaeda room to operate in both.

Things have also deteriorated in Somalia, where radical Islamists with ties to al Qaeda have gained control of Mogadishu after defeating U.S.-backed warlords in June 2006.

The weakness of the Bush administration's offensive against al Qaeda stems partly from the administration's decision to attack Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003. The Iraq war diverted needed resources away from the war on al Qaeda.⁶ These diverted resources include management talent, intelligence assets, military forces, lots of money, and political capital at home and abroad. For example, operation Anaconda in Afghanistan failed partly because needed U.S. troops were withheld from the battle to conserve them for the coming war with Iraq.⁷

In warfare, one should concentrate on the most dangerous threat first. Al Qaeda posed a far greater threat than Saddam's Iraq and should have taken top priority. Although the Bush administration has implied otherwise, Saddam and al Qaeda had no operational ties and did not work in concert against the United States.⁸ Hence, ousting Saddam was a pure diversion from the war against al Qaeda.

The U.S. attack on Iraq, bungled as it was, also inflamed the Muslim world against the United States. This has helped al Qaeda to recruit and to find friendly places to hide.⁹ U.S. forces in Iraq have disastrously been drawn into a counterinsurgency campaign. Nothing looks worse on television than counterinsurgency. It is inherently brutal and cruel. By falling into the role of counterinsurgent in Iraq, the Bush administration has created a broad political disaster, damaging America's position far beyond Iraq and giving al Qaeda a big boost. Thus, while parts of the Bush administration's offensive against al Qaeda have succeeded, the sideshow in Iraq has undercut this effort, serving overall to strengthen al Qaeda while weakening U.S. efforts against it.

There must be no further diversions from the campaign against the main enemy—the al Qaeda network and its jihadi allies. For example, a military confrontation with Syria, or Iran, or both—urged by some in Washington—would be a grave mistake.

Bottom line: even on the offensive, its favored mission, the Bush team has shown an uncertain hand and deviated counterproductively from its objective.

Front Number 2: The Defensive

The Bush administration's homeland defense effort has large holes. Funding, leadership, and institutional reforms have all been inadequate. Homeland security funding has increased since the attack of September 11, 2001, but much more remains to be done.¹⁰ The FBI has yet to make the transition from a crime-solving to a terror-preventing agency.¹¹ Likewise, reforms of the broader U.S. intelligence community, which is the key to victory in counterterrorism, have not been adequately implemented.¹² For example, the U.S. government still has no single, coordinated watch list of terror suspects. Such a tool is a basic and essential tool of counterterrorism. Yet the United States instead maintains several different watch lists, feeding confusion among security personnel on the front lines.¹³ The CIA has been damaged by a campaign against CIA employees who were deemed unfriendly to the Bush administration. This campaign caused an exodus of able officers from the agency.¹⁴

U.S. efforts to disrupt terrorist financing have been stymied by infighting among U.S. government agencies. State Department and Treasury Department officials cannot even agree on who should lead the counterfinancing effort.¹⁵

Local police, fire departments, and public health labs have not been effectively integrated into homeland security, although they have a key role as likely emergency first-responders to attack.¹⁶ No portion of the broadcast spectrum is

reserved for emergencies so that these players can communicate with one another if and when an attack occurs.¹⁷

Many U.S. domestic vulnerabilities remain unaddressed. The borders of the United States are still essentially open, offering easy entry to terrorists. U.S. nuclear reactors and chemical plants remain vulnerable and inviting targets for terrorists. Clever attacks on these reactors and plants could cause immense damage, killing tens of thousands or more. U.S. railroad security remains porous, allowing the possibility of an attack on trains carrying lethal chemicals that could again kill tens or hundreds of thousands.¹⁸ U.S. ports remain open to devastating attack. U.S. biodefenses have been strengthened, but the United States remains vulnerable to bioterror. U.S. insurance laws governing terrorist incidents give businesses little incentive to harden their infrastructure against an attack. Instead of distributing the most funds to places that are most at risk of attack, U.S. funding for homeland security often goes to low-priority pork barrel projects in places represented by greedy and irresponsible members of Congress.¹⁹

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This situation reflects the administration's decision to focus its efforts on the offensive while doing only enough on homeland security to give the appearance of action. At this point, homeland security is more a palliative to public fear than a real security program.

Front Number 3: Securing Weapons of Mass Destruction

Vast amounts of nuclear and biological weapons and materials remain poorly secured in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. Enough nuclear materials remain unsecured in Russia to make tens of thousands of Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs. Many Soviet nuclear and biological weapons scientists also remain underpaid or unemployed, ripe for hiring by terrorists. Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush have all failed to move strongly to lock down these materials and scientists. The United States spends only some \$1.3 billion per year on the project (through the Cooperative Threat Reduction Initiative, or CTR) and will not have it finished for years.²⁰ The CTR program lacks a strong,

visible leader who can make things happen in Washington and Moscow. Amazingly, in the two years after 9/11, no more loose nuclear weapons and materials were secured than in the two years prior—a testament to the Bush administration's inattention to the problem.²¹ Duck and cover! This policy lapse is among the worst failures of government in modern times.²²

Funding for CTR should be tripled. And a strong political figure—a James Baker-type—should be put in charge of the effort. The president should empower this leader to use the full array of American carrots and sticks to persuade Russia's President Putin to agree and implement a deal on securing nuclear materials and scientists. It should be made clear to Putin that such a deal is America's prime objective in U.S.-Russian relations.

A strong-handed approach should also be taken toward securing WMD around the rest of the world, including poorly secured nuclear materials in Pakistan and in scores of research reactors elsewhere. During the cold war, the United States unwisely dispersed enough nuclear material to make perhaps one thousand nuclear bombs to forty-three countries around the world, starting in the 1950s and ending in 1988. The U.S. government has since made only lackadaisical efforts to recover these immensely dangerous materials, which are ripe for theft or illicit purchase by terrorists.²³ These materials must be secured immediately.²⁴

Front Number 4: The War of Ideas

To defeat al Qaeda, the United States must reach a *modus vivendi* with the wider Muslim world. The Islamist jihadi movement from which al Qaeda grows must be reduced, isolated, and drained of energy. This requires changing the terms of debate in the Muslim world, channeling discussion in less hostile directions.

To do this, the United States must develop and use its power to persuade and its power to make peace. The jihadis feed on political and historical myths and lies. They also exploit anger stemming from political and social realities in the Middle East, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These myths must be dispelled by strong U.S. public diplomacy, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be dampened by a strong new U.S. push for peace. The United States should also push to end other conflicts that al Qaeda exploits. Al Qaeda feeds on war; the United States should stand for peace and promote peace.

Public diplomacy. The recruiting narrative used by al Qaeda and other jihadi movements is a tissue of historical fabrications and half-truths. It portrays the past century as a period of vast unprovoked one-way violence by the United States and other non-Muslim states against a benign Muslim world that was innocent of wrongdoing. If this narrative were true, it would indeed justify Muslim rage. The crimes of the West would cry out for a punishing response.

But violence has in fact run both ways between non-Muslims and Muslims. Western states have committed great cruelties, including horrific barbarism by

France, Britain, and Italy in their efforts to subdue colonies in Algeria, Libya, Iraq, and elsewhere; the 1953 U.S. coup in Iran; and a cynical U.S. policy toward Afghanistan during 1989 to 1992 that left it in flames. On the other hand, Muslim Sudan has slaughtered 2 million non-Muslim South Sudanese since 1983, and Sudan supported the murderous Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.²⁵ Muslim Indonesia murdered 200,000 Christian East Timorese during 1975 to 2000 and 400,000 to 500,000 of its non-Muslim Chinese minority in 1965. Muslim Turkey massacred 600,000 to 1,500,000 Christian Armenians in 1895 and 1915 in one of the great genocides of modern times.²⁶ Thus, the true recent history of Muslim–non-Muslim relations is one of great crimes committed by both sides. Both should confess their crimes, hang their heads in shame, and ask forgiveness. Muslims have spilled vast amounts of non-Muslim blood, likely giving as well as they have gotten.

Muslims, especially the Islamist extremists, also have much Muslim blood on their own hands. These crimes include the slaughter of several hundred thousand Muslims in Darfur by Sudan's Islamist government since 2003; the killing of many thousands of Afghan Muslims by the Taliban during its bloody rule; and the killing of tens of thousands of Algerian Muslims by the violent Algerian Islamist movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), during 1992 to 1998. These crimes put the lie to extreme Islamists' claims of concern for the welfare of fellow Muslims. The Islamists should atone for these crimes before demanding vengeance for the crimes of others against Muslims.

Yet all of these Muslim crimes are forgotten in the al Qaeda self-innocence narrative. In that narrative, Muslims appear only as victims, never as perpetrators. The crimes of Muslims against Muslims and non-Muslims alike are airbrushed from memory. And instead of remembering their own crimes, the Islamists invent unreal Western crimes. In the jihadi narrative, the U.S. interventions in Somalia (1992 to 1994), Bosnia (1995), and Kosovo (1999) are painted as violent predations against Muslim populations. This portrayal grossly distorts the historical record. The United States made serious mistakes in these interventions, but it intervened in each case to assist Muslims, not to harm them. Its interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo ended Serb violence against those Muslim populations, and its intervention in Somalia saved more than forty thousand Muslim Somali lives.²⁷

In short, the al Qaeda/jihadi narrative rests on very shaky historical ground. It leaves much to debate and correct. Muslim rage would be deflated if Muslims understood this. But U.S. efforts to correct the record are half-hearted. The books, articles, and media products one would expect to be produced in a serious war of ideas are not appearing. Missing are the books in Middle East languages with vivid photos and personal histories that document the great crimes and follies of the radical Islamist governments in Afghanistan during 1996 to 2001, Sudan since 1983, and Iran since 1979. These governments are Islamist religious tyrannies of the kind Bin Laden seeks to foster elsewhere. They are laboratories where Bin Laden's social program has been tried and failed. Muslims would be more skeptical of Bin Laden's program if they knew this. The Bush administration should spread the word, but it has not.

Missing are films of interviews with the hundreds of African victims maimed by al Qaeda's 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Missing are films on the great suffering of al Qaeda's many Muslim victims. A handful of filmmakers could produce these quickly, but the administration is not interested.

The administration has replaced successful older public information programs with newer programs that have underperformed. Specifically, the administration shut down the Voice of America Arab language service to focus instead on creating two new electronic media outlets (Radio Sawa, a radio network aimed at youth, and Alhurra, a satellite TV news channel) and on three new State Department public diplomacy initiatives aimed at the Muslim world—a media ad campaign, a youth magazine, and a set of exchange programs. But Radio Sawa and Alhurra have not been effective, and by 2006 all three new State Department initiatives had been largely suspended or terminated.²⁸

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U.S. public diplomacy is failing because the Bush team has put only scant resources into it. In fiscal year (FY) 2003, the U.S. government spent only some \$1.14 billion on the public diplomacy function,²⁹ and in FY 2005 it spent barely more than \$1.3 billion.³⁰ Only \$150 million of the State Department's FY 2003 public diplomacy money was spent in Muslim-majority countries.³¹ These are paltry sums relative to the task at hand.

U.S. public diplomacy efforts have also been poorly led. The first post-9/11 director of the State Department Office of Public Diplomacy, Charlotte Beers, was a poor fit for the job. Its second director, Margaret Tutwiler, left after a brief tour of duty. Its third leader, Karen Hughes, is able but was allowed to defer her arrival for months while the job sat empty. This musical-chairs leadership reflects a failure by the Bush team to put priority on waging a forceful war of ideas.

This failure of public diplomacy reflects the Bush administration's macho approach to foreign policy. It believes that friends abroad are won by using the mailed fist and the mailed fist alone. Allies are gained by instilling fear, not respect. The Caligula theory of statecraft—"let them hate us as long as they fear us"—is believed and applied. Reasoning with others is assumed to be pointless, as others are immoral cowards who understand only threat of force. Public diplomacy

is for sissies. This schoolyard bully attitude has led the administration into grave errors of both commission (the overuse of force and threat of force) and omission, including a failure to use the potent weapon of public diplomacy. The United States has powerful skills of persuasion when it chooses to use them, but the Bush team has failed to use them.

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Will the Islamic world engage in debate about historical truth? Will it agree that it must rest its claims on valid history? The Koran says it must: "Believers, if an evil-doer brings you a piece of news, inquire first into its truth, lest you should wrong others unwittingly and then regret your action."³² The United States should embrace this teaching and propose that both sides fully live by it. This would require that both agree to enquire about and debate the truth of history.

The Arab-Israel conflict. To win the war of ideas, the United States must move credibly toward a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This conflict inflames Arabs and Muslims against the United States, which they blame for whatever Israel does in the conflict. As a result, the United States has a harder time finding allies against al Qaeda.³³ Yet the Bush administration is not pursuing Israeli-Palestinian peace with conviction.

To move toward peace, Washington should frame its own final-status peace plan and use carrots and sticks to persuade both sides to agree. The U.S. final-status plan should posit a near-complete Israeli withdrawal in exchange for full and final peace, in line with the four major peace plans that have been widely discussed in recent years: the Clinton bridging proposals of December 2000, the Abdullah Plan of March 2002, the Geneva Accord of December 2003, and the Ayalon-Nusseibeh (or "People's Voice") initiative, also of December 2003.³⁴ The United States should use the first phase of the 2003 Quartet roadmap as its work plan to start the parties toward its final-status agreement. It should frame a schedule for implementing this work plan and oversee compliance by both sides.

By framing and pushing for a final-status plan, the United States will put the opponents of peace on both sides on the defensive. Most important, it will

corner the radical Palestinian group Hamas by exposing its extremism as an obstacle to a just peace. Most Palestinians now want a two-state solution. Hamas, which won Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006, rejects a two-state solution and instead seeks Israel's destruction. It has argued that its extremism does its followers no harm because the two-state solution that its extremism prevents was never in the cards. The United States can demolish this argument by making clear that it will lead matters to just such a peace if the two sides will cooperate. Hamas will then be forced to bend toward peace or lose support.

The United States should also use focused pressure on both sides to persuade them to align their policies with peace. For example, the United States should press the Palestinian leadership to accept that any peace settlement will recognize the Palestinian right of return by compensation for losses, not by physical return to Israel. Some Palestinians choke on the notion that Palestinians who were driven from Israel in 1948 cannot return there. But the necessities of peace-making require that the Palestinians accept this.³⁵

Israel's government will also need strong American persuasion. Most Israeli leaders favor some further Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories. But the Israeli settler movement and others on the Israeli far right will strongly oppose the near-total Israeli pullback that peace requires. Absent strong U.S. pressure, these expansionist elements may well persuade the Israeli government to keep enough occupied territory to preclude a peace settlement.³⁶

Accordingly, the United States should press the Israeli government to offer near-total withdrawal in exchange for peace. Carrots should include the prospect of large economic aid to cover the cost of adjusting Israeli defenses to new borders and the prospect of a formal alliance with the United States—perhaps even NATO membership—if Arab-Israeli peace is achieved. As a stick, the United States should explain that no U.S. government can remain allied to another government that pursues policies that harm U.S. national security. The United States should elaborate that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict harms U.S. national security; that an Israeli policy of retaining large chunks of the West Bank precludes an Arab-Israeli peace, and thereby harms U.S. national security; and that the United States therefore insists, as a firm condition for continuing the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship, that any policy of expansion be discarded. Israel must instead agree to make peace within the terms of the four peace plans mentioned above.

A U.S. policy of this kind would probably bring the Palestinians and Israelis to a settlement. The United States can bring to bear strong pressure, both carrots and sticks, if it chooses. Both the Israeli and Palestinian publics already favor moderate policies that align with peace, and they will not support leaders whose policies threaten rupture with the United States. Hence, leaders on both sides will find themselves impelled toward peace if the United States forcefully applies its carrots and sticks to get them there.

Instead, the Bush team now plans only coercion of Hamas plus some passive mediation unlinked to a strong U.S. policy. This will not be nearly enough to bring peace. A U.S. full-court press on both sides is needed.

Dampen other conflicts. Al Qaeda feeds on war. It exploits any war involving Muslims anywhere in the world by painting the Muslims as victims, whether or not they are, and publicizing their suffering. It exploits in this fashion current wars in Kashmir, Chechnya, and Iraq and past wars in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian war. It has also used the wars in Iraq, Kashmir, and Chechnya to train its operatives in the arts of violence. Accordingly, the United States should have a policy of dampening conflict and promoting peace in Kashmir and Chechnya, as well as in Israel-Palestine. As al Qaeda feeds on war, so the United States should be the great maker and builder of peace in the region.³⁷

An Alternative Framework for Strategy

The Bush administration advanced its own framework for strategy in its 2006 *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*.³⁸ In this scheme, the United States would define and then deny the inputs that terrorist organizations require to sustain themselves and their operations. Nine key inputs are identified: (1) leadership; (2) safe havens for training and planning; (3) funds and finance; (4) communications, needed to exert command and control over operatives and to inspire a broader political base; (5) movement, needed to gain access to targets, especially in the United States; (6) intelligence, needed to make strategy, plan operations, and plan countermeasures against attack; (7) weapons, including WMD; (8) personnel, supplied by the recruitment, training, and indoctrination of new operatives; and (9) ideological support, needed to recruit and motivate new operatives and to gain broader support from host societies.³⁹

This scheme is an intelligent alternative to the four-front strategy that I outlined above. It is tied directly to the logic of terrorist organizational sustenance and so is especially useful for identifying tactics that will defeat terrorist networks.

However, the Bush policy against al Qaeda looks inadequate when measured against this scheme as well. The administration is moving firmly against only four vulnerabilities (numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5—al Qaeda leadership, al Qaeda safe havens, and al Qaeda ability to communicate and move). The strategy is good, but the execution is poor. It still appears by this accounting that the Bush administration is waging a one-dimensional war on terror.

Needed: Large Policy Innovation

Winning the war on terror will require large innovation in U.S. national security policy. The United States should put relatively less resources into traditional military functions—army, navy, air force—and far more resources into counter-terror functions. These include intelligence, homeland security, diplomacy to lock

down loose nukes and bioweapons around the world, public diplomacy, diplomacy to end conflicts that breed terror—including the Israeli-Arab conflict and the conflicts in Kashmir and Chechnya—and nation building and saving failed states to deny terrorists the haven states they need to build their organizations. But the organizations that carry out these functions—U.S. intelligence agencies, local law enforcement, the Coast Guard, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, local public health agencies, the CTR, the State Department Office of Public Diplomacy and other State Department elements, the Agency for International Development, and so forth—are politically weak in Washington, so they lose out in Washington budget battles. And our government, like all governments, is reluctant to innovate, so the changes needed to defeat al Qaeda face strong natural resistance. Can the U.S. government innovate to the extent required?

Americans should want to hear the pulling and hauling of vast turf fights in Washington. This would tell them that innovation in security policy was under way—that resources and authority were being transferred from yesterday's cold-war-oriented agencies to counterterrorism-oriented agencies.

Instead, the tenor of national security policy in Washington is largely business as usual. The agencies that would lead in a serious war on al Qaeda continue to take a far backseat to the military services. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which frames the plan for future U.S. military programs, is little changed from the cold war era. It still recommends spending vast sums on super-high-tech tactical fighters and killer submarines that now have no enemy to fight and little role against al Qaeda.⁴⁰ The innovation that victory against al Qaeda requires is not under way.

After al Qaeda? More Trouble! Get Ready!

Two worrisome long-term trends will likely increase the risk of catastrophic terror in coming decades.

First, rising violent religious fundamentalism in Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism creates an energy source for future terrorists. It raises the danger that more al Qaedas could be born. Millenarian fundamentalism is especially dangerous, as it supplies a moral justification for WMD terrorism. Millenarians believe that the end of the world is coming, and this is a good thing. Some would therefore help bring it about, perhaps by catastrophic terrorism. Such millenarianism has increased markedly among Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists over the past several decades.⁴¹

Second, WMD technology is spreading relentlessly. The 1991 Soviet collapse dispersed technical knowledge as Soviet nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons scientists scattered. And Soviet weapons and materials are at risk of theft or sale to terrorists, as I noted above. In the future, the advance and dispersion of WMD technology will take us further down this dangerous road, making WMD still more accessible. The price of making or acquiring WMD will fall until WMD become affordable by terrorists. And the Internet has a disastrous downside. It

enables groups with only rudimentary research skills to learn what they need to assemble and use WMD or to launch other grand terror attacks.

The spread of bioweapons and the resulting risk of bioterror pose a particular danger. Bioweapons are far cheaper to make than nuclear weapons, so even non-state terrorist actors may someday be able to make them. Terrorists are far harder to deter than states, so terrorist possession of bioweapons (or other WMD) is far more worrying than state possession of bioweapons. Bioweapons can be used anonymously, which also complicates efforts to deter their use. And establishing an arms control regime to control bioweapons seems very difficult—far harder than a nuclear arms control regime—as bioweapons programs have no clear signature that distinguishes them from legitimate biomedical research programs.

In the future, the advance of bioscience will magnify this danger, as genetic engineering raises the danger that terrorists can design and make their own superlethal pathogens.⁴²

Some, including myself, were lulled about the bioterror danger before 9/11 partly because the United States and most other major powers were uninterested in developing bioweapons. (The United States abandoned its offensive bioweapons program in 1969.) We inferred from this that bioweapons were not very useful and so would not be developed or used. But while bioweapons may not be useful to states, they are quite useful to terrorists who seek vast destruction instead of finite military objectives. The appearance of skilled terrorist groups that aspire to mass murder, like al Qaeda, means that a new class of potential bioweapons users has appeared. These weapons now have customers.

Many were also lulled by the world's success in surviving the nuclear revolution. They assumed that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons were all of a piece—all were “weapons of mass destruction”—and that measures that worked with one (arms control, deterrence) would work with all three. But as noted above, bioweapons are far harder to control by agreement than nuclear weapons, and their use is far harder to deter.⁴³

What implications would follow from the democratization of the power to destroy? Human history shows that the arrangement of power shapes politics among states and groups. When the arrangement of power is benign, there is peace. When it is malignant, violence prevails. Toxic power arrangements bring out the beast in us. They create fears and temptations that erase the veneer of civilization. For example, before 1914, the governments of Europe believed that conquest was easy. This belief led them to think their countries were insecure and that aggressive policies could remedy this insecurity. Hence, they pursued highly aggressive policies toward one another. World War I soon exploded. That war stemmed in large part from perceptions of the arrangement of power.⁴⁴

The democratization of the power to destroy will create a far more dangerous arrangement of power than the arrangements that led to the two world wars. It will pose conundrums to which students of security have no obvious remedies. The danger of WMD terror will greatly expand.

We must recognize, therefore, that we are in an enduring struggle against terror and adapt accordingly. Business as usual will not suffice. One-dimensional

policies will not suffice. A wholesale transformation of U.S. national security policy is required.

Notes

1. In 1998, quoted in Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002), 59.

2. In 2002, Abu Ghaith announced on an al Qaeda-affiliated Web site, www.alneda.com, "We have a right to kill 4 million Americans—2 million of them children—and to . . . wound and cripple hundreds of thousands." Quoted in Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 2004), 12.

3. For accounts of FDR's propaganda efforts in World War II, see Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994); Christof Mauch, "Media War and Black Propaganda," in *The Shadow War against Hitler* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); and Richard Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media 1933-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985).

4. Recent works on the efforts to win the war of ideas during the cold war both in the "free world" and behind the Iron Curtain include Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); and Gary D. Rawnsley, ed., *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999).

5. On the scope and causes of deterioration in Afghanistan, see Seth Jones, "Averting Failure in Afghanistan," *Survival* 48, no. 1 (spring 2006): 111-28.

6. A criticism of the diversion from the war on al Qaeda and from other important priorities caused by the Iraq war is James Fallows, "Bush's Lost Year," *Atlantic Monthly*, October 2004.

7. An account of Operation Anaconda is Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005).

8. See *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, authorized ed. (New York: Norton, 2004), 66, reporting that the 9/11 Commission found "no evidence" of a "collaborative operational relationship" between Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime and al Qaeda. Debunking more recent false allegations of Saddam-al Qaeda ties is Peter Bergen, "Enemy of Our Enemy," *New York Times*, March 28, 2006.

9. The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) reported that al Qaeda's recruiting was accelerated by the U.S. invasion of Iraq, swelling al Qaeda's ranks to some eighteen thousand in the aftermath of the war. See IISS, *Strategic Survey: 2003/4* (London: IISS, 2004), 6.

10. A valuable survey on homeland security is Stephen Flynn, *America the Vulnerable: How Our Government Is Failing to Protect Us from Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004). Also valuable is Jonathan Chait, "The 9/10 President: Bush's Abysmal Failure on Homeland Security," *New Republic*, March 10, 2003, pp. 18-23.

11. The 9/11 Public Discourse Project, the nonprofit successor organization to the 9/11 Commission, reported in October 2005 that the FBI had failed to reform itself to address the terror threat. Philip Shenon, "9/11 Panel Criticizes Reform Effort at the F.B.I.," *New York Times*, October 21, 2005, p. A19. In March 2005, the WMD Commission likewise complained that FBI has made "insufficient progress" in areas crucial to recasting itself as a counterterror agency. Eric Lichtblau, "For F.B.I., Not Enough Progress in Combating Terrorism," *New York Times*, April 1, 2005, p. A11. For example, remarkably the FBI remains unable to develop software to link its case files (*ibid.*). It has also been unable to provide stable leadership to head its counterterror mission. In early 2006, the FBI counterterror division was on its sixth director since 2001. See Scott Shane, "Year into Revamped Spying, Troubles and Some Progress," *New York Times*, February 28, 2006, p. A12. Instead, the common practice at the FBI has been to punish

employees who point out shortcomings with the FBI's performance. One report noted that "a string of whistle-blowers at the [FBI] . . . said they had been punished and effectively silenced for voicing concerns about the handling of investigations and other matters since Sept. 11, 2001." See Eric Lichtblau, "Justice Department Investigators Find a Cover-Up in an F.B.I. Terror Case in Florida," *New York Times*, December 4, 2005, sec. 1, p. 37.

12. Shane, "Year into Revamped Spying." According to Shane, former and current U.S. officials warn that U.S. intelligence agencies "remain troubled by high-level turnover, overlapping responsibilities, and bureaucratic rivalry." Recent reforms have "bloomed the bureaucracy . . . without producing clearly defined roles."

13. Stephen E. Flynn, "Q&A: Homeland Security: Disturbing Lack of Attention Paid to America's Security Vulnerabilities," December 24, 2005, www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/slot2_122405.html?pagewanted=print, p. 2.

14. Thomas Friedman, "Saying No to Bush's Yes Men," *New York Times*, May 17, 2006, p. A23. See also Thomas Powers, "Spy vs. Spy," *New York Times*, May 10, 2006, p. A23; and Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti, "Top C.I.A. Pick Has Credentials and Skeptics," *New York Times*, May 6, 2006, p. A1.

15. Eric Lichtblau, "Turf Wars Hinder U.S. Attack on Terror Cash, Agency Says," *New York Times*, April 9, 2005, p. A8, reporting the conclusions of a 2005 report from the Government Accountability Office, a congressional investigative agency.

16. On this failure, see Warren B. Rudman, Richard A. Clarke, and Jamie F. Metz, *Emergency Responders: Drastically Underfunded, Dangerously Unprepared* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003).

17. "U.S. Security: Failures, Near-Failures, and an A-Minus," *New York Times*, February 26, 2006.

18. David Kocieniewski, "Despite U.S. Security Worries, Railyards Are Still Vulnerable," *New York Times*, March 27, 2006.

19. "U.S. Security: Failures, Near Failures."

20. The United States spent only \$1.312 billion on the Cooperative Threat Reduction Initiative (CTR) in fiscal year 2006. Matthew Bunn and Anthony Wier, *Securing the Bomb 2005: The New Global Imperatives* (Cambridge, MA: Project on Managing the Atom, 2005), 86.

21. *Ibid.*, vi.

22. For details on U.S. policy toward nuclear materials security, see Bunn and Wier, *Securing the Bomb 2005*; Graham T. Allison, Owen Cote Jr., Richard A. Falkenrath, and Steven E. Miller, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); and resources at the Nuclear Threat Initiative Web site (www.nti.org) and the Managing the Atom Web site (www.managingtheatom.org).

23. Joel Brinkley and William J. Broad, "U.S. Lags in Recovering Fuel Suitable for Nuclear Arms," *New York Times*, March 7, 2004.

24. In this volume, see Siegfried S. Hecker, "Toward a Comprehensive Safeguards System: Keeping Fissile Material Out of Terrorists Hands," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 607 (2006): 121-32, for more information on this issue.

25. Sudan's support for the Lord's Republican Army (LRA) ended in 2004. Sudan then agreed to allow Ugandan military forces to attack LRA camps in southern Sudan. See Payam Akhavan, "The Lord's Resistance Army Case: Uganda's Submission of the First State Referral to the International Criminal Court," *American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 2 (April 2005): 403-21.

26. A 1994 study of genocide estimated that 1.4 million Armenians were murdered between 1914 and 1918 by the Ottoman Turkish government. See Rudolph J. Rummel, "Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder," *Journal of Peace Research* 31, no. 1 (February 1994): 1-10. A good introduction to this genocide is Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 157-66.

27. A good account of the intervention in Bosnia is Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999). On Somalia, see Taylor Seybolt, "Knights in Shining Armor? When Humanitarian Military Intervention Works and When It Does Not" (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, 1999): 15-17, 115-211. Seybolt estimated that more than forty-four thousand Somali lives were saved by U.S. action at the cost of some one thousand to fifteen hundred Somalis killed by Western forces (*ibid.*, 15-17).

28. On the State Department initiatives, see United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges* (Washington, DC: GAO-06-535, May 2006): 3-4, 11-14. Also, in 2006, 36 percent of State Department public diplomacy positions in the Arab world designated to be filled by officers with Arabic language skills were still filled by officers without these language skills (*ibid.*, 37).

29. Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Must Counteract Image in Muslim World, Panel Says," *New York Times*, October 1, 2003. This figure includes \$600 million spent by the State Department on its worldwide public diplomacy activities and \$540 million spent by the Broadcasting Board of Governors on broadcasts.

30. U.S. Congressional Research Service, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations*, RL32607 (May 1, 2006), by Susan B. Epstein, p. 5, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization.66505.pdf> (accessed May 30, 2006).

31. Weisman, "U.S. Must Counteract Image in Muslim World."

32. In *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1934/2001), 49:6. Also relevant is God's prohibition of undue suspicion of others: "Believers, avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a crime." *The Koran*, trans. N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin, 1999), 49:12.

33. I summarize poll data on the harmful impact of the Israel-Palestinian conflict on Arab opinion toward the United States in Stephen Van Evera, "Vital Interest: Winning the War on Terror Requires a Mideast Peace Settlement," *American Conservative* 4, no. 5 (March 14, 2005): 7-10 at 7-8. A footnoted version is online at http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_5_05_VanEvera.pdf.

34. Neither side will accept terms outside these parameters. Israel will never agree to a large return of refugees to Israel; Palestinian insistence on a large return would torpedo peace. And the Palestinians will accept no deal that they cannot credibly claim involves full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Jordan's King Hussein both got full Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian and Jordanian territory in exchange for full peace in their earlier peace deals with Israel, and today's Palestinian leaders need to claim that they won the same terms to quiet their own radicals, who will otherwise accuse them of surrendering the national cause by accepting second-best treatment—"Not even what Sadat got! Not even what Hussein got!" Accordingly, Israel will torpedo peace if it offers less than full withdrawal—as it did at the failed talks at Camp David II in the summer of 2000, where it unwisely insisted on retaining 8 percent of the West Bank and parts of Palestinian East Jerusalem. On Camp David II, see Jeremy Pressman, "Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?" *International Security* 28, no. 2 (fall 2003): 5-43 at 16, 18.

35. Toward these goals, the administration needs a broad strategy for strengthening moderate forces among Palestinians. In practical terms, this means strengthening Palestinian President Abu Mazen and other moderate leaders and groups and either moderating or weakening the radical Hamas. Such a strategy is now missing.

36. Some observers think that without U.S. pressure Israel may be willing to pull back to the security barrier that Israel is building to prevent Palestinian terrorists from entering Israel. Some 92 percent of the West Bank is outside the security barrier, so such a move would leave 92 percent of the West Bank for the Palestinians. However, this would still involve annexing to Israel 8 percent of the West Bank and all of Palestinian East Jerusalem, including the Muslim holy places. Some 195,000 Palestinian East Jerusalemites and 10,000 Palestinian West Bankers would be unwillingly annexed as well. Steven Erlanger, "Israel, on Its Own, Reshaping West Bank Borders," *New York Times*, April 19, 2005, p. A1. No Palestinian leader would accept such terms.

37. My argument is from Stephanie Kaplan, who argues in a forthcoming MIT political science Ph.D. dissertation that war is a tonic for terrorist propaganda making, recruiting, network building, and training and, thus, serves as a general breeding ground for terrorists. She concludes that war prevention and war termination should be a centerpiece of U.S. counterterror policy.

38. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1, 2006). An earlier sketch framing eight key inputs to terrorist organizations was offered in U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, March 1, 2005), 8.

39. *National Military Strategic Plan*, 4-5, 14-19.

40. Fred Kaplan, "Rumsfeld Surrenders: The QDR Dashes His Dreams of Military Transformation," *Slate*, February 3, 2006, www.slate.com/toolbar.aspx?action=print&id=2135343.

41. A survey of the new millenarian wave is Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War against America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 2003), 91-94, 419-46.

42. An important discussion of this and related dangers is Martin Rees, *Our Final Hour: A Scientist's Warning: How Terror, Error, and Environmental Disaster Threaten Humankind's Future in this Century—On Earth and Beyond* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

43. Specifically, bioweapons are more likely to be obtained by nondeterrable terrorists; they can more easily be used anonymously; and arms control regimes to halt their spread are harder to establish. Discussing these aspects of biological weapons is Gregory D. Koblentz, "Pathogens as Weapons: The International Security Implications of Biological Warfare," *International Security* 28, no. 3 (winter 2003/2004): 84-122.

44. Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (summer 1984): 58-107.