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AMERICA'S INFORMATION WAR ON TERRORISM: WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines America's struggle to win hearts and minds in the Muslim World. The US may win the military fight on terrorism but thus far is losing the public opinion fight in Muslim countries. Although the US may be able to eradicate many of today's terrorists, many in fact welcome the chance to die for their cause, and there are thousands ready to fill the ranks of the fallen. The US must find a way to build bridges to Muslims while simultaneously discrediting and then isolating bin Laden (or his successor) and other Islamic terrorist organizations from the Muslim masses. America's most daunting and important fight is the information war in the Muslim World. If we fail in the struggle to win the hearts and minds there, we'll be locked into an interminable struggle of strike and counterstrike while American civilian casualties mount and US domestic life is changed forever. This paper describes a proposed overarching strategic information campaign to restore favorable perceptions of the US in the Muslim World.

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As to America, I say to it and its people a few words: I swear to God that
America will not live in peace before peace reigns in Palestine, and
before all the army of the infidels depart the land of Mohammed, peace
be upon him.
—Osama bin Laden: videotaped statement on 7 OCT 2001

Osama bin Laden has been called the conscience of Islam. What he
says and what he does represents what most Muslims or Arabs want to
say and can't. What he says we like.
—Statement by a Saudi lawyer

Information War

This paper examines America's struggle to win hearts and minds in the Muslim
World. The US may win the military fight on terrorism but thus far is losing the public
opinion fight in Muslim countries. Although the US may be able to eradicate many of
today's terrorists, many in fact welcome the chance to die for their cause, and there are
thousands ready to fill the ranks of the fallen. The US must find a way to build bridges to
Muslims while simultaneously discrediting and then isolating bin Laden (or his
successor) and other Islamic terrorist organizations from the Muslim masses. America's
most daunting and important fight is the information war in the Muslim world. If we fail to
win the hearts and minds there, we will be locked into an interminable struggle of strike
and counterstrike while American civilian casualties mount and US domestic life is
changed forever. Bin Laden's center of gravity is his ability to sustain active, sympathetic
Muslim support that manifests itself through funding, concealment, and a ready pool of
eager martyrs. His center of gravity can only be neutralized through a sustained and
focused information campaign. Consequently, the following is a proposed overarching
strategic information campaign to restore favorable perceptions of the US in the Muslim
World.

The US war on terrorism includes many components such as domestic law
enforcement and intelligence gathering, international intelligence sharing, terrorist
funding interdiction, Homeland Defense, and direct military action. While all of these
measures are necessary, they are also limited to countering only terrorism itself and fail
to address the ideology, motives, and conditions that conspired to create a person such
as Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. What is missing in the current US counter-terrorism

strategy is a detailed analysis of the politics and ideology of bin Laden, his sympathizers, patrons and fellow ideologues.

If Carl Von Clausewitz were alive today he would certainly say, *terrorism* "is the continuation of politics by other means."[1] The US Department of Defense defines terrorism as, "the unlawful use of – or threatened use of – force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives."[2] Terrorism is usually a form of political intercourse with supporting motives, goals, and objectives driven by an overarching ideology. In the case of al Qaeda, their brand of terrorism is not only politically but intrinsically intertwined with Islam. Merely labeling bin Laden and his apostles as "evil" and "insane" is unhelpful in developing an effective counter-terrorism strategy, since it fails to address the fundamental ideological foundations of our adversaries

The most crucial fight in America's war on terror is the war of ideas. An ideological war can only be waged through a well crafted information campaign based upon a clear understanding of the adversarial ideology and its methods for sustaining the anti-Americanism hostility that fuels it. America is indeed in an ideological war with Islamism. It must engage in a campaign to counter fervent anti-Americanism, which serves as the source for manpower and homicidal fanaticism which endangers not only US vital interests, but potentially the future survival of the United States as we know it today. Before beginning to outline an American informational counterstrategy it is necessary to first understand the Islamists' ideology and methods it employs to empower its cause.

Islamic Fundamentalism, Islamism and Islamists

Oliver Roy defines Islamism as the following:

"Islamism is the brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism
which claims to recreate a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing
the sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political
action. Islamists see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political
ideology which should be integrated into all aspects of society
(politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy, etc.)... To
Islamists, the Islamic State should unite the ummah as much as
possible, not being restricted to a specific nation. Such a state

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attempts to recreate the golden age of the first decades of Islam and supersede tribal, ethnic and national divides, whose resilience is attributed to the believers' abandonment of the true tenets of Islam or to colonial policy."[3]

In simplistic terms, Islam must be empowered so Muslims and Islam itself can rise to its rightful, foreordained destiny of world domination. Muslims were once powerful and they can restore that power and assume their rightful leadership in the world if they return to the original, devout Islam. Achieving this resurrection entails a comprehensive transformation since Islam is not simply a "religion", at least as understood by Westerners. It is a comprehensive system of belief, based upon God's immutable law (sharia), that deals with every aspect of life, including the organization of the state and the world.[4] Realization of this religious-ideological vision demands disavowal of secular institutions and establishment of a purely Islamic state under the sovereignty of a revived Caliph, and governed through complete implementation of the sharia. There can be no peaceful coexistence between secular and Islamic law; one is antithetical of the other. For Islamists, any compromise on this issue is anathema and outright apostasy. Expanding and empowering Islam is a sacred duty of all Muslims. This end may in fact be pursued by any means that can be rationalized within Islamic codes and has at various times been pursued using persuasion, guile, or force.[5] For many Islamists, the ends justify the means.[6]

Islamists seek to unite the ummah (Muslim peoples) into a pan-Islamic state that dispenses with nation-states. Nations and national boundaries have been discredited as imperialist imports imposed on Muslims to maintain Western domination. Islamists seeks to establish their own divine order (hakimiyyat Allah), in order to separate the peoples of Islamic civilization from the rest of humanity while creating universal legitimacy for their competing worldview.[7] Following the rise of a pan-Islamic state, the other nations of the world will incrementally fall under the control of a utopian Islamic world order.

The danger posed by militant Islamist terrorism, as demonstrated on 11 September 2001, is indeed significant, but not all Islamists are militants. Perhaps an equal if not greater danger to US regional policy interests, in particular for stability in the Middle East, comes from the non-militant Islamist ideologues who are actively seeking to politically undermine and replace the secularist political order and replace it with a new

Islamist order. Some of these ideologues operate as the complementary, public face for militant terrorist organizations, not unlike the relationship between Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army. Other non-militant Islamist organizations are purely political and seek to inject their ideological agenda into standing political frameworks through legal and political activism. In short, they seek to change what they see as an inadequate system as they work within that system itself. Islamists often seek to win public support while undermining government legitimacy. The best example of this Islamist activity is in Egypt, where they have created alternative sub-national institutions within the parent country by establishing and sponsoring alternate social, medical and educational services competing with those inadequately provided by the Egyptian authorities.[8] Although the motives may include genuine altruism, these activities do in fact represent a deep social penetration that creates extensive political power bases for the Islamist cause.[9]

The Islamists clearly lack the resources to realize their stated goals, but to dismiss them as insignificant extremists would be a grave mistake as demonstrated by the 11 September 2001 (popularly referred to as "9/11") terrorist attacks. The fact that Islamists lack the capability to impose their "order" on the world will not deter them from the struggle to do so, and in this struggle, they can and will create *disorder*, on a vast scale.[10] Examples of the spreading Islamist-inspired disorder can be seen in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Disorder and virulent anti-Americanism are not ends of themselves, but merely methods of mobilizing support and coalescing global Muslim unity. Islamists aim to empower Islam while simultaneously severing US influence and diminishing US power. As in the Cold War, this is a return to the classical zero-sum game.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks renewed awareness of the terrorist threat and reenergized the need for reassessment of the Islamist ideology and by extension, Osama bin Laden's role in propagating this ideology. To fully understand the ability of Islamists to orchestrate sympathetic reactions throughout the Muslim world, it is both necessary and instructive to understand what Osama bin Laden, their unofficial "poster-boy" and spokesman, has to say and why he is important to the Islamists' cause.

Osama bin Laden: Islamism's First Global Communicator

Our battle with the Americans is larger than our battle with the Russians.
We fought against the Soviet Union until, not to say we defeated them,
but Allah defeated them. They became non-existent. There is a lesson

to learn from this—for he who wants to learn. There was nothing left to call Soviet Union. I predict a black day for America—and the end of the United States as the United States, God willing.

—Osama bin Laden in a 1998 ABC interview

In the late 1980s Osama bin Laden established al Qaeda (The Base) as a multinational Islamist terrorist organization designed to fund, supply, and coordinate a transnational mujahideen network. It has global reach and is said to operate in up to fifty countries.[11] The stated goal is to "establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems 'non-Islamic,' and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries."[12] Bin Laden has issued numerous statements, videos, and three anti-U.S. *fatwas* (religious edicts) encouraging Muslims to take up arms against Americans and American allies. On 23 February 1998 bin Laden issued a fatwa calling for attacks on all Americans, including civilians, and announced the creation of the 'International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders,' which represented a coalition of extremist groups from Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh.[13] The following quotations are taken from a translation from that edict.

"First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples."

"Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded 1 million... despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation."

"Third, although the Americans' objectives of these wars are religious and economic, they are also to serve the Jewish state and distract from its occupation of the Holy Land and its killing of Muslims therein."

"We--with God's help--call on every Muslim who believes in God and
wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans
and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call
on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on
Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to
displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson."

"The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military --
is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in
which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and
the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to
move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any
Muslim." [14]

A quick reading of these quotes reveals a clear, coherent message that
not only demonstrates bin Laden fully understands the Islamists' dogma but
understands which messages best resonate throughout the Muslim world. In
previous and subsequent statements and videos bin Laden has been quite
consistent in sticking to these major themes. In subsequent statements he has
added a number of world leaders to his long list of enemies of Islam. In his 3
November 2001 video statement he calls UN Secretary General Kofi Annan a
"criminal" and declares all Muslim leaders who maintain membership with the
UN as "infidels" and calls for their ouster.[15] In summary, his overall objectives
are to

- expel the US from the Arabian peninsula, the Persian Gulf and all other Islamic
  lands;
- end the suffering and repression of Muslims throughout the world;
- topple every ruling regime in the Islamic world and install a government based
  upon the sharia;
- unite the lands of Islam under the Caliph and incorporate the lands of the
  unbelievers into the fold of Islam. [16]

Since 9/11 bin Laden has increasingly emphasized the oppression of the
Palestinians and the plight of the Iraqis — largely attributed to the US-led sanctions

regime against the Saddam Hussein government. Although the unintended consequences of US policies have further victimized the Palestinians and Iraqis, bin Laden has not taken up their respective causes out of humanitarian altruism, but rather, he seeks to conveniently exploit their collective misery as a mechanism to broaden his base of sympathetic supporters. In fact, a peaceful settlement in Palestine would be contrary to bin Laden's interests, since he counts on this issue to perpetuate Middle Eastern turmoil which he exploits to rally sympathetic and economic support. As regards Iraq, few Muslims would be sorry to see Saddam Hussein's downfall, but the US-sustained sanctions regime, aimed at Saddam, is widely interpreted as an intended policy of malicious cruelty aimed at the Iraqi people. Barring the fall of Saddam's government or extensive reform of the international sanctions regime, the suffering of the Iraqi people will continue to be an easily exploitable point of vulnerability for US policies in Muslim countries.

While it is important to understand what bin Laden has said, it is also instructive to note what he has not mentioned. On one hand bin Laden has mercilessly criticized practically every major leader in the Muslim world, but not a single reference has been made to Saddam Hussein. Saddam is a marginal Muslim, the most despotic ruler in the Middle East, and is infamous for his brutal tactics in crushing Islamist movements within Iraq. Yet, bin Laden has never made a single mention of Saddam. Perhaps bin Laden's *jihad* really does not have much to do with protecting all Muslims or improving their lives. By the same token, he has been absolutely silent on the insidious effects made by the corrupting influence of western pop culture and the other bi-products of globalization (satellite TV, videos, MTV, alcohol, sexual promiscuity, etc...) within Muslim countries.[17] This is a rather odd omission for a holy warrior, fighting a holy war for the sanctity of Islam. Some obvious conclusions are that bin Laden's *jihad* is not about improving the plight of Muslims but rather it is simply a struggle for power that is both regional and global in its scope.

Peter Bergin in his book, Holy War Inc., agrees with this conclusion when he states, "bin Laden is at war with the United States, but his is a *political* war, justified by his own understanding of Islam, directed at the symbols and institutions of American *political* power."[18] Over the past three years, Bin Laden has directed a gradually escalating series of attacks on overt symbols of American power, beginning with two embassies, then a US warship, and culminating with the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.[19] In summary, he has successfully attacked the

diplomatic, military, and economic symbols of US power. He clearly is attempting to empower Islam by striking the symbols of American power and therefore diminishing the perception of American power. His objectives are to set in motion events that will ultimately transform the existing Western-dominated world order into a new world order led and dominated by Islam.

Al Qaeda: The First Information Age Terrorist Network

> The US has created a myth out of him. Bin Laden now stands for challenge and represents a compensation for hurt dignity. If he is killed now, he will be an idol. I agree with the view that he won 50 percent of the ongoing media war.
> —Fahmy Howeidy, prominent columnist of Al-Ahram, 18 November 2001

It would be a mistake to dismiss al Qaeda as crazy fanatics struggling to reverse the modernizing effects of globalization while seeking to propel the Muslim world back to the seventh century world of Mohammed. Bin Laden and al Qaeda are not anti-modern but are thoroughly comfortable with the modern world. They are quick to exploit the advantages of information technologies and rapid international transit, and employ sophisticated methods of hiding and diversifying financial resources. The al Qaeda represents a new type of Islamist terrorism that represents a paradoxical fusion between utopian Islamic fundamentalism and globalization, sometimes labeled as "Neo-Fundamentalists."[20] In the latter part of the twentieth century, fundamentalists followed a domestic agenda fighting for change within national boundaries. Conversely, the Neo-Fundamentalists are seeking a global Islamist agenda that disregards national boundaries utterly. Dr. Oliver Roy of the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in Paris describes al Qaeda as prototypical Neo-Fundamentalists since they are, "using two international languages (English and Arabic), traveling easily by air, studying, training and working in many different countries, communicating through the internet and cellular phones, they think of themselves as "Muslims" and not as citizens of a specific country." [21]

Al Qaeda's exploitation of the information medium, made possible through rapidly expanding globalization, is truly revolutionary for terrorist organizations. They have demonstrated exceptional ability in employing numerous information technologies. Al Qaeda has used a variety of e-mail, cellular, radio, and other modes of communication, including encrypted messaging.[22] Internet technology has likewise been effectively employed to propagate their Islamist propaganda, to include their notorious recruiting

videos. The effectiveness of their internet operations is best exemplified by the remarkable continuity of message themes across international Muslim communities as seen in the US, South America, Africa, Middle East and Asia. Although al Qaeda's skillful use of information technologies optimizes operational security and coordination, it is the sophisticated exploitation of global media that truly creates the greatest challenges for the US and its coalition partners.

Bin Laden clearly understands the importance of exploiting global media networks in order to foster desired public relations and propagate his ideological messages. Indeed, bin Laden's al Qaeda posses a well-tuned public relations operation that includes a committee just below the top level of leadership solely devoted to developing and disseminating Islamist propaganda.[23] Since 9/11, international viewers have observed several bin Laden video productions. In each case the videos were carefully staged and packaged with messages and images designed to exploit maximum use of symbolism to evoke the desired emotional responses from his target audiences. Bernard Lewis cautions "that the West should not underestimate the man who fashions himself as a second Saladin engaged in a struggle against a modern crusade."[24] Bin Laden cloaks his messages in a theocratic syntax, with frequent Koranic references, and speaks as though he was an Islamic scholar or holy man entitled to instruct the Muslim world on all matters religious. Since 1998 he has assumed the title of *sheikh* to legitimize his authority to issue Islamic edicts known as *fatwas*.[25] In the Arab-language media, especially independent media like the London-based *Al Hayat*, or Al Jazeera broadcasting, Al Qaeda has conducted a major campaign to establish bin Laden as the champion of the long-repressed Muslim *umma*.[26] Al Qaeda has successfully exploited the grievances that motivates the terrorists and created for bin Laden a persona of towering, mythical stature.[27] The sophistication of al Qaeda's communications capabilities and propaganda apparatus far exceeds the challenges posed by any other preceding terrorist organization heretofore encountered by the US.[28]

Target Audiences, Responses, Grand Strategy and Endgame

> Bin Laden is gada'a (a man who stands up for himself and others).
> America must understand it can't oppress entire nations, kill tens of
> thousands of innocent people and not pay for it. I thought he was an evil
> terrorist, a stupid fanatic, but he's a brave man, although I don't know who
> or what he represents.
> —Response to bin Laden propaganda video by Soha Abdallah of Cairo

Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have tailored their messages to specific target audiences with specific expected responses from each one. An argument can be made that the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were in fact messages themselves to the US to provoke a pre-calculated response to support a desired strategy. Bin Laden might have calculated that a profane, horrifying attack on the scale of 9/11 would ensure a massive, indiscriminant military retaliation resulting in huge civilian casualties — preferably Muslims. The images of those Muslim casualties would in turn be exploited to create outrage leading to revolts and eventual toppling of key governments throughout the Muslim world. The results of such uprisings would isolate the US from heretofore friendly Muslim governments and lead to defeat of the US through accumulative exhaustion as a result of strategic overreach.[29] Although most see 9/11 as a provocation intended for the US, by this interpretation its primary target audiences are Islamists and the "Arab street" — sympathizers or potential converts. The following are the intended messages resulting from 9/11:

- Empower the image of bin Laden and al Qaeda. Demonstrate they have the power to inflict a heavy wound on America the superpower.
- Portray this as war between Islam and the West as demonstrated by US military actions in multiple Islamic countries.[30] Form a global jihad and compel the Muslim masses to arise in defense of Islam.
- Gain legitimacy for the Islamist's cause and al Qaeda's methods. Convince Muslims that this is a cosmic battle between good and evil. Mobilize action and legitimate the barbaric attack on civilians as a holy imperative that supercedes Islamic prohibitions for attacking noncombatants. Legitimize the attacks by influencing Muslim perceptions that al Qaeda is fighting in defense of Islam, which is under attack by the West in general and the US in particular.
- Demonstrate that al Qaeda can win the fight against a superpower by exhausting American military power in multiple theaters then, eventually, dealing the US a decisive defeat in the Islamic world.

To further expand on this argument, the primary targets were overwhelmingly Islamist militants, potential recruits, and sympathizers. The minimum expected response from the messages was to mobilize the will to act. Bin Laden believed that the rampant anti-Americanism on the Arab street was poised on the brink of eruption. He intended to

create the catalytic event or series of events to ignite that eruption. Subsequent to the 9/11 attacks, al Qaeda operatives were sited in many countries, where it is believed they have been forming liaisons with local Islamic leaders who, if supplied with sufficient funds, might be in a position to destabilize or even overthrow targeted regimes.[31]

Religious legitimacy and the blessing of God are vital enablers for rallying public support and action for bin Laden's global jihad. Religious sanction and demonization of the West are central in bin Laden's strategy to portray his jihad as a cosmic, spiritual war of survival between good (Islam) and evil (US-led infidel "Crusaders"). For this strategy to work, bin Laden has tried to portray himself and his followers as merely instruments in the hands of God. How else can the weak, fragmented Muslim world rise up to destroy a superpower and displace western civilization except by divine intervention? 9/11 was perhaps intended to be the catalytic event that would fuse Muslims into a unified Islamist uprising that would sweep through the Muslim world. Bin Laden seeks to provoke a "clash of civilizations", a global war that first unites all of Islam and then engenders a world war pitting the West against all Muslims; a war America could not win. Most importantly, the US would be forced from the Muslim world, which would leave Saudi Arabia and Egypt without US military protection and therefore vulnerable to Islamist takeover.

Bin Laden's prime targets in order of priority are Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Islamist takeover of one or more of these countries would have serious political, economic, and security repercussions. The following is a brief discussion of each country and both its symbolic value and geo-strategic importance.

Pakistan: As the holder of the "Islamic bomb", Islamist control of Pakistan could very likely be the most dangerous scenario of the three. Wedged between India, China and Afghanistan, Pakistan resides at the epicenter of a critical geo-strategic crossroad where three contrasting civilizations converge into one of the most dangerously volatile regions on earth. Internationally, Islamist control of Pakistan would minimally serve as a base of regional instability and in a worst case could spark a nuclear confrontation or conventional war with China, India or Russia. From a US security perspective, the thought of what bin Laden-inspired terrorists could do with access to multiple nuclear weapons is a nightmare almost too horrible to contemplate. A nuclear-enabled terrorist with global reach, supported by fanatical followers unfettered by any morality, could relegate 9/11 to a small footnote in the history of catastrophic terrorism. The US could not allow Pakistan, and hence its nuclear weapons, to fall into pro-bin Laden hands; this

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scenario would trigger a large-scale military intervention.[32] This intervention would not only divert critical US military forces from other counter-terrorism operations but may potentially create very dangerous unintended consequences involving the US, Russia, China, and India.

Saudi Arabia: As the Center of the Islamic world, keeper of Islam's two holiest sites, and bin Laden's birthplace, Saudi Arabia could just as likely be bin Laden's top priority as well. Control of Saudi Arabia from a symbolic point of view would be invaluable in uniting the *umma* and shaping Islamic dogma to support the Islamists' world-view. Most important of all is that Saudi Arabia sits on "25 percent of the world's known oil reserve, in a region containing 60 percent of those reserves", and wields tremendous influence in regulating oil supply and market prices.[33] Islamist control of Saudi Arabia would have tremendous global economic repercussions and potentially serve as a source of heightened regional security tensions throughout the Middle East.

Egypt: As the linchpin of US security interests in the Middle East, Egypt has a special geo-strategic significance. "Egypt is the center of gravity of the Arab world in terms of population and economy."[34] As the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars demonstrated, an Egypt un-reconciled to the existence of Israel is a recipe for renewed cross-border instability and conflict. Islamist control of Egypt would likely lead to renewed Arab-Israeli wars of attrition and survival. According to a recent assessment by STRATFOR.COM, a web-based intelligence and strategic analysis service, "should an Islamic government emerge in Egypt, Israel would be forced to pre-empt militarily, retaking the Sinai."[35] STRATFOR.COM's analysis also surmises that "the United States would be caught in the same position it was in with the former Shah of Iran, supporting a toppling government it could neither abandon nor save."[36] Egypt itself would be invaluable to the Islamist cause through its tremendous influence as the epicenter of Arab culture. An Islamist controlled Egypt would completely destabilize the entire region.

US and allied leaders serve as secondary target audiences. When addressing or discussing the US and the West, bin Laden employs a tone that is not simply hateful but is confidently disdainful as well. The US and the West are weak. The US withdrawal from Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia is his litmus test, proving that America is only a "paper tiger" that has no stomach for casualties or close combat. At least in the cases of Lebanon and Somalia, bin Laden failed to consider that the US simply left because those countries were not deemed important enough to justify US bloodshed.

If he intended to lure the US to Afghanistan, bin Laden was probably counting on exploiting civilian casualties, subsequent to US long-range strikes, to enrage Afghans against the foreign invaders, as typically happened in all earlier invasions in Afghanistan. The desired result would be to mobilize Afghanistan as a nation in arms against the invaders and cause the war to become a long, drawn-out guerrilla war reminiscent of Vietnam, or more recently, of the failed Soviet experience. This strategy failed because neither he nor Mullah Omar realized how badly he and his Taliban regime were despised by the people of Afghanistan. Te misread the Afghans badly, as well as the Muslim mainstream.

Bin Laden believed that the Soviet defeat held two important lessons. First, the unforgiving terrain of Afghanistan combined with stalwart Mujahideen warfare could deflect and ultimately defeat even a superpower. Secondly, the collapse of the Soviet Union was directly related to their military defeat in Afghanistan. Therefore, he might have believed that by enticing the US into Afghanistan, "the graveyard of empires", he could precipitate the end of the US, and ultimately Western dominance in world affairs. What he never considered was the speed, sophistication, power, and precision of US military operations which have combined to derail his strategy and scatter his forces — at least for now.

Paradoxically, bin Laden denied credit for 9/11 in subsequent taped statements. His denials can theoretically be explained as an effective means of further mobilizing popular Muslim support through a series of supporting message themes as seen below.

- 9/11 was a "Crusader-Zionist" conspiracy, conducted by the Mossad, designed to implicate Arabs and Muslims, which was simply a ruse to justify increasing Western attacks on Muslims. Many Muslims are abhorred by the brutality of 9/11 and do not want to believe that Muslims had anything to do with it. Bin Laden and Islamists have readily exploited this popular conspiracy theory. On one hand it provides group-exoneration for Muslims desperately in denial, but on the other hand, it supports Islamists' claims that Islam is under attack by the West.
- Islam is under attack by the West. This is proven by the US' unprovoked attacks on bin Laden and the defenseless Afghan people, and is amplified by the plight and struggles of Muslims all over the world. Whether in Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, or Chechnya, each and all of these conflicts

demonstrate the West's global plan to destroy Islam. Consequently, it is the duty of every able Muslim to join in the defense of Islam.

- Bin Laden was made the scapegoat for 9/11 because he is the champion of Islam and is therefore a threat to the West. This theme supports the other themes and has the added benefit of both lionizing bin Laden and building a groundswell of support for the "defender of Islam."

Although it would appear that bin Laden's denials contradict his strategy to lure the US to Afghanistan, this is not so. The message from the attacks of 9/11 was largely focused on the US. Conversely, bin Laden's denials were aimed at the Muslim masses. These messages were never intended to be mutually supporting, rather they were always intended to be mutually exclusive, not only in themes but in target audiences as well. The advantage of a strategy of denial is that there are few downsides. Islamists see nothing wrong with deceiving infidels who are proven liars and murders. After all, this is a cosmic war against evil, and in such a war there are absolutely no moral prohibitions that might impede the ultimate objective — the destruction of the West and the rise of a utopian Islamic world order. Bin Laden's supporters, who know that he was responsible, understand and support his reasons for denial. Conversely, those not fully in the Islamist camp might be seduced to join as "defenders of Islam," whereas they would not normally be inclined towards Islamism.

A question often heard is, "what is the popularity of bin Laden's messages?" Unfortunately for Americans there are indications that at least some of bin Laden's messages do in fact resonate well throughout the Muslim world. Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, a physics professor in Islamabad, said that regarding the 11 September attacks "it took two hours of sustained, impassioned, argumentation for me to convince my students that the brutal killing of ordinary people who had nothing to do with policies of the United States was an atrocity. I suppose that millions of Muslim students the world over felt as mine did, but heard no counter-arguments."[37] In an email I exchanged with a Western instructor in Saudi Arabia, he stated that "judging from the delight of students on hearing of the tragedy of September 11 and the huge show of support when my students were asked if they would join Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, I would say that sympathy for bin Laden is virtually unanimous in the Arab world, judging by the Pakistani students who go to an American-curriculum school here who all carry photos of their hero bin Laden."[38] In a survey on the Al-Jazeera network's internet site, 83% of the respondents

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"think that bin Laden is a Jihad fighter, not a terrorist, and that his incitement against Western and American interests constitutes a Jihad..."[39]

Although there appears to be widespread support for bin Laden there also appears to be evidence that his support is ephemeral. Martin Indyk, former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, tracked the number of demonstrations in the Arab world since the US operations in Afghanistan began.[40] His findings demonstrate the fickle, transitory nature of Muslim support for bin Laden. These findings were published on 26 November 2001 when it was apparent that US-led military operations had rapidly succeeded in breaking al Qaeda and Taliban resistance and sent their fighters fleeing into hiding.

> "In this entire swath of 21 countries, from Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa to Yemen and Dubai in the Persian Gulf, here's how many anti-American demonstrations have taken place. Week one: 9; week two: 3; week three: 1; week four: 2; week five (and this was the week that Mullah Mohammed Omar called for massed protests, American bombs hit a hospital and Israeli tanks rolled into the West Bank): 0 (yes zero); last week (19 NOV 01): 1. After the first few days, these protests were tiny, often being made up of a thousand people. And this despite the daily pictures of Afghan children, Osama bin Laden speeches and commentary from fiery radicals that was broadcast by Al-Jazeera, the Pan-Arab "news" network."[41]

This is not to imply that there is not an anti-American problem in the Muslim world, because there is. However, it does indicate that, at least for now, that hatred and sympathy has not manifested itself into broad-based support for terrorism, Islamism or bin Laden's Islamic utopia. Bin Laden demonstrated a limited, flawed worldview both of the Muslim world and the West. He assumed that sympathy for some of his messages, and the wide-spread dissatisfaction with governments in most Muslim countries combined with rampant anti-Americanism would mobilize the Muslims into a global jihad. What he did not understand was that the majority of Muslims, if forced to choose between bin Laden and the West, would reject both.[42]

Although few Muslim people really buy into bin Laden's ideology, he's able to garner moral support and sympathizers because he symbolically "empowers" the

powerless. He gives a voice to despair and is seen to stand up to the superpower. By intertwining Islamic symbolism and manipulating current issues, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, bin Laden effectively rallies sympathy. US and Western leaders are only recently coming to the realization that although some of bin Laden's messages do resonate in the Muslim world, very few Muslims want to live in his "Talibanized" utopia. This was best summed up by Mr. Edward P. Djerejian of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University when he said, "although there is Arab criticism of America's policies, this does not mean public opinion supports bin Laden taking over their countries."[43]

Root Causes

> Americans think! Why does the whole world hate you?
> —Sign at a Pakistani anti-US demonstration after 11 September 2001

The barbaric terrorist acts of 9/11 cannot be justified or explained as a result of accumulated humiliations, perceived grievances, failing domestic governments or American regional hegemony. This analysis does not search for justifications for 9/11 but rather the root causes of wide-spread Muslim anti-Americanism, which serves as a source of financial aid and a huge potential source of willing recruits for bin Laden's al Qaeda. If the US hopes to diminish global terrorism over time, we must try to understand and mitigate the conditions that have allowed terrorists like bin Laden to recruit followers to become human missiles and have spawned deep-seated hatred of the United States in disparate regions of the world.[44]

Today's Muslim world, countries spanning from North Africa through South Asia, has been characterized as an "Arc of Crisis."[45] According to Meyrav Wurmser, the director of Middle East Studies at the Hudson Institute, conditions within the so-called Arc of Crisis is characterized by failing or failed autocracies, repression, weak deteriorating economies, double-digit unemployment, and accelerating birth rates, with growing popular discontent that places blame for this sad state of affairs at the doorstep of the US.[46] The policies most often cited for anti-Americanism are the perceived lack of US impartiality in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, US intransigence for lifting UN mandated sanctions resulting in continued suffering of Iraqis, and the stationing of infidel US troops on the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia. These are significant issues in the Middle East that certainly impact on regional stability but are not the causes of Muslim rage.

The majority of governments in the Arc of Crisis have been very unpopular with their constituent populations. In the Middle East they have long employed a tactic of redirecting domestic unrest and hatred from themselves to external targets. In essence the repressors have used a strategy to pacify the repressed and export brewing civil wars to the West. A secondary effect was to further radicalize and politicize Islam. According to Wurmser,

> "these regimes crushed their opposition ruthlessly, they did little to address the conditions that fueled its fervor — namely the failure of their corrupt and repressive governance. Formenting anti-Western sentiments was thus a matter of survival for these failed, incorrigible regimes, a way of riding the tiger and deflecting the growing resentment among their impoverished, oppressed populations. They struck a deal with the Muslim radicals: the radicals would be free to engage in terror and might even receive official encouragement, funding, or support, as long as the violence was directed only at Israel and the West. And in order not to endanger their friendship with the West, regimes across the Middle East insisted that the terrorist acts be executed in ways that would not incriminate them or expose their double-dealing. During the 1990s, Arab regimes not only refused to fight anti-Western terror, they fueled it."[47]

According to Samuel Berger, former National Security Advisor in the Clinton Administration, many pundits wrongly declare the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and inequitable US support to Israel, as key reasons for anti-Americanism in the Middle East.[48] On one level it is a source of anti-Americanism, not because of the plight of Palestinians, but rather for a number of Machiavellian reasons having little to do with the suffering of Palestinians.

While Arab and Iranian governments constantly harangue the Israelis over the "occupation" and oppression of the Palestinians, those same governments have done little to enable the peace process or relieve the plight of the Palestinians. In fact, for many Middle Eastern governments, peaceful coexistence between the Palestinians and Israelis is antithetical to their own interests. Iran, as a Shia nation, surrounded by Sunni nations, is often insecure in its minority and stands to benefit by Palestinian unrest that keeps Sunni's attention directed at Israel, rather than Iran. For most Arab governments,

peace in Palestine would rob them of their most readily exploitable shield to externally deflect domestic discontent in times of need. The rise of satellite TV stations such as Al-Jazeera have given greater access to emotionally charged imagery that contrasts stone-throwing Palestinians battling "American-armed" Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The fact that the US only arms the Israelis and not the Palestinians as well, is used as proof of US collusion in the greater "Zionist and Crusader" conspiracy to undermine and suppress the Muslim world. Although there appears to be considerable evidence that the plight of Palestinians and inequitable US support for Israel are the root causes of anti-Americanism, the argument simply does not hold up to closer scrutiny. If the Arabs were truly concerned about the Palestinians, then why are Palestinians not allowed to settle in other Arab countries (with the exception of Jordan) and the desperately needed financial support been practically non-existent? It would appear that the search for root causes lies elsewhere.

During the Middle Ages the Middle East was the most advanced, cultured, and enlightened civilization in the world. But the intervening centuries have seen the gradual rise in Western power coinciding with a precipitous downward slide into dissolution throughout the Middle East. Today, Middle Eastern frustration for this long decline in power and influence has resulted in wide-spread humiliation that seeks to assign the blame for their failing civilizations to elaborate xenophobic conspiracy theories. According to Fareed Zakaria, many in the Arab world believe the rumor that the 9/11 attacks were a CIA or Mossad plot to justify attacks on Arabs and Muslims; incredibly this delusion is propagated by both state-run and independent media, including *al-Jazeera*.[49] The US is the sole superpower and therefore becomes the lightning rod for Arab frustrations. Whether the US is directly responsible or not, the perception is that the US caused the problems or can solve them if it cared. Such is the aura of omnipotent power assigned to the US and the consequently heavy burden of being the world's sole superpower. The depths of Muslim despair can be seen in the trend to rally behind any Muslim who appears to be powerful, and most importantly, challenges US power. This form of adulation is largely without moral scruple, as exemplified by the wide-spread support of Saddam Hussein, a most unscrupulous and un-Islamic leader, who threatened the entire Middle East during the Gulf War, and on multiple occasions, has committed genocide against his own people. Consequently, is it really surprising that many Muslims have lionized bin Laden, a self-admitted mass murderer who contemptuously disregarded all Islamic prohibitions on killing innocent noncombatants,

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as the Muslim world's "Robin Hood" and defender of Islam? The same can be said for the wide-spread Muslim legitimization for intentionally targeting and killing Israeli civilians. Such is the pitiful state of disillusionment, humiliation and desperation throughout the Muslim world today. Although the major issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the suffering of Iraqis are not the root causes of 9/11, they do serve as readily exploitable irritants that help sustain anti-Americanism, but are in no way the causes of Islamist-inspired terrorism.

Eroding economic conditions, unemployment and material deprivation are frequently cited as causes for terrorism and those pundits declare a Middle Eastern "Marshal Plan" would solve the terrorism problem. This is an argument with little merit. Most of al Qaeda's leadership and key operatives are in fact educated sons of privilege whose families have benefited politically and economically from the corrupt governments they seek to unseat. Since Osama bin Laden comes from one of the wealthiest families in the world, and Mohammed Atta, the alleged mastermind of the airplane hijackings, was the son of an Egyptian lawyer, the attacks of September 11 cannot have been the result exclusively of anger induced by material deprivation."[50] A Middle Eastern Marshal Plan does not appear to be a good investment either. Saudi Arabia has access to the greatest single source of petro-dollars in the world while Egypt is the recipient of billions of dollars of US aid. Yet, both are in steep economic decline because of corrupt governments, supporting bloated bureaucracies that seek to enrich themselves at the expense of their people. Most Middle Eastern governments, without comprehensive reform, are incapable of effectively accepting and judiciously using economic aid. Any economic aid sent to these countries would simply further enrich the wealthy and do little to improve the life of the common citizen. The problem is not economics, it is government.

The West often sites Islam itself as the mobilizing cause for anti-Americanism in the Middle East. Dr. Shibley Telhami of the Brookings Institute counters this argument when he says,

> "throughout the region people have grievances but no political
> organizations through which to express them, because there is no
> electoral democracy. Islamic religious and social institutions are often the
> only available vehicles for mass political mobilization. They are anti-
> Western because the governments they oppose are pro-Western.

Governments in the region know this, and when they seek international support they paint a stark picture between themselves and anti-Western Islamic movements. These regimes prevent any serious third option from emerging. The US government is left straddling these two stools."[51]

In a nutshell, this is the dilemma for the US— insistence on democracy and human rights are largely discarded for fear of Islamist takeover that would certainly be hostile to the US. Consequently, US support for regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt have been labeled as examples of "American duplicity" in ensuring continued Muslim repression. Although there is certainly a degree of American culpability in this charge, it ignores the fact that there are limits to just how far the US can press these governments to democratize. The US is seen as both benefactor and guarantor of the survival of these corrupt, oppressive regimes. In essence, we have told our regional friends that we do not care what they do domestically as long as there is an uninterrupted flow of cheap oil and no renewed Arab-Israeli war. In the absence of US pressure to reform, repression and corruption are left unchecked and the people are left with no safe outlet for expressing disenchantment except in the mosque, the final sanctuary for safe dissent. As a result, extremist mullahs are empowered and Islam is further politicized and radicalized. Kurt M. Campbell and Michele A. Flournoy in their recent book, To Prevail: An American Strategy For The Campaign Against Terrorism, state that, "the single greatest driver of Islamic rage is the failure of many 'moderate' states to create modern governments responsive to the needs of their people and viable civil societies where even minimal levels of debate and democracy are tolerated."[52] Islamic rage is the manifested despair of people ruled by failed governments and living in failing civilizations. If the roots of Islamic rage are the result of corrupt, failed governments, then why is the US and not the regimes themselves held responsible?

In the Middle East, both friendly and hostile governments have long employed their state-controlled media and education systems to instill in their people, a sustained hatred of the US.[53] According to Meyrav Wurmser, Egypt, the second largest recipient of American foreign aid, and Saudi Arabia, whose regime was saved by US forces during the Gulf War, both use their official, government-sponsored newspapers to launch inflammatory attacks against the US and Israel.[54] Saudi Arabia, during the past decade, has been funneling its wealth into expanding the reach of its fundamentalist Wahhabi version of Islam across the globe; the recipients of this wealth are typically virulently anti-

American.[55] In order to deflect internal outrage from failed government policies, many Middle Eastern regimes have tolerated Muslims clerics preaching anti-Western rhetoric and have sponsored schools, mosques, universities that teach a form of radical militant theology that might influence the politically disaffected or religious zealots alike to take up the militant Islamist's cause.[56] Whether intended or not, a significant source of terrorism that threatens the US and created bin Laden resides in Saudi Arabia. The fruits of Saudi state-controlled education and the effectiveness of its anti-American and anti-Israeli propaganda are empirically quite telling: "15 of the 19 terrorists in the 11 September attacks were Saudis"[57]; on 30 January 2002, a top Saudi Arabian official confided "that approximately 100 of the 158 suspected terrorists held by the United States in Cuba are Saudi citizens"[58]; one "Saudi official estimates that between 12,000 and 25,000 Saudi men have participated in mujahideen training."[59] This is not a charge that the Saudis intended to create terrorists nor intended direct harm towards the US, but the unintended consequences from their long-standing domestic policies have unequivocally resulted in the genesis of bin Laden and his fellow ideologues. There is a frightening and discouraging lesson to be drawn from the empirical data. Even if the US, with Muslim government support, can reverse or at least moderate anti-Americanism, a small number of terrorists who are beyond redemption can still inflict catastrophic damage on the US.

To be fair, the US owns some responsibility for this state of affairs through its actions during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the 1980s the US facilitated a pipeline for mujahideen fighters to train and fight in Afghanistan, then following the war did nothing to disassemble the pipeline and did nothing while Afghanistan spiraled into anarchy, becoming a harbor for terrorists.[60] There have been positive developments. In early 2002 President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan took courageous, decisive action to shutdown the radical Peshawar madrassas that had served as the entry point for the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. US combat operations in Afghanistan have successfully eliminated the training camps. What is left is for Saudi Arabia to acknowledge that there is a domestic problem *within* the Kingdom and to take decisive actions to address those problems.

The idea that the al Qaeda terrorists hate us because they misunderstand America fails to consider that Mohammed Atta and most of his 9/11 cohorts lived in Western Europe and the US for a number of years and had first-hand knowledge about the US. Flawed US policies do not explain why young men willingly become human

missiles. Their actions were not based upon a misunderstanding of the US, but rather a fanatical desire to serve their Islamist cause by striking a decisive blow to drive the US from the Middle East, and set in motion a series of events ultimately leading to a new Islamic world order. Attempts to appease or engage these people will be useless since there can be no compromise in a cosmic war of good against evil. These Islamist terrorists are beyond reconciliation or redemption. From a US perspective there can be only one answer to these terrorists — annihilation or incarceration.

Consequently, the US information strategy must target those Muslims that are still not fully supporting or within the Islamist camp. It is vital that the US information strategy address the causes of anti-Americanism as a means of isolating al Qaeda (and future al Qaedas) from the popular sympathies that provide a recruiting pool of martyrs, economic support and concealment. This will require an uncomfortable change in the US policy of "stability" in the Middle East and a renewal of US commitment to democracy and human rights. Unfortunately for the US, most of the root causes of "Muslim rage" are internal problems that Muslims must sort out for themselves. In the interim, there is still much the US can and must do to begin moderating anti-Americanism throughout the Muslim world, which can do much to dry up the terrorists' sources of sanctuary, support and popularity.

A US Information Campaign For The Muslim World

> The Enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our
> many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and
> every government that supports them.
> —President George W. Bush address to Congress, 20 September 2001

The US suffers a negative reputation throughout the Muslim world due to hostile propaganda campaigns waged by Muslim governments and the absence of active US public diplomacy. In order to counter this negative perception of America, it will be necessary to develop and resurrect these neglected, shrunken organs of strategic information dissemination and employ them in a well orchestrated, long-term information campaign to get the US message out to the Muslim peoples. This cannot be a unilateral US voice. The US must cultivate and win support from key regional opinion makers because the most effective, best received messages must come from indigenous Muslims, preferably spontaneously of their own volition. The suggested information campaign is not intended to convert the Islamist terrorists, they are beyond redemption,

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but rather it is designed to influence the behavior and perceptions of passive sympathizers and others who do not support terrorism but still harbor varying degrees of anti-American sentiment.

During the Cold War the US had a robust strategic information apparatus that played a significant role in bringing about victory over the late Soviet Union. Following victory, public diplomacy seemed anachronistic and wasteful with no competing ideology. The search for "peace dividends" by way of governmental efficiencies resulted in a comprehensive reduction in the size, support and capabilities of the US Information Service (USIS), America's primary strategic information organization. The US has failed to actively engage the Muslim world on regional issues and as a result Muslims feel they have been ignored and their opinions taken for granted.

Only recently have American policy makers come to the realization that bin Laden has challenged the US in an ideological battle. This is not a battle for global dominance, since the Islamist's ideology holds little attractiveness for non-Muslims, but rather, it is a fight for one-seventh of the world's population; it is a fight for 1.2 billion Muslim hearts and minds. It is time for America to resurrect and bolster its' strategic information capabilities. The following are suggested measures the US must take in order to effectively wage our newest ideological war.

- Rebuild Voice of America (VOA) and seek alternative media channels. "At its peak during the Cold War, VOA together with Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe reached fifty percent of the Soviet populace every week and between 70 and 80 percent of the population of Eastern Europe."[61] In contrast, VOA only reaches 2 percent of Arabs today.[62] Since 9/11 the US has slowly begun reconstituting VOA, first in Afghanistan and then the wider Muslim world. It is imperative that these programs get adequate funding and are mobilized as quickly as possible. Although the US would exercise complete autonomy over subject matter and programs, it is critical that VOA not be seen as a propaganda tool but rather as a source of fair and balanced news. The unvarnished truth will attract more listeners, build trust, and have far greater impact.

- Employ and exploit independent Muslim TV and print media. Perhaps the best media outlets are the uncensored satellite TV stations, such as Al-Jazeera, LBCI, MBC, and moderate newspapers like *Al Hayat.*[63] Al-Jazeera has been oft criticized as being hostile to America. To be fair, Al-Jazeera is in the business of selling air time and in order to do so they must play to their audiences, not unlike

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US media. Al-Jazeera is somewhat anti-American because their viewers are anti-American. Nevertheless, the US must work to get influential US spokespersons on the air where they can get maximum exposure in the Muslim countries. US spokespersons should expect to take their lumps but over time opinions can be changed. The US has taken important initial steps through appearances on al Jazeera by Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld. More significantly, the Bush administration later decided to employ Christopher Ross, a former US Ambassador to Syria, to engage in dialogue with Arab audiences on Al Jazeera.[64] Most importantly, Ross speaks Arabic and is an expert well-versed in regional Muslim issues. Although not received with wild approbation by Muslim audiences, the US did get an opportunity to make its case. The US must not look for immediate gratification, because it simply will not happen. There are too many years of anti-American rhetoric to overcome in a few months of effort. Through a concerted effort the US will be able to get its message out and counter the most damaging misperceptions and caustic conspiracies. It may take time, but through persistence the points will get across, at least to those willing to open their eyes and ears.

- Creatively exploit the Internet as a tool for reaching a broader audience. The Internet offers to be a promising tool for reaching and persuading Muslims throughout the world. In fact Middle Eastern and Arabic-speaking countries are one of the fastest growing Internet users in the world, exceeding 12 million in 2001.[65] Bin Laden and other Islamists have for years taken advantage of the fact that increasing numbers of Muslims are getting connected to the Internet. Each year, these efforts have effectively brought Islamists together and increased the continuity of their rhetoric. Islamist-sponsored web pages have effectively propagated conspiracy theories and globalized Islamist's causes. The proliferation of Muslim web pages offers opportunities for the US as well. The US Department of State's, "Response to Terrorism" web site includes a number of features emphasizing the evils of terrorism and at the same time, a US that is Muslim-friendly.[66] Although a useful page, its visibility to international mainstream Muslim audiences is likely quite limited. In order to reach a wider audience, the US Government (USG) needs to monitor and engage in dialogue on the numerous Muslim web pages, both moderate and extremist alike. These web pages can serve several purposes. First, they are a good source for

keeping tabs on the latest Islamist propaganda and conspiracy theories. Second, infrequently there are useful editorials written by respected clerics and liberal Muslim intellectuals that are pro-US and/or anti-bin Laden. It would be in the US' best interests to ensure these articles get maximum visibility by passing the editorials on to other Muslim web pages and newspapers.

- Establish and maintain US information organizations dedicated to the war on terrorism. Within this organization must be a rapid-response information capability that can counter propaganda and engage target audiences in near-real time. In the early stages of US military operations in Afghanistan, the US virtually conceded the informational initiative to bin Laden and the Taliban. In part, the US was distracted by the ongoing Anthrax scares, but most importantly it was a result of the ponderous, Byzantine process for developing US policy positions and talking points. In November 2001, the Bush administration announced the establishment of "Coalition Information Centers" (CIC) described as information rapid response teams designed to counter al Qaeda and Taliban propaganda and disinformation in a timely manner.[67] The actions of the CICs combined with the rapid disintegration of Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan helped the US to make up a lot of ground in the war of ideas. Although CICs are a good news story, we were and are still playing catch-up. What is needed is a long-term, concerted effort dedicated to the war on terrorism as was done during the Cold War. On 9 November 2001 the US Department of State (DOS) announced the appointment of Charlotte Beers as the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy.[68] Under Beers' leadership a number of quality products have quickly been assembled and disseminated on the DOS web site and in hard copy to US Embassies in 30 different languages.[69] Included are "The Network of Terrorism", "Muslim Life In America", and a catalogue of persuasive products, including Islamic opinions on bin Laden's fatwas, coalition membership, Taliban crimes, and US humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan.[70] This is a good start, but it is imperative that the US maintain the same will and focus it employed during the Cold War.

- Cultivate indigenous Muslim spokespersons. The US is in urgent need of Muslim spokespersons. The US desperately needs the active support of influential, indigenous Muslim opinion shapers. A single article or TV appearance by one of these people can have a more profound impact than a year's worth of US efforts.

Muslim government leaders will be useful, but their effectiveness is hampered, since they are often unpopular and not trusted by their constituents. Likewise, the leading Muslim clerics have long been perceived as merely official mouthpieces that have been co-opted by the government and therefore lack influence and credibility. The most influential Muslim opinion shapers are media spokespersons, religious leaders, and scholars. In key countries the US must actively cultivate a mutually supportive relationship with these key communicators. They can serve a dual purpose of actively supporting US interests while also serving an invaluable role as validators of US products and campaign efforts. By validators, it is meant that they can ensure that US messages and themes do in fact send the intended messages and avoid cross-cultural *faux pas* such as the unfortunate "crusades" statement or the "Ultimate Justice" title initially used for the US operations in Afghanistan. This strategy carries a degree of risk. First, the US must take to not be seen to be forming a relationship with these people which could place their safety or lives in jeopardy. Second, if they are seen as being co-opted by the US, then their utility as effective public opinion shapers and spokespersons will be largely, if not totally, compromised. Third, potential spokespersons must be thoroughly vetted. Merely wielding influential power and proclaiming anti-bin Laden rhetoric cannot be the only qualifications for US support. The US must fully understand the politics and goals of these spokespersons in order to assess whether they can be reconciled with long-term US regional objectives.

Information Campaign Strategy: Themes and Perception Management

The number one message in America's information war on terrorism must be that this is a war on terrorism not Islam. It is vital to the US and the West that this war not be portrayed as an attack on Islam. Conversely, it is in the Islamists' vital interest to provoke a true "clash of civilizations". The US information campaign supporting the war on terrorism is both more complicated and dangerous than the information war against communism that dominated much of the second half of the twentieth century. The anti-terrorism information campaign is and will continue to be complex, awkward and rife with risks for missteps, since this war is, to a degree, about Islam. This is not a war against Islam; on the contrary, it is a war against Islamic terrorists. As a result, this fact will always be in the background and will always be a ready source of

exploitation by Islamists and conspiracy theorists. It is absolutely critical that USG leaders, spokespersons and all forms of independent media avoid any statements that could be exploited as "proof" of a US war on Islam. USG spokespersons would be well advised when speaking about terrorism to avoid using the words "Islam or Muslim" at all. It is not helpful to identify groups or individuals as "Islamic" or "Muslim" terrorists. After all, al Qaeda, bin Laden and the Taliban no more represent Islam than Timothy McVeigh represented Christianity. Repeatedly stating, "this is not a war on Islam or Muslims" merely reopens the wounds of distrust and suspicion.

- The US is friendly to Muslims. Millions of Muslim immigrants have been welcomed and accepted in the US without prejudice. The US must emphasize that throughout most of the 1990s, it supported Muslim causes in Bosnia, Kosovo and Kuwait (Desert Storm). It is imperative that the US demonstrate its goodwill towards Muslims in Afghanistan by actively supporting humanitarian aid and following through with recovery of the country to ensure a successful outcome. The US must also demonstrate itself as a more reliable friend by loyally standing by Pakistan and helping with economic development after the Afghanistan military operation concludes.

- This is not a war on Islam. The US can further support the "this is not a war on Islam" theme, by capitalizing on US efforts to fight non-Islamic terrorist groups throughout the world. One opportunity is the ongoing US support to Plan Columbia and our assistance in the ongoing fight against FARC narco-terrorists. Increased publicity and exposure of these efforts can reinforce the US assertion that this is not a fight against only Islamic terrorists but against all terrorists.

- This war is not a battle between the US and Osama bin Laden. The US must avoid personalizing the war on terrorism. Early US attempts to demonize bin Laden backfired badly and served to only increase his stature and perceived power. In a sense, US missteps created a "David and Goliath" image where bin Laden was seen as standing toe to toe with the most powerful man on earth, the President of the United States. The US gave bin Laden exactly what he wanted — global exposure and inflated notoriety. Quickly coming to the same conclusions, the US has made an admirable attempt to deemphase bin Laden's importance. As a point of communications policy, the US should

avoid mention of his name to the greatest extent possible. When forced to address bin Laden at all, he should be deemphasized as only one of many terrorists the US is pursuing. Likewise, there are a number of other options US spokespersons could employ when forced to discuss bin Laden. Bin Laden's actions, or lack of actions, during the Afghanistan campaign have created targets of opportunity. Subtle intimations or messages questioning his courage by pointing out that he fled, leaving others to fight and die for him, may over the long-term have a moderately corrosive effect on his semi-mythical image as a selfless, devoted holy warrior.

- Bin Laden and his supporters are responsible for the attacks of 9/11. The US must continue providing evidence of bin Laden's guilt in the 9/11 attacks, as many Muslims still refuse to believe this. Some consider the acts so abhorrent that they are simply in denial, while others profess insufficient proof or the proof was a CIA-manufactured lie. Lastly, there are the extremists who are lost causes — nothing will change their minds. It's imperative that the US publicize and make available as much evidence as possible in order to give moderate Muslims the ammunition they need to convince the confused or wavering.

- The US is fully committed to fighting terrorism. The US must demonstrate undeniable will and commitment to the fight against terrorism. When military force is employed, we must achieve rapid and decisive results. This communicates the futility of al Qaeda's cause and emphasizes their weakness as compared to the overwhelming strength of US and coalition powers. The rapid destruction of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan undermined bin Laden's myth of power and deprived radicals of a hero to emulate. The US must clearly differentiate between the fight against terrorism and the earlier withdrawals from Vietnam, Beirut, and Mogadishu. In those cases the US resolve was not mobilized because the cause was perceived by Americans as not worth the loss of life. US adversaries, including bin Laden, divined a lesson from these withdrawals that the US will recoil from casualties. The 9/11 attacks can partly be attributed to the perceived unwillingness by the US to exercise decisive force in the face of ample provocations such as the Khobar Towers bombings, US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and finally the bombing of the USS Cole in

Yemen. The US, through its irresolute responses in the face of these incredible provocations, had lost the deterrent power that its unrivaled military capabilities should have assured. Resolve and long-term commitment must constantly be demonstrated to see this fight out to the very end. President Bush's widely ridiculed "Axis of Evil" speech, referring to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea plays well into a newfound US philosophy of muscular deterrence.[71] The message intended and received by those rogue regimes was that in the event of a WMD attack against the US, those three nations will be on a short list of US suspects. Furthermore, it is occasionally necessary to remind our adversaries why the US is the world's sole superpower and the awesome powers the US can bring to fore when provoked. It is through military strength, and the demonstrated will to rapidly employ it, that the US will find its greatest deterrent power. As the saying goes, "when Rome is powerful, then the provinces are orderly."

- Terrorism does not work. A vital message the US must constantly reinforce is that "terrorism does not work". The US must not be portrayed as changing international policies or accelerating the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process as a consequence of 9/11. To do so, is to send the dangerous message that massive, catastrophic terrorism is a viable method of obtaining desired responses.

- The US is committed to a fair and impartial resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. US credibility has been called into question due to its perceived lack of impartiality for Israel in the so called "Peace Process" and the US' support of undemocratic regimes. Peace in Palestine would be an important coup in US efforts to restore goodwill in the Middle East and an important foil to Islamist propaganda. Although the US is partial to Israel, it can still demonstrate a commitment to a fair, impartial peace in accordance with UN resolutions. Given the intransigence of Hamas and Hezbollah and their benefactors in Syria and Iran, the possibility of peace in Palestine still appears to be quite remote. US superpower status somewhat hurts our credibility, since many Muslims are disposed to believe that the US could solve this problem if it so desired. In any event the US must be seen as making a legitimate effort. The conviction must repeatedly be reaffirmed, that an independent and viable Palestinian state is a minimal requirement for a

just and lasting peace. In addition, Muslim audiences need to be reminded of the stated American policy that peace must be based on an implementation of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, which call upon Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.[72]

- The US is committed to democracy and human rights — including in the Muslim world. An important key for shoring up US credibility entails a renewal of US commitment for human rights, the rule of law and democracy in the Middle East. US regional policy in the Middle East has been hampered by the fear of the "Arab of street" and the belief that if Middle Eastern governments are pressed to liberalize then Islamists will seize power. Following the aftermath of US military actions that crushed the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, there was no uprising of the Muslim masses throughout the Islamic world as predicted by anxious Muslim leaders in the Middle East. In short, the specter of the "Arab street" has finally been debunked as a myth. It is time for the US to revise its strategy of "stability" in the Muslim world. The US must exploit the momentum from its tide of successes in the war on terror and "press Arab regimes to confront Islamic extremism, stop encouraging their media to rant about America and Israel, and open up their societies to ease their people's sense of powerlessness and discontent."[73] This is not a demand for instant democracy, which would be a destabilizing shock and would yield results counter to everyone's interests. Gradual liberalization of government controls, improved respect for human rights and professional reform of the media would do much to stabilize domestic tensions. This means allowing Islamist groups to participate as well. Allowing the Islamists to participate in government will do much to undermine their appeal and influence. The Islamists have only two things to offer, criticism of the government and "Islam" is the answer for everything. Neither of these principles offers much hope for fundamentally solving terrestrial problems. Allowing the Islamists the unrestricted opportunity for political participation will ultimately undermine their influence, since they will be exposed as being devoid of practical solutions to the severe problems resident in much of the Muslim world today. The US must emphasize to Muslim governments, particularly those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, that extensive domestic reform (political, economic, and media) is in their best

interest. If these governments refuse to reform, then the US must begin planning on how it intends to interact with radical Islamist regimes after they eventually seize power. The issue is not whether Islamists seize power by either by revolution or legitimate popular political mandate. The true issue is that in the absence of good government and viable alternatives, Muslims will continue to claim that Islam is the answer. Harsh crackdowns and oppression by Muslim governments may only ensure the thing they wish to prevent, their eventual removal and replacement by Islamist governments. Iran's twenty-two year experience with an Islamists government can be instructive as to what a future Islamist government may look like and how it might evolve. While it is true that Iran has been hostile to the US, it is also true that Iran is rapidly becoming one of the most progressive and democratic governments in the Middle East. Iran's movement towards democracy is largely seen as a series of conciliatory measures conceded by the ruling mullahs as a result of popular dissatisfaction. The reason behind popular dissatisfaction is the inadequacy of Islam itself as the foundation for a modern government. It would appear that in the not too distant future, the Islamists themselves may see themselves replaced by secular democratic political movements. A possible lesson for the US may well be that over time Islamism as a basis for government will eventually fail. As such, it will be in America's best interest to actively engage with these countries in order to help shape the type of government that consequently arises. If Islamists come to power, the US should engage with these governments from the perspective that they are merely transitory manifestations that will one day crumble under the weight of their own inadequacies. The character of the US engagement need not be automatically adversarial, but rather, should be based upon the actions of those governments. The US should take a long-view approach to engagement that emphasizes democratization and adherence to universally recognized human rights. By so doing, the US may be able to nurture future partners rather than merely creating enemies. Affirming democracy and human rights as US policy priorities in the Muslim world will do much to ease anti-Americanism while simultaneously improving American credibility by eliminating the charge of US duplicity and double standards for Muslims.

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Conclusion

> As long as we are suffering economically and politically in the Muslim world, God will be the solution.
> —Egyptian analyst Ahmed Fakhr

US destruction of al Qaeda will not end the threat to the US from terror attacks. This is a war of ideas. Although attrition of terrorist cells will reduce risks of future attacks, there can never be complete victory because you cannot kill ideas. Hence, there will never realistically be a day the US can declare total victory. The US must adopt a strategy of muscular deterrence that visibly demonstrates our overwhelming military might, and unwavering resolve to fight terrorism to the bitter end. Concurrently, the US must demand that key Muslim countries crackdown on Islamist militant extremists within their borders. For the US, this is the path offering the best short-term deterrent to future terrorist attacks. The US will have little or no success in changing the beliefs of radicals and fanatics, but we can degrade their capabilities by annihilation of the terrorists themselves and eradicating their support networks. While these measures are necessary, they are purely defensive and do nothing to address terrorism over the long-term, nor do they alter the social, political and economic environments that demonstrably support the Islamist terrorist networks. In order to gain long-term security from Islamist terrorism, the US must address the root causes of Muslim rage and anti-Americanism, which permeate the Muslim world today. Neither Muslim rage nor anti-Americanism cause Islamist terrorism, but they are the key enablers that provide recruits, support, and sanctuary.

The most important struggle is to shape perceptions and behaviors of the non-radicalized Muslim masses. The single greatest factor for Muslim rage is the failure of Muslim regimes to provide modern governments responsive to the needs of their people and viable civil societies where even minimal levels of debate and democracy are tolerated.[74] As such, the Muslim world is a failing society led by failed governments, and Muslims, unsurprisingly, have become disenchanted as every measurable sector in quality of life standards are dropping to some of the lowest on earth, and are worsening. This situation is exacerbated by key Muslim regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt, who maintain their power bases by deflecting blame for their failures onto the US and Israel. This scapegoat strategy is amplified through their state-run media. By extension, US support of these oppressive regimes has helped create anti-Americanism.

Fear of Islamist takeover compelled the US to adopt a foreign policy strategy to contain or suppress Islamist political participation throughout the Muslim world. The goal to suppress Islamists manifested itself into an overall US strategy of "stability," that ultimately sought to maintain the status quo, since democracy was deemed as too dangerous. The US dual strategies of stability and containment of non-militant Islamists must be disregarded. These strategies are proving to be ineffective and even counterproductive to US security interests, since they are likely to increase the chances of Islamist's takeovers, not lessen them. The US must renew its commitment to human rights, the rule of law and democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world. To be successful, the US must demand that Muslim regimes undertake extensive reform of their governments and adhere to the rule of law. Secondly, the US must demand that Muslim regimes begin accepting responsibility for their own actions and desist from using their state-run media as instruments for American bashing. This will entail extensive media reform by discontinuing state control of the media, and adopting modern media ethics that honestly strive to present fair and balanced news reporting rather than politicized vitriol. These actions will not only reduce Muslim discontent and instability (and hopefully improve Muslim living conditions), but will also significantly improve US credibility and lessen anti-Americanism.

Although it is unrealistic to believe that public diplomacy can reverse anti-Americanism, it is possible through well-crafted US regional policies and timely public diplomacy to moderate or at least partially ameliorate, the numerous points of friction that exists between the US and the Muslim world. Consequently, the US must reinvigorate its public information organizations, cultivate influential Muslim spokespersons, and actively engage the Muslim world in genuine dialogue. The US must stay abreast with the issues of the Muslim world and remain actively engaged through a long-term, dedicated information campaign, tailored to address those issues from a US perspective. Failure of the US to resolutely answer the challenge in the war of ideas in the Muslim world, will only result in increasing support for terrorism, leading to an escalation in terrorist attacks against the US, and copious resurrections of new "Osamas". This is why it is in the US vital national interests to engage in long-term, responsive, and proactive information programs with the Muslim world.

Word Count= 13,361

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GLOSSARY

AMIR, EMIR. A ruler, a commander, a chief, a nobleman.

DAR AL-HARB. The abode of war, i.e., territory not under Muslim sovereignty, against which warfare for the propagation of Islam is licit. The converse of *Dar al-Islam*, the abode of Islam.

FATWA. The formal opinion of a canon lawyer (*Mufti*).

HADITH. A tradition of the sayings or practice of the Prophet. One of the many sources of Islamic law.

HAKIMIYYAT ALLAH. A Muslim divine order, sought by Islamists, in order to separate the peoples of Islamic civilization from the rest of humanity while creating universal legitimacy for their competing worldview

IMAM. The leader of prayer; the leader of the whole community of Islam.

ISLAMISM (ISLAMISTS). A brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism which claims to recreate a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing the sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political action. Islamists (the followers of Islamism) see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology which should be integrated into all aspects of society (politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy, etc.)... To Islamists, the Islamic State should unite the ummah as much as possible, not being restricted to a specific nation. Such a state attempts to recreate the golden age of the first decades of Islam and supersede tribal, ethnic and national divides, whose resilience is attributed to the believers' abandonment of the true tenets of Islam or to colonial policy.

JIHAD. An internal effort (struggle) to reform bad habits in the Islamic community or by an individual Muslim. The term is also used to denote holy war in the service of Islam.

KHALIFA, CALIPH. The successor of the Prophet, and thus head of all Muslims, combining in himself both the temporal and religious powers.

KAFIR. An infidel, i.e., a non-Muslim.

MADRASAH. A school for Muslim learning.

MULLAH. a member of the *ulama.*

SHARIA. Islamic law consisting of the teachings of the Koran, the *sunna* of the Prophet which is incorporated in the recognized traditions; the consensus of the scholars of the orthodox community; the method of reasoning by analogy (Kiyas).

SHEIKH (SHAYKH). Old man, leader of a tribe, a title of respect.

SHIA. The supporters of Ali's claims to the caliphate. Evolved into the principal minority religious group of Muslims.

SUNNA. Properly, a custom or practice, and later narrowed down to the practice of the Prophet or a tradition recording the same.

SUNNI. A member of the majority group of Muslims, usually called orthodox.

ULAMA. A scholar, especially in religious subjects; the whole Muslim ecclesiastical class.

UMMAH. The Muslim community.

WAHHABISM. A fundamentalist form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia today. It is a puritan religion based on a strictly literal interpretation of scripture and early Islamic tradition.

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