



Public Diplomacy: Ideas For the War of Ideas



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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: IDEAS FOR THE WAR OF IDEAS

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The United States cannot defeat al-Qaeda by strength of arms alone. It must also change the terms of debate in the Arab/Muslim world, especially in its radical wing. How can this best be accomplished? What strategy should the United States adopt for what is often called the “war of ideas” against radical Islam?

The Barack Obama administration has vastly improved on its predecessor’s approach to the war of ideas. As a result, the global terms of debate have improved since the change of administrations in January 2009. But recent U.S. gains are shallow and reversible. They fall short of the change in opinion needed to defeat the al-Qaeda network. Moreover, they mainly reflect President Obama’s subtle instinct for public persuasion. As such, they could be undone by a change in U.S. leadership. These gains should be consolidated by embedding them in stable policies that will create and sustain favorable terms of debate over the long term.

Accordingly, we survey and assess recent and current U.S. public diplomacy toward the Muslim world and offer suggestions for improvement. A theme of these suggestions is that U.S. public diplomacy should emphasize dialogue over one-way monologue. Instead of simply turning up the volume of its message, the United States should provide mechanisms for Americans and the world’s Muslims to talk to one another.

A second theme is that U.S. public diplomacy should emphasize objective facts over propaganda. A third is that U.S. public diplomacy should convey respect to the audience. A fourth theme is that the United States should contest the al-Qaeda narrative directly; an indirect discussion that leaves al-Qaeda’s claims unrefuted is not enough. A fifth is that new nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that address pernicious ideas around the world could

help defeat the al-Qaeda narrative. Bringing these NGOs into being should be considered. A sixth theme is that conflicts involving Muslims feed the al-Qaeda narrative; hence, the United States should adopt a more muscular policy aimed at dampening conflicts involving Muslims as a part of its war of ideas.¹

U.S. UNPOPULARITY, AL-QAEDA POPULARITY

Foreign views of the United States were broadly favorable before the United States attacked Iraq in March 2003, but grew very negative, especially in the Arab and Muslim worlds, during the years before the Obama administration took office in January 2009. During the administration's first months, foreign attitudes toward the United States improved somewhat but remained negative overall. Foreign views of al-Qaeda have also declined since 2002, but al-Qaeda still enjoys a core of popular support in the Muslim world. As a result of its own unpopularity abroad and al-Qaeda's remaining popularity, the United States faces a stiff headwind in its struggle against al-Qaeda. Its own unpopularity costs the United States support, and al-Qaeda's remaining popularity is enough to sustain its efforts to find recruits, money and safe havens.

During 1999-2000, public attitudes toward the United States were positive in much of Europe and the Muslim world, averaging 74 percent among those polled in Britain, France and Germany, and 68 percent in Indonesia, Turkey and Morocco. However, by 2005, U.S. favorability had plummeted to an average of 46 percent in Britain, France and Germany, and to 42 percent in Indonesia, Turkey and Morocco.²

By 2007, publics around the world widely saw the United States as a threat to their countries. In fact, many people considered the United States to be the greatest threat. In a poll taken that year, the publics of 17 states, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Indonesia, China, Russia, Malaysia, Nigeria and Brazil, identified the United States as the greatest threat to their country.³ Remarkably, more Pakistanis saw the United States as a threat (64 percent) than saw India as a threat (45 percent).⁴ In contrast, the publics of only four states identified al-Qaeda as the greatest threat to their country.⁵ Large majorities in Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey and Indonesia did not even believe that groups of Arabs carried out the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States.⁶ Instead, they widely embraced bizarre conspiracy theories that blamed the Israeli Mossad, the American CIA or other dark forces.

Public support for the U.S.-led war on terror waned accordingly. Between 2002 and 2007, public support for U.S.-led efforts against terror fell from 69 to 38 percent in Britain, from 75 to 43 percent in France, from 70 to 42 percent in Germany, from 30 to 9 percent in Turkey and from 20 to 13 percent in Pakistan.⁷

Foreign attitudes toward the United States improved in the early months of the Obama administration, but remained negative overall. For example, the percent of Egyptians who are highly confident that the U.S. president will do the right thing in international affairs rose sharply under Obama, from 8 percent in January 2008 to 39 percent in April/May 2009. However, Egyptians' views of U.S. foreign policy remained negative. In April/May 2009, 67 percent of Egyptians still believed that the United States plays a negative role in the world. Large majorities continued to believe that the United States seeks to weaken and divide the Muslim world (76

percent), to control Mideast oil (80 percent), and to impose its culture on Muslim countries (80 percent). Sixty percent said that the creation of a Palestinian state is not a U.S. goal. These numbers are virtually unchanged from 2008.⁸

Public support for Osama bin Laden in the Muslim world declined sharply after 2002, but remained substantial in absolute terms. In 2007, 41 percent of the public in Indonesia and 38 percent in Pakistan had confidence that Bin Laden would do the right thing regarding world affairs in 2007 (down from 59 percent and 46 percent, respectively, in 2003).⁹

The war on al-Qaeda is not an election. It will not be decided by public opinion alone. But the negative foreign attitudes reported above matter. They prevent the United States from gaining important help from individuals and governments, and they leave space for al-Qaeda to find the recruits, funds and havens it needs to stay in business.

Since 9/11, important intelligence has often come from foreign citizens who volunteered information. Ramzi Yousef, the organizer of the 1993 World Trade Center attack and the foiled 1994 Bojinka airliner attack, was captured in Pakistan on a tip in 1995.¹⁰ Khaled Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), organizer of the 9/11 attack, was captured in 2003 with help from phone tips.¹¹ A 2006 al-Qaeda plot to bomb a number of planes in mid-air was foiled in Britain by a tip from a member of the British Muslim community, likely saving thousands of lives.¹² These instances reassure us that the United States has friends in the Muslim world. They also show, however, that the United States would have more intelligence if it had more friends.

The harm to U.S. security caused by hostile opinion in the Muslim world is manifest today in the Pakistan/Afghanistan region. Two dangerous setbacks for U.S. policy are happening there, both stemming in large part from public attitudes in Pakistan, where the United States is very unpopular and al-Qaeda is somewhat popular, especially in the northwest region bordering Afghanistan. First, the Taliban is resurgent in Afghanistan and poses a serious threat to the Hamid Karzai government. The Taliban is back largely because it has a secure haven in Pakistan's northwest border areas, from which it can move at will into Afghanistan, and because Pakistan's security services covertly give it direct support.¹³

Second, al-Qaeda's leadership has also found a secure haven in Pakistan's northwest region. It has exploited this haven to scale up its training activities, to support an invasion by its allies of Pakistan's Swat valley and Buner district, and to plan attacks throughout the rest of Pakistan, as well as in the Mideast and the West. With this haven in Pakistan, al-Qaeda can stay in business indefinitely and be free to grow in size, develop expertise and continue its search for weapons of mass destruction. Al-Qaeda burgeoned in the 1990s, eventually developing cells in over 60 countries, partly because it enjoyed a haven in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, where it trained thousands of recruits in safety. If al-Qaeda is allowed a secure haven in Pakistan for any length of time, this dangerous cycle will be repeated. Al-Qaeda will expand to become larger and more lethal than it is today.

These twin setbacks reflect distemper in Pakistani public and elite opinion. The Taliban and al-Qaeda find haven and recruits in Pakistan's northwest region because they are popular with the people there, while the Pakistani government and the United States are wildly unpopular. As Jane Perlez of *The New York Times* reports, "Many Pakistanis ... see the militants not as the

enemy, but as fellow Muslims who are deserving of greater sympathy than are the American aims.”¹⁴

Pakistan’s security services support the Taliban and give al-Qaeda wide latitude in the northwest partly because the United States has not pressed Pakistan’s government to cooperate fully with its policies. In turn, Washington has curbed its demands on Pakistan out of fear that public and elite Pakistani support for Pakistan’s government might crumble, bringing on its downfall, if that government became too identified with U.S. policies.¹⁵ America’s hands are tied by Pakistani public attitudes. This is the price the United States pays for being viewed by Pakistanis as the main threat to their country and for Bin Laden’s continuing popularity with the Pakistani people.

Robert Keohane and Peter Katzenstein have argued that “cooperation between the United States and its allies, on issues such as terrorism ... has not been disrupted” by anti-Americanism.¹⁶ Conditions in Pakistan and Afghanistan offer important evidence to the contrary. Pakistani anti-Americanism has disrupted Islamabad’s cooperation with U.S. counterterror efforts in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. The government of Pakistan will not be a reliable ally against al-Qaeda and the Taliban until the terms of debate in Pakistan are changed. Al-Qaeda must be discredited with the Pakistani public, and the legitimacy of the United States must be restored.

CURRENT PUBLIC-DIPLOMACY PROGRAMS

Public diplomacy is defined as action toward “understanding, informing and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.”¹⁷ It includes both government-to-people (G2P) and people-to-people (P2P) communication. It comprises a range of activities, including TV, radio and Internet communications to reach foreign publics; educational and cultural exchanges; communication and dialogue with foreign audiences by U.S. officials; and language training to enable these programs. Five U.S. agencies are responsible for conducting public diplomacy: the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), which oversees all non-military broadcasting;¹⁸ the State Department (DOS); the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the White House (through the National Security Council); and the Department of Defense (DOD).¹⁹ Funding is heavily concentrated in the BBG and State Department.

U.S. public diplomacy toward the Muslim world includes 11 main projects with a total budget of roughly \$400 million.²⁰ They divide into five media projects; three international exchange programs; a group of micro-programs to support pluralism, prosperity and gender equity; language-training programs; and the overseas work of ambassadors and other State Department officials. Some of these efforts are successes, others are dismal failures. International exchanges and language training earn especially good marks, while U.S. media efforts deserve very poor ones. The most successful programs are far too small to have much beneficial impact. Thus, current U.S. efforts to shape opinion in the Arab/Muslim world are largely ineffective due to either poor execution or inadequate funding.

Media Projects: TV and Radio

The United States operates one U.S.-based Arabic-language satellite TV news station, Alhurra; one Arabic-language radio operation, Radio Sawa; and the Voice of America (VOA), which broadcasts in several Muslim-world languages. Alhurra and Radio Sawa are failures. The VOA is effective but does not broadcast in several key languages, most notably Arabic and Punjabi. Overall, U.S. TV and radio operations directed at the Muslim world are very disappointing.

Alhurra was launched in 2004 with the goal of providing pro-American coverage of U.S. and Middle East news to Arab publics. Surveys show that Alhurra attracts only a tiny audience and has very little credibility in the Arab world.²¹ An April/May 2009 University of Maryland/Zogby poll found that Alhurra was picked by a vanishingly small 0.5 percent of Arab respondents as their favorite TV news source — even less than the 2 percent who picked al-Manar, the news station of the radical Lebanese group Hezbollah, and vastly less than the 55 percent who picked the more mainstream Al Jazeera.²² (Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed considered CNN a trustworthy source in a 2004 Zogby poll, showing that not all U.S. news outlets lack credibility).²³

Radio Sawa, launched in 2002, attracts a larger audience than Alhurra but also has little impact. Its programming consists largely of music with a little news mixed in. The news content is too limited to affect opinion on policy issues.

When it launched Radio Sawa, the George W. Bush administration unwisely chose to cancel the VOA's Arabic-language service, replacing it with Radio Sawa. This bizarre decision created a large hole in U.S. media efforts. The VOA Arabic service served a valuable purpose by reaching a modest but important audience — government, business, academic and media elites — with important hard news. That audience has been lost.

Bottom line: the United States now has no credible TV or radio networks to communicate with Arab elites and publics. Alhurra is unwatched, Radio Sawa conveys little content, and the useful VOA Arabic-language service has been abolished. Something is wrong with this picture!

Other U.S. Media Projects

Three more U.S. government media efforts bear mentioning: making U.S. diplomats available to speak on Arab/Muslim media outlets, the Rapid Response Unit and blogging.

After the 9/11 attack, the Bush administration at first took a combative approach to the Arab/Muslim media. It often refused to make U.S. officials available for interviews and expelled Al-Jazeera from U.S.-occupied Iraq.

In 2005, the Bush team reversed course, allowing many more U.S. civilian officials and military officers to appear on Arab media to explain, discuss and defend U.S. policies. These appearances were often ineffective, however, because U.S. diplomats felt constrained in what they said. They feared that any remark that criticized U.S. conduct would be pounced on by political pundits or members of Congress back home, denounced as “anti-American,” and made a pretext to punish or fire them.²⁴ As a result, their appearances had a scripted feel, often rendering them unpersuasive. Moreover, very few U.S. diplomats and almost no military officers know enough Arabic to handle an interview in Arabic. As a result, they are heard through translators, which reduces their effectiveness. Finally, few U.S. officials know enough about Islamic law and

theology, or about Muslim-world history and culture, to debate relevant issues. As a result, they are rarely persuasive on questions that shape Arab/Muslim political opinion.

The State Department Rapid Response Unit monitors native-language media from around the world and produces a valuable daily report on this media that helps policy makers understand how the United States is being perceived abroad and what stories are resonating in foreign media. The report also helps U.S. officials craft rapid responses to events and criticisms.

In early 2007, the State Department launched a useful blogging program. It maintains five or six government employees working full-time to answer and debunk disinformation on Internet blogs. These bloggers are Arabic-speaking State Department employees, supervised by Foreign Service officers.

International Exchange Programs

The U.S. government has long operated two large exchange programs, both widely recognized as successful. Following 9/11, it introduced other initiatives, including a promising outreach dialogue program aimed at the Muslim world.

The Fulbright Program is the main exchange program of the Department of State. It awarded 8,344 grants in 2007, at a cost of more than \$200 million. These grants went to U.S. students, teachers, professionals and scholars to study, teach, lecture and conduct research in more than 150 countries, and to their foreign counterparts to engage in similar activities in the United States.

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), begun in the 1950s, annually brings some 5,000 foreign nationals from around the world to the United States to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience American life firsthand. These visitors are current or potential leaders in government, politics, the media, education, labor relations, the arts, business and other fields. They are selected by U.S. Foreign Service officers overseas. By all accounts, these visitors learn and teach a great deal on their visits, especially if their visits are lengthy (more than a couple of weeks). Former IVLP participants include more than 200 current and former chiefs of state and 1,500 cabinet-level ministers.

DOS has introduced another initiative that shows promise. The Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program has brought around 5,000 teenagers from countries with significant Muslim populations to the United States since 2003.

Citizen Dialogue is a new program that sends U.S. Muslim citizens around the world to engage in dialogue (town-hall meetings and media interviews) with foreign Muslims. These meetings are often run through U.S. embassies. This program is too young to evaluate, but it seems a wise way to use the talents of the U.S. Muslim community.

Support for Pluralism, Prosperity, Gender Equity

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), begun in 2002, oversees a number of small programs to support democracy, education, economic growth and the empowerment of women.

MEPI is hampered by a conundrum: its main mission is to promote political reform in countries run by autocrats, but this would undermine regimes that the United States relies on for strategic cooperation. Hence, MEPI operates mainly in the weakest, least important Mideast states. It does little in America's closest allies such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. And most of

MEPI's early funding has gone to assisting Mideast government agencies or officials, despite MEPI's mission to focus on civil-society groups.

Overall, MEPI has achieved little. It has the look of underfunded window dressing, organized to allow the United States to claim some engagement with the issues that MEPI is tasked to address, but without real engagement.

Language Training

The U.S. government sponsors language-training programs to teach others English and to teach Americans Arabic and other Muslim-world languages. U.S. language-training programs are very valuable, very successful and far too small.

In 2004, the Bush administration launched an initiative to teach English to under-served teens in their countries, the English Access Microscholarship Program. The program has reached approximately 44,000 youth in more than 55 countries since its inception. This is a decent start, but only a start, given the vast size of the Muslim world (1.3 billion people). Language training for foreigners is cheap, and the United States should provide it widely, especially for non-elite young people who otherwise could not get training.

The National Security Language Initiative, introduced by President Bush in 2006, provided funds for increased foreign-language training (including Arabic) in elementary school through college in the United States and for fellowships for American students to study the Arabic abroad. This program is very effective but much too small. It should be scaled up to several times its current size (\$100 million). Quality candidates are available. The U.S. government received over 6,000 applications for 367 language-training scholarships in 2007. Thus it turned away more than 5,600 people (over 93 percent of applicants) who wanted to help shore up America's language skills, a key U.S. weakness in its struggle against al-Qaeda. As noted above, the State Department and U.S. military still have very few Arabic speakers, most with no better than Level 3 skills. These are good enough to translate basic documents but not to conduct regular government business, for which Levels 4 or 5 — the highest levels — are required. Expanding the National Security Language Initiative would help correct this shortfall.²⁵

Ambassadors

U.S. ambassadors and other State Department officials do important work shaping debate and perceptions abroad. Their foreign placement allows them to learn local cultures and develop relationships that can help them be heard when the need arises. Funding for their activities is notoriously meager, however, especially when compared to the Defense Department and other security agencies. The DOD budget was 34 times the size of the State Department budget in 2008.²⁶ There are more musicians in U.S. military bands than there are foreign service officers in the State Department. Again, there is something wrong with this picture.

IMPROVING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The following suggestions emerge from America's public-diplomacy experience. Several have a common theme: public diplomacy should usually be conducted as a dialogue, not a monologue. Dialogue makes the audience feel heard, which primes the audience to consider the

speaker's message. It also helps the audience to educate the speaker about its concerns, and this helps the speaker focus discussion on the real interests of the audience. U.S. public diplomacy has often assumed a monologue format in recent years. Instead, the United States should focus on creating a two-way exchange of ideas.

More Listening

The United States should discern the views of target audiences before developing programs to address them.²⁷ Past U.S. programs have sometimes faltered because the Americans talked before listening. For example, the U.S. Shared Values Initiative of 2001-02, which featured TV ads that touted the high quality of life enjoyed by Muslims in America, was nicely produced but addressed a question that the Muslim world was not asking.²⁸ Muslims around the world were concerned with U.S. policies toward the Muslim world, not with conditions of life for U.S. Muslims. The "Shared Values" campaign talked past them.²⁹

Re-brand the Wars

The United States should re-label its main counterterrorism efforts to avoid confusing itself and muddling its message overseas. The "war on terror" should become the "war on al-Qaeda"; the "war of ideas" should become the "dialogue of ideas."

"War on terror" misleads Americans by defining too many players — all of the world's many terrorist groups — as adversaries. It mixes real enemies with neutrals or non-enemies (all terrorists do not threaten the United States), leading Americans to believe they must fight non-adversaries. It also fails to set priorities. Some hostile terrorists are far more dangerous than others, but a call to a "war on terror" suggests an equivalence among them.

The "war on terror" label obscures the potential of a divide-and-conquer strategy toward hostile groups. Assigning these groups a common framing masks the conflicts among them. A divide-and-conquer strategy has promise because internecine conflicts among extremist groups often run deep. For example, some elements of the extremist Sunni Muslim community voice more hatred of Shia Muslims than of Jews or Christians.³⁰ A smart U.S. strategy could exploit this hatred to weaken extremists among both Shia and Sunni, and the United States should use concepts that remind us of this possibility.³¹ "War on terror" fails to do this.

"War of ideas" should be dropped in favor of "dialogue of ideas" or "engagement of ideas." The word "war" connotes one side's winning or losing, imposing its will on another, and using force to do it. To Arabs and Muslims, "war of ideas" suggests a war on *their* ideas, their religion and their culture. Using language that carries this hostile undertone is a poor way to start a conversation. In contrast, "dialogue" or "engagement" implies equality among parties, respect for the opinions of both sides, a conversation instead of a monologue, and an effort to find solutions that serve the interests of both sides. Muslims will join a "dialogue of ideas" with more open minds than a "war of ideas."

Bring People Together

Experts widely agree that the Fulbright and International Visitor Leader Programs and similar people-to-people exchange initiatives have been great successes and should be expanded.³² Giles

Scott-Smith notes that exchange programs are “an oft-neglected but arguably the most successful element of public diplomacy.”³³ He adds that U.S. Foreign Service officers have consistently reported that exchange programs are “one of the most effective means to influence opinion abroad. In particular, U.S. ambassadors rate the IVLP as the most useful of all public diplomacy tools available to them.”³⁴ The experience of other countries confirms these judgments. For example, Franco-German exchanges after World War II are widely deemed an important ingredient to Franco-German rapprochement.³⁵ This evidence makes clear that the United States should greatly increase its investment in exchange programs.

Increase Language Training

The United States should teach English to more Muslim-world citizens. This would prepare them to participate in exchanges and ease U.S. government efforts to engage in direct dialogue with ordinary citizens. More important, the U.S. should teach Muslim-world languages to many more Americans. Teaching Muslim-world languages to Americans would provide the government with more multilingual talent for public-diplomacy activities and better prepare ordinary Americans to understand and have dialogue with the Muslim world, including participation in exchanges.

Improve U.S. Broadcasting

Current U.S. broadcast media aimed at the Arab world (Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa) are largely ineffective. They should be remade, and the VOA Arabic Service should be restored.³⁶ A remade U.S. media should observe two public-diplomacy best practices: Socratic dialogue over monologue, and objective facts over polemics.

Recent U.S. public-diplomacy media efforts have favored monologue over give-and-take discussion. On Alhurra, recorded broadcasts have predominated over talk shows and call-in programs, and Radio Sawa has no political talk shows. All evidence indicates that this is the wrong approach. Monologue format is less effective than dialogue. People listen better to people who listen to them, and people listen better when they are also allowed to speak. Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault observe that “the need to be heard is a fundamental characteristic of human nature,” and “a century of communication research demonstrates that the need to be heard represents an almost universal human characteristic.”³⁷ As they note, democratization researchers report that “individuals are more likely to feel favorably toward those with opposing viewpoints and consider political outcomes fair ... if they have the opportunity to engage in discussion and debate.”³⁸ Accordingly, a reformed U.S. broadcasting operation should feature dialogue over one-way monologue.

This requires empowering U.S. ambassadors and other officials to engage in debate about history and current U.S. policy — and protecting them from attack by domestic primitives. Many U.S. officials are understandably leery of leading Socratic dialogue because a small slip on camera can cause a career-ending firestorm at home. Hence, a high-level presidential commitment to insulate U.S. officials from domestic attack, and to counterattack on their behalf, is required.³⁹

The United States should reformat its media to offer more objective news, with fewer polemics or one-sided arguments. For example, British public-diplomacy broadcasting has long emphasized objective news, as heard on the BBC. In contrast, U.S. public diplomacy has emphasized advocacy. This is a mistake for two reasons. First, successful persuasion requires a credible messenger, and credibility is best earned by offering accurate, objective information.⁴⁰ Second, in the war between the United States and al-Qaeda, facts are more often America's friend than foe. Bin Laden is, in fact, a bad guy. Al-Qaeda is a bad outfit with a bad program; it does bad deeds. Authoritarian Islamist rule has been a cruel failure in Afghanistan, Sudan and Iran. The United States is not out to destroy Islam. Objective facts favor the United States, so U.S. public diplomacy should favor formats that feature objective facts.

U.S. broadcasting also needs better management. Recent U.S. broadcasting has failed partly because the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is poorly run. Appointments to the eight-member board that runs it have often been awarded as perks to political friends of those making appointments. As a result, the BBG has become a headless horseman, independent of outside control but poorly managed from within. In recent years, influential board member Norman Pattiz was allowed wide latitude to make poor decisions without debate or accountability for results. High-quality professionals with experience in public diplomacy should be appointed to all BBG board posts, and the BBG should be held to high standards of performance.⁴¹

Involve American Muslims

U.S. public diplomacy should not focus solely on foreign audiences but also include American Muslims in the discussion. The U.S. Muslim community has valuable language and cultural skills that should be fully mobilized to support U.S. public diplomacy and other national-security programs abroad. Conversely, U.S. Muslim communities could provide havens for al-Qaeda cells if they became alienated from society, like some Muslim communities in Europe. To maintain the support of the Muslim community and mobilize its skills, the U.S. government must be in close two-way communication with U.S. Muslim communities and quickly address any concerns and grievances that stem from security measures (such as anti-Muslim profiling in airports) or private discrimination against Muslims.

Be Specific

U.S. public diplomacy should be tailored to individual foreign audiences. Communities are different. When it comes to public diplomacy, one size does not fit all. Accordingly, U.S. public diplomacy should speak separately to the unique beliefs and worries of each foreign Muslim community. A tailored message of this sort will better connect to each community's concerns. It also conveys respect.

A dialogue format makes it easier to tailor public diplomacy in this fashion. Dialogue creates opportunities for communities to educate the United States about their unique concerns, which in turn helps the United States to address them.

Improve Muslim-World and U.S. Education

Extremist Muslim religious schools have been a conduit for the al-Qaeda narrative in parts of the Muslim world.⁴² Accordingly, the United States should put a priority on moderating their curricula or putting them out of business. Such schools often exist because public schools are deficient and overseas (often Saudi) funders are available. The United States can improve this situation by helping governments to provide better public education, which can then replace the extremist schools. It should also press foreign donors directly or through their governments to stop donating.⁴³

The U.S. government can also directly educate the Muslim world by reviving its American cultural centers and their libraries. Important dialogue between Americans and non-Americans formerly took place at American cultural centers in foreign countries run by U.S. foreign-service officers. Non-Americans also learned a great deal at American cultural-center libraries. The books in many of these libraries were famously dog-eared from overuse. Partly for security reasons, these centers have been largely replaced by more anodyne American Corners, displays of Americana that are tucked away in local schools or libraries and have no American staff to engage visitors. But the problem of securing American cultural centers is not insurmountable, and they should be reopened.⁴⁴

Education in the United States also needs improvement. To engage in dialogue with those from the Muslim world, Americans must know something about its culture and history. Americans know very little, however, because U.S. education on these subjects is woefully thin. This should change. A broad increase in education on the Muslim world is needed in American secondary and higher education.

Improve Trade and Aid Policies

- Reduce trade barriers against textile and food imports from Pakistan, Indonesia and other Arab/Muslim countries. This will cause workers who produce food and textiles to feel more in partnership with the United States, while raising their standard of living and reducing costs for U.S. consumers.
- Don't object to Arab/Muslim import restrictions on U.S. entertainment products (TV, films and music). Many Arabs and Muslims are offended by the materialism, hedonism, pornography and violence that saturate these media. They resent its corrosive effect on their traditional social values.⁴⁵ The U.S. alienates potential friends by forcing these products on Muslim societies.
- Offer prompt and generous relief in the wake of calamitous natural disasters, such as the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and the 2005 Pakistani earthquake. Aid given in times of greatest trauma is especially appreciated and long remembered. U.S. aid to the victims of the tsunami caused a marked improvement in Indonesian views of the United States.⁴⁶ Such aid should not be an ad-hoc response, but a standing policy.
- Publicize U.S. humanitarian and economic aid to Arab/Muslim countries. This modest aid is largely invisible to Muslim publics, partly because USAID is generally prohibited from using program funds to publicize its aid efforts.⁴⁷ As a result, Muslim publics greatly underestimate the scope of U.S. aid.⁴⁸ Effort should be made to take public credit for aid given.

Increase Funding and Improve Leadership

Money invested in shaping foreign opinion yields a good return if it is spent wisely, but the United States now spends very little on the mission. This is penny-wise and pound-foolish. In FY 2008, the United States spent only \$1.6 billion on public diplomacy worldwide.⁴⁹ In contrast, it spent \$8.4 billion per month on the Iraq war in early 2009.⁵⁰ Thus, what it spends on public diplomacy in a year, it spent in six days in Iraq.⁵¹ Moreover, while current figures are unavailable, those from 2003 suggest that only about one-quarter of State Department public diplomacy spending is directed at Muslim-majority states.⁵²

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. The second, Margaret Tutwiler, left after a brief tour of duty. The third director, Karen Hughes, was allowed to defer her arrival for months while the job sat empty, then left in 2007. This musical-chairs leadership reflected a failure by the Bush team to put priority on waging a forceful war of ideas.⁵³ Future U.S. administrations should put first-rate leaders in charge of this essential mission.

Create a State Department Bureau of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a distinct mission requiring special skills and training that are not needed for government-to-government (G2G) diplomacy (and vice-versa).⁵⁴ Accordingly, the work should be performed largely by dedicated public-diplomacy officers who have special training and skills and are judged for promotion based specifically on their performance in public-diplomacy functions. Toward this goal, a semi-autonomous Bureau of Public Diplomacy should be established within the State Department.⁵⁵ Public-diplomacy specialists should be collected in this bureau (they are now scattered through the State Department, where their public-diplomacy skills atrophy as they work on other matters); and a new assistant secretary of state for public diplomacy should be given authority over their hiring, training, promotion, assignments and budgets. Most State Department public diplomacy should be assigned to these officers, who should spend most of their time doing this work.

Before 1999, most U.S. public diplomacy was conducted by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Due to unwise pressure from Congress, the USIA was absorbed into the State Department in 1999. This merger was a serious mistake. It cannot now be easily undone, but much of the damage could be abated by uniting public-diplomacy officers in a new bureau. This step would restore professionalism to U.S. public diplomats and make their work far more effective.

In addition, the primacy of the State Department over public diplomacy should be restored. In recent years the Department of Defense has developed its own public-diplomacy activities. These have not been successful. Instead the DOD should be confined to its traditional limited role of conducting psychological operations (“psyops”) against wartime enemies.⁵⁶

Convey Respect

Arabs and other Muslims widely believe that Americans view them with disrespect.⁵⁷ This is a prime cause of Arab/Muslim anger toward the United States. Accordingly, the format and

content of U.S. communication toward the Muslim world should be redesigned to convey respect. Dialogue should be favored over monologue, as discussed above, partly because dialogue requires listening, and listening shows respect. Objective news should be favored over polemics in U.S. broadcasts, partly because polemics suggest that the broadcaster thinks the audience is too stupid to recognize propaganda for what it is.

Address Arab/Muslim Interests

As a general matter, the United States should adapt its foreign policy to reflect the concerns of the peoples of the Arab/Muslim world. Even the best public diplomacy cannot defend foreign policies that damage others' core interests. The United States has hurt its standing in the Arab/Muslim world by supporting unpopular authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and by giving unconditional support to Israel, which implicates the American people in Israel's much-hated expansionism. Such policies are very hard to justify to Arab/Muslim publics. Instead, the United States should gently favor pluralism and good governance in the Arab world, and strongly back Israel within its 1967 borders but strongly oppose Israeli expansion beyond those borders, including all Israeli settlement activity in contested areas. Only *in extremis* should it attack, invade or occupy Arab and Muslim states, as U.S. uses of force against Muslims provoke great resentment.

President Obama gestured toward these policies in his dramatic June 4, 2009, speech at Cairo University. Now he should follow through.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

Contest the al-Qaeda Narrative

To date, the U.S. government has largely sidestepped direct debate about the validity of the al-Qaeda narrative. Instead, the United States should move to challenge and destroy it. This narrative is highly compelling and widely believed in large parts of the Muslim world.⁵⁸ It motivates many to join or support the movement. As long as it has traction in Muslim societies, al-Qaeda will have fertile ground to find recruits, money and haven.

The United States should contest this narrative because it is both dangerous and flimsy, resting on claims that are usually debatable and often patently false. As such, it is highly vulnerable to attack. Moreover, al-Qaeda will endure as long as its narrative remains intact. And its narrative will remain as long as it goes uncriticized.

Some argue that a debate over al-Qaeda's narrative would happen on al-Qaeda's terms and could never be won. But the greater danger lies in ducking the debate. Even implausible arguments are believed if they are not answered. Accordingly, al-Qaeda's arguments will be accepted by many if they are not refuted.

The al-Qaeda narrative has a theological chapter and a historical chapter. Both chapters should be countered.

Theology

Al-Qaeda's theology has six elements: salafist roots, the militarization of jihad, the elevation of jihad, the framing of vast imperial aims, and justification for the killing of both civilians and Muslims. All six elements are departures from mainstream Muslim belief.

- Salafist roots. Al-Qaeda thinkers embrace the puritanical Sunni salafist tradition that seeks to return the Muslim world to the social and religious practice of the time of Mohammed. Salafis hold that the rules of government and society should be based solely on their particular literalist reading of the Quran, the Hadith and the Sharia. Unlike mainstream Muslims, they therefore reject all Western social ideas and inventions, including democracy, constitutions, human rights, personal freedom, international law and Western economic concepts.⁵⁹ Al-Qaeda adopts this salafi worldview.

- Militarization and elevation of jihad. "Jihad" is an Arabic term meaning "struggle toward good" or "striving in the way of God." Mainstream Muslims recognize two types of jihad: an internal struggle to be a good person (the greater jihad) and an external struggle to defend Islam against injury or attack (the lesser jihad). The struggle to be a good person is considered the more important of the two. The lesser jihad requires defending Islam, by force if necessary, but includes no duty to wage aggressive war. In fact, aggressive war is forbidden by mainstream Muslim theology. Both jihad duties are subordinate to the five pillars of Sunni Islam.⁶⁰

Al-Qaeda thinkers invert mainstream Islam by elevating the duty to defend the faith above the duty to be a good person.⁶¹ In this way they militarize the concept of jihad. They also elevate jihad itself to exalted status, at the same level as the five pillars of traditional mainstream Islam.⁶² And they vastly expand the lesser jihad to include three elements excluded or forbidden by mainstream Islam: expansionist wars of aggression, and the mass killing of noncombatants and Muslims.

- Framing of imperial aims. Al-Qaeda thinkers use two devices to expand the lesser jihad to both allow and require aggressive war.⁶³ First, they define any place that was ever ruled by Muslims or ever had a significant Muslim population to be "Muslim" land today. They then hold that if these lands are not now governed by Muslim rulers, they are under attack and must be defended, by force if necessary. The mainstream Muslim rule against waging aggressive war is thereby replaced by a *de facto* requirement to use force to spread Muslim rule.⁶⁴

A vast swath of the world is targeted by this legerdemain. All of Spain ("al-Andalus"), the Balkans, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, India, Nepal, Burma, the Philippines, East Timor, Eritrea, all of Israel, Lebanon and Russia (on grounds that Russian leaders once paid tribute to Muslim Tatars) are defined as "Muslim land" by various jihadi thinkers.⁶⁵ The allies of the "attackers" who now occupy these "Muslim lands" are also legitimate targets, as they assist the alleged attack. Overall, much of the planet is fair game. Al-Qaeda's theoreticians have manufactured a warrant for an immense global war of aggression.

In addition, al-Qaeda thinkers define "aggression" against Islam to include the mere existence of competing ideologies, rather than physical attack by another group or state. Thus Sayyid Qutb, a key source of ideas for al-Qaeda, argued that "we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements that limit his freedom," to include "beliefs and concepts."⁶⁶ This truer understanding of Islam requires the global spread

of Muslim rule — “the establishment of the sovereignty of God and His Lordship throughout the world,” as Qutb put it.⁶⁷

- Justifying the killing of civilians and Muslims. Al-Qaeda thinkers allow, even require, the mass killing of noncombatants during wartime. Osama bin Laden has 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.”⁶⁸ An al-Qaeda press spokesman, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, claimed a right for al-Qaeda to kill four million Americans, including two million children.⁶⁹ Al-Qaeda thinkers have argued that Islam permits the vast killing of civilians that the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would cause,⁷⁰ and Osama bin Laden has unambiguously promised to use WMD if he can.⁷¹

Al-Qaeda also expands jihad to allow violence, including mass violence, against other Muslims.⁷² Mainstream Islam forbids this. Al-Qaeda thinkers draw on the writing of early salafi writer Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) to evade this rule.⁷³ Ibn Taymiyya advanced the doctrine of *takfir*, holding that people who do not follow the correct (salafi) interpretation of Islam or support political regimes that govern against Muslim law can be declared *takfir*, i.e., no longer Muslim. Such persons then may be killed, even though they consider themselves Muslim. This argument allows al-Qaeda to direct its violence against Muslims as well as non-Muslims.⁷⁴

By these devices al-Qaeda defines much of humanity to be a permissible, even mandatory, target for violence. A mainstream Islam that forbids aggressive war, the killing of non-combatants and the killing of other Muslims has been distorted into its polar opposite.

History

The al-Qaeda historical narrative features the claim that the West has waged an unprovoked and unrelenting war of aggression against a peaceful Muslim world since the time of Mohammed. Events mentioned as episodes in this aggressive war include the Crusades; the brutal colonization of Muslims by the British, French, Russians, Italians and Americans from the eighteenth century to the 1960s; the destruction of the caliphate after World War I; and the establishment of Israel in 1948. More recent episodes include the U.S. humanitarian intervention in Somalia (1992-94);⁷⁵ alleged U.S. support for the murder and expulsion of Bosnian Muslims by Serbs in the early 1990s;⁷⁶ Western support for the independence of East Timor from Indonesia (1999), which “tore apart Indonesia and deported the Muslims of Timor”;⁷⁷ alleged U.S. support for India’s oppression of Muslims in Kashmir and for Russian oppression of Muslim Chechens;⁷⁸ the alleged U.S. killing of many hundreds of thousands of Iraqis by economic sanctions directed at Saddam Hussein’s regime from 1991 to 2001;⁷⁹ the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003); and U.S. support for Israel’s many military actions against Arabs since 1948.⁸⁰ An al-Qaeda propaganda film summarizes the damage allegedly done by this aggression: “Today the entire Muslim nation is subject to the tyranny and oppression of ... Crusader disbelief.”⁸¹ As Western motives, al-Qaeda asserts that the United States does not value the lives of Muslims and that it seeks to destroy Islam and control its oil. Al-Qaeda claims that its violence protects Muslims from this aggression.

Assessing the Narrative

The theological chapter of the narrative cannot be judged “right” or “wrong,” as it rests on belief, not facts. But it can be deemed highly deviant from the mainstream Muslim understanding of Islam.

The historical chapter of the al-Qaeda narrative is a farrago of half-truths and fabrications. If true, it would indeed justify Muslim rage against the crimes of the West. But it deviates far from the truth, partly by making false claims, but, more important, by omitting basic truths whose absence renders the story false.

Not all claims in the al-Qaeda historical narrative are false. The West did brutally colonize large parts of the Muslim world from the 1700s to the 1960s, does care more about the lives of Western citizens than Muslim civilians, does prop up Muslim autocrats, and does back Israel more or less unconditionally.

Other important allegations in the al-Qaeda narrative are untrue. These include claims that the United States was largely responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis (or more) under sanctions imposed on Saddam Hussein between 1991 and 2003; engaged in predation against Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor; supported Russian and Indian cruelties against Muslims in Kosovo and Kashmir; and in a larger sense has sought to destroy Islam. This portrayal grossly distorts the historical record. The Western sanctions of 1991-2003 allowed Saddam Hussein enough food and medicine to care for his people, but Saddam refused to distribute these resources. Hence, the United States was only tangentially responsible for the suffering; Saddam was the main culprit. The United States committed serious mistakes during its interventions in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, 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-majority populations, and its intervention in Somalia saved some 22,000 Muslim Somali lives.⁸² The Western powers involved themselves in East Timor in 1999 to halt Indonesian brutality against the East Timorese, not to injure Muslims. The United States has not supported Russian or Indian brutality in Chechnya or Kashmir and has not sought in any sense to destroy Islam.

Most important is what the al-Qaeda narrative omits. It portrays the history of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims as a record of unprovoked one-way violence by non-Muslims. But the violence has in fact been a two-way street.

Western states have committed great cruelties against Muslim societies. These include some crimes that al-Qaeda decries (Western efforts to subdue Muslim colonies, between 1700 and the 1960s, as noted above), and some that al-Qaeda omits (the 1953 U.S. coup in Iran and a cynical U.S. policy toward Afghanistan from 1989 to 1992 that left it in flames).

On the other hand, Muslim Sudan’s government has slaughtered two million non-Muslim South Sudanese since 1983, and it supported the murderous Lord’s Resistance Army’s rampage in Uganda until 2002. Muslim Indonesia murdered 200,000 Christian East Timorese from 1975 to 2000 and 400,000-500,000 of its non-Muslim Chinese minority in 1965. Muslim Turkey massacred 600,000-1,500,000 Christian Armenians in the slaughters of 1895 and 1915, in one of the great genocides of modern times.⁸³

Thus, the recent history of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims is marred by great crimes committed by both sides. Both have put themselves in the wrong by their brutal conduct. Accordingly, both should confess their crimes, hang their heads in shame and ask forgiveness. And both should temper their complaints against the other in the light of their own barbarism.

Islamist extremists also have much Muslim blood on their hands. Their crimes include the slaughter of several hundred thousand Muslims in Darfur by Sudan's Islamist government since 2003; the killing of thousands of Afghan Muslims by Afghanistan's Islamist Taliban government during the 1990s; the killing of tens of thousands of Algerian Muslims by the violent Algerian Islamist movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) from 1992 to 1998; and the killing of thousands of Iraqi Shia by Sunni extremists in Iraq since 2003. Extreme Islamists posture as defenders of Muslims, but they have killed far more Muslims than have Americans, Europeans and Israelis in recent years.

In short, the al-Qaeda narrative leaves much to debate and correct. To fail to address the narrative would leave a powerful rationale for supporting al-Qaeda in place. What steps should the United States take?

Debating the Narrative

The U.S. government should do what it can to amplify Muslim voices that dispute the al-Qaeda narrative. Toward this goal, the U.S. should give any useful assistance to Muslim leaders, scholars, commentators, schools, publishers and other institutions that challenge al-Qaeda's ideology. It must be recognized, however, that U.S. aid can undercut the credibility of its recipients with Muslim audiences.

The U.S. government should also build up its in-house knowledge on all matters related to the al-Qaeda narrative, so that its own people can debate that narrative effectively. A U.S. government voice in this debate will be effective if it is backed by deep expertise.

Toward this goal, the U.S. government should establish a Civilization Dialogue Corps (CDC) to debate the theological and historical chapters of the al-Qaeda narrative. The CDC would be based in the new State Department Bureau of Public Diplomacy (whose creation we recommended above). It would comprise a few U.S. State Department officers who are deeply learned in Islamic law and theology, Muslim religious history, the political and social history of the Muslim world, and the history of Muslim relations with non-Muslims. Preferably, CDC officers would speak a language of the Muslim world (e.g., Arabic, Pashto, Punjabi, Farsi or Indonesian). To gain sufficient expertise, CDC officers will need months or even years of intensive special schooling. Those specializing in Islamic law and history would need training to the level of respected Muslim scholars.

CDC officers would be prepared to explain how the al-Qaeda theological narrative departs from mainstream Islam, and to expose errors in its historical narrative, while granting truthful elements of the narrative and advancing a mainstream view of relevant history. CDC officers would also lead in organizing and empowering voices in the Muslim world to dispute the al-Qaeda narrative.

Clearly, Muslim communities will not accept CDC officers as authorities on Islamic theology or history, but will still listen mainly to their own authorities. Even so, CDC officers will serve a

valuable purpose. At a minimum, their existence will stand as a visible gesture of respect to Muslims, demonstrating that the U.S. government cares enough about Muslims to become informed about them. CDC officers will also calm Muslim fears that the United States is “out to destroy Islam” by showing an awareness that mainstream Islam and the West have important values in common (as President Obama argued in his Cairo University speech), and that al-Qaeda’s theology is a perversion of Islam. And in the long run, CDC officers will affect the terms of discourse among Muslims by pointing to facts or arguments that Muslims by their own research then find to be well-supported. They may not persuade many Muslims directly, but they will spur useful discussions in which Muslims persuade one another.

To create CDC officers, the State Department could send a few of its Arabic, Pashto, Punjabi or Indonesian speakers to seminary to learn Islamic law or history. It could recruit American scholars who are learned in Islamic law or history to work part-time representing the U.S. government in Arab/Muslim media and other Arab/Muslim forums, acting as a kind of “civilian reserve” and subject to being called up as needed. Or it could recruit Muslim-world scholars who are willing to work openly for the U.S. government as full-time or part-time employees. They would be available free to Mideast media, such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya.

Some say that Muslims will never agree to debate their narratives with Americans, so there is no point preparing to join the discussion. In fact, however, the U.S. government has denied itself the expertise needed to join the discussion. At this point, the U.S. government knows too little about Islamic theology or history to have anything interesting or useful to say about them. Why should Muslims want to have a dialogue with the ignorant? When the U.S. government brings more expertise to the table, it will be more welcome. It can make itself a legitimate interlocutor by paying its dues through study and learning.

As noted above, demagogues in the United States have sometimes made a sport of attacking foreign-service officers for moments of public candor. But CDC officers cannot be effective if they fear being pilloried for doing their jobs. They will need protection from such attacks.

Create NGOs: Religious-Hate Watch, Myth Watch

The U.S. government should seek ways to bring into being new nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that will contest the al-Qaeda narrative and otherwise support U.S. goals. What is needed are two new “naming-and-shaming” NGOs — in the mold of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Transparency Watch and the Southern Poverty Law Center — to address harmful ideas around the world.

Existing NGOs have demonstrated that naming and shaming is effective. States that abuse human rights or allow corruption fear criticism from these NGOs and sometimes improve their conduct to avoid it.

The new NGOs would name and shame in like fashion but for a new purpose: to expose and criticize the propagation of destructive ideas, especially ideas that support the al-Qaeda narrative. The success of these organizations would dampen harmful ideas around the world and thereby serve important American foreign policy goals. The U.S. government cannot lead in creating these NGOs, but could inspire friends in civil society to make them happen.

Religious-Hate Watch would expose and censure the use of religious authority — God’s authority or the authority of a religious faith — for hate in every religious community. It would monitor outlets for religious ideas across the world, including churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, religious schools and universities, religious print and electronic media, and the Internet. Its mission would include criticism of hateful scripture, which is found in every religion. Religious-Hate Watch would challenge religions to find a way to decommission hate scripture and make it a dead letter.

Religious-Hate Watch would also press religious communities to acknowledge wrongs that their faith has committed against others. Experience shows that those who admit their own wrongs are far less likely to repeat them. Accordingly, religious communities that acknowledge their past misdeeds will be less likely to abuse others. Truth commissions have often served as a format for acknowledging wrong in the aftermath of civil conflict or human rights abuse, most famously in South Africa.⁸⁴ Organized religions could be urged to follow this example and implement their own truth commissions.⁸⁵

Religious-Hate Watch would not seek to limit others’ free-speech rights. Rather, it would answer hate speech with speech of its own. Monologues by religious haters would be replaced by dialogues that included voices critical of the haters’ message. Purveyors of hate would find themselves sharing the podium with others, and their followers would hear both sides of the story. Thus, Religious-Hate Watch would create more, not less, free speech on religious/political issues.⁸⁶

Five observations support the case for creating Religious-Hate Watch:

(1) The demon of hate-filled and violent religion is rising in the world. Al-Qaeda’s violence is just one example of a wider menace. Examples of other recent religious conflicts include civil wars in Sudan between Islamists and non-Muslims since 1956, civil war in Algeria between radical Islamists and secularists in the 1990s, war between Islamist Shia Iran and Sunni-ruled Iraq in the 1980s, civil war between Sunni and Shia in Iraq since 2003, the rise of religious motives on both sides in the Israel-Palestine and India-Pakistan conflicts in recent decades, the recent civil war in Sri Lanka between Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils, civil violence between the Islamist Taliban and others in Afghanistan in the 1990s, and a general rise of angry Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu fundamentalisms in recent years.⁸⁷

(2) Organized religions face little accountability for their actions. A mechanism to hold them responsible for destructive conduct is needed.

(3) Moral criticism can improve the terms of debate in morally unhinged communities. Examples of communities that were transformed by moral criticism include the United States in the era of slavery and racist Jim Crow laws, the Soviet Union and the world communist movement after World War II, apartheid South Africa and the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. The elites of these communities came to accept that their political or social systems or ideas were illegitimate partly because outsiders made criticisms that they could not answer. Works like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* and *First Circle* helped demolish the moral case for slavery and communism. Similarly, criticism of religious hatred can help persuade religious communities to renounce it.

(4) Religious-Hate Watch could give Western voices another useful entry point into the intra-Islam debate on theology. It would define itself as a neutral body that holds all faiths to the same standard and includes members of all faiths in its leadership. Accordingly, it would be hard for leaders of any faith to refuse dialogue with it. Those who declined would reveal themselves as having no answers or something to hide.

(5) U.S. efforts to defeat al-Qaeda are damaged by non-Muslim religious extremism as well as Muslim extremism, because non-Muslim extremism fans Muslim extremism. Extremist religious movements reinforce one another. Each uses the threat posed by the other to mobilize its followers. Islamic extremists exploit Christian and Jewish anti-Islamic rhetoric to whip up their followers, and vice-versa. Christian pastor Franklin Graham, who famously termed Islam a “very wicked and evil religion,”⁸⁸ and Osama Bin Laden are de facto allies. They help keep each other in business. It would therefore assist U.S. efforts against al-Qaeda to weaken extremists of all stripes, including Christian, Jewish and Hindu. Hence, efforts that dampen hate in all religious communities would help the U.S. war — or dialogue — of ideas against al-Qaeda.

Reaching agreement on a working definition of religious hate will take effort. The problem lies in finding a definition that is neither too broad nor too narrow. For example, the question of religious exclusivism will pose a thorny issue. Some argue that claims by any religion to be the only path to God are hateful, as they suggest that other believers are lesser people in the eyes of God. But such claims are widely made by religious communities. Thus, many Christians cite the words of Jesus in John 14:6, “I am the way; ... no one comes to the Father except by me,” as evidence that Christianity is the only path to God.⁸⁹ Finding ways to address such beliefs without branding vast parts of the world as hateful will require care.

Myth Watch would expose and censure the purveyance of false chauvinist historical narratives by governments, political movements and other groups around the world. It would serve the war/dialogue of ideas by deflating anti-American narratives worldwide and dampening or preventing conflicts that are fed by chauvinist narratives and become fodder for al-Qaeda propaganda.

Political leaders widely use self-justifying, self-glorifying, and other-denigrating historical narratives to mobilize public support for themselves and their programs. Such narratives are a prime cause of conflict. World Wars I and II were fueled by chauvinist historical falsehoods that fed toxic ideologies of victimization, helping to spawn aggressive foreign policies.⁹⁰ Hitler rode to power on malignant lies about history and used these lies to justify his aggressions.

Such lies still play a pernicious role in many situations around the world today. As discussed above, al-Qaeda inspires its followers with a fictional self-whitewashing, other-blaming victim narrative. Israelis and Palestinians both embrace self-whitewashing, other-blaming narratives about their mutual history. Such narratives also fueled Serb-Croat-Bosniak violence in the 1990s and stoke hard-line foreign-policy arguments in Russia and China today.

Since 1945, Western Europe has commonized the teaching of history under prodding from UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute of Brunswick, Germany. Eckert and UNESCO sponsored an international dialogue about school history texts that helped narrow differences in the teaching of history across countries.⁹¹ An indigenous movement for historical truth-telling in Germany pushed German education still further in the right direction. The success of these

efforts goes far to explain why war is now unthinkable in Western Europe, and shows that malignant history can be revised by concerted action. We should scale up the European insight and replicate it worldwide. A Myth Watch should be established to preemptively contest chauvinist lies when they appear, before they cause conflict.⁹²

The U.S. national interest in deflating false historical narratives worldwide lies first in abating false anti-American narratives. This would help the United States find more allies against al-Qaeda. The U.S. interest also lies in abating narratives that are not anti-American but cause war among others. Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups feed on war, as we discuss below. Hence, it is in the U.S. interest to prevent wars involving Muslims and, therefore, to deflate narratives that cause or sustain such wars.

Strengthen U.S. Peacemaking

Al-Qaeda heavily exploits wars involving Muslims in its propaganda. This propaganda features grisly images of Muslims suffering in strife-torn Israel/Palestine, Kashmir, Iraq, Chechnya and Afghanistan and in past wars in Bosnia, Kosovo and Somalia.⁹³ Al-Qaeda paints Muslims harmed in these wars as victims of Western cruelty, whether or not they were. This war-fueled propaganda supplies al-Qaeda with one of its best recruiting devices.

Ending or abating conflicts involving Muslims should therefore be a central part of the war of ideas.⁹⁴ Toward this goal, the United States should adopt a more muscular peacemaking policy toward conflicts in and around the Muslim world. Specifically, it should move beyond mediation to a stronger policy of framing final-status peace plans and then using leverage to persuade belligerents to accept the U.S. plan. Carrots would go to the peacemakers, while sticks would be applied to those who obstruct progress toward peace, as defined by their support or opposition to the U.S. peace plan.⁹⁵ For example, regarding Israel/Palestine, the United States should reintroduce President Bill Clinton's December 2000 final-status peace plan (known as the Clinton Parameters or Clinton Plan) and back it with carrots and sticks (mostly carrots) directed at both sides. This could break the logjam and finally move the parties toward peace. Polls have long shown that most Israelis and about half of all Palestinians favor peace on the terms framed in the Clinton plan.⁹⁶ What's been missing is U.S. leadership to pull them over the line.

The United States should help moderate Israeli and Palestinian leaders by promising that the U.S. government would provide incentives to their opponents for reciprocating concessions. Today, moderates on both sides hold back from offering concessions for fear of being hung out to dry, exposed as willing to concede but with no results to show for concessions. U.S. pressure would lessen this fear.⁹⁷

U.S. suasion for peace would also compel radicals on both sides to moderate their goals or risk losing support from their communities. Today, extremists on both sides — Hamas, the Israeli settler movement and its Likud allies — pay no political price for depriving their communities of peace. They can claim that “our radical actions aren't preventing peace, as there would be no peace even if we behaved better.” Hamas used this argument with success in its victorious 2005-06 election campaign. Washington can prevent this game by making clear that it will lead the region to peace unless the radicals disrupt it. Palestinians would then understand that Hamas really is preventing peace. Hamas would then be forced to moderate or lose support.

Regarding India-Pakistan, the United States should frame an Obama Plan that defines a just final-status settlement to their conflict and back it with sticks and carrots. The outlines of that plan are fairly clear.⁹⁸ What's missing is U.S. pressure to make the plan happen. India and Pakistan have at times seemed ready to make peace themselves in recent years. U.S. suasion might bring them to seal the deal.

Regarding Iraq, the United States should frame a grand bargain that defines how to settle the major outstanding issues: powers of the central government vs. the provinces; demarcation of provincial borders; sharing of control of state security services among groups; rights of provinces to organize militia; distribution of oil revenues; and the identity of Iraq (Arab or not). The United States has been in Iraq long enough to know what formulas are most acceptable to the parties. It should frame them and use leverage to persuade all the communities in Iraq to sign on. The Bush administration blundered by meekly confining itself instead to mediation and cajoling. The Obama administration should act more forcefully.

Is a muscular peacemaking policy of this kind feasible? Yes, but the following problems may need to be addressed:

- Muscular peacemaking would require a flexible policy that directs U.S. support to whichever belligerent behaves better, and shifts support from one belligerent to another when their behavior changes. But the U.S. government is often too rigid for this. Instead, it sorts the world into white hats and black hats, which it then treats as permanent friends and permanent enemies. It is not clear that Washington is capable of learning the more complicated habits of mind that muscular peacemaking requires.
- Washington officials would have to agree on a U.S. peace proposal. But achieving this agreement would often be challenging given that the belligerents will mobilize opposing lobbies in Washington to promote their cases, creating policy gridlock.
- The U.S. government would need deep knowledge of the goals and perceptions of the belligerents. But the State Department has few resources, and the wider American culture is insular. As a result, Americans know little of the world and may be the wrong people to attempt difficult social engineering in faraway lands.
- The United States would have to be a fair broker; muscular peacemaking fails if the United States pursues an unjust peace. But past U.S. policies have sometimes been tainted by prejudice or ideology, or captured by foreign lobbies (like the China lobby of the 1950s and today's Likud, Cuba, Taiwan, and Georgia lobbies) that seek their own parochial goals without regard to justice.⁹⁹ These influences on U.S. policy must be kept at bay.

Muscular peacemaking may not succeed, but Washington should try it nevertheless. The United States has a large national-security interest in peace and should run risks to pursue it, including the risk of failure.

CONCLUSION

Al-Qaeda is a grotesque movement. Its leaders preach hate against most of the world, including the vast share of the Muslim world that rejects their view of Islam. They and their allies have murdered many thousands of Muslims and other innocents. Their extreme Islamist

political model has already been tried with disastrous results in Afghanistan, Sudan and Iran. The al-Qaeda leaders are hiding in caves, with no state apparatus to amplify their message.

Such a movement should be easy to discredit and defeat. Yet al-Qaeda has so far fought the world's sole superpower to a stalemate in the worldwide struggle for hearts and minds. As a result, U.S. prospects in the larger war against al-Qaeda are uncertain. Together with its Taliban allies, al-Qaeda now threatens Afghanistan and has expanded its domain of control in Pakistan. From its redoubts in these countries it continues to threaten the wider world, including the United States. Victory against al-Qaeda is nowhere in sight and will not be won until the United States changes the terms of debate in the Muslim world through success in the dialogue of ideas.

U.S. failure in this dialogue reflects a failure of strategy. The past U.S. emphasis on monologue over dialogue and advocacy over objective facts, combined with an insufficiently respectful tone, often made U.S. public diplomacy ineffective. U.S. leaders also failed to launch initiatives to directly contest the al-Qaeda narrative and deflate pernicious ideas that support it.

There is also a failure to commit sufficient resources to the task. For many years, both the Congress and the Executive Branch have dismissed public diplomacy as unimportant, believing it deserved only a token amount of money and leadership talent.

The United States has suffered, and al-Qaeda has benefited, from these mistakes. The U.S. government should now recognize that national security requires a capacity to shape debate abroad. It should develop a sound strategy for this mission and commit resources that are appropriate to its vital importance.¹⁰⁰

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¹ This article is informed by recommendations for improving U.S. public diplomacy offered by scholars and public-policy practitioners in recent years, including Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, special eds., *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World*, special edition of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616 (March 2008); Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World* (Washington, DC, 2003, a.k.a. "The Djerejian Report"); William A. Rugh, "Repairing American Public Diplomacy," *Arab Media & Society* (February, 2009); Mike Canning, *The Overseas Post: The Forgotten Element of our Public Diplomacy* (Public Diplomacy Council, December 1, 2008); William A. Rugh, *Enabling Public Diplomacy Officers to Do Their Jobs* (Public Diplomacy Council, December 20, 2008); William A. Rugh, ed., *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds through Public Diplomacy: A Report and Action Recommendations* (Public Diplomacy Council, 2004); Leadership Group on U.S.-Muslim Engagement, *Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World* (U.S.-Muslim Engagement Project, 2008); Craig Charney and Nicole Yakatan, *A New Beginning: Strategies for a More Fruitful Dialogue with the Muslim World* (CRS No. 7, Council on Foreign Relations, May 2005); *2005 Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy* (U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 2005); *2008 Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy* (U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 2008); Kristin M. Lord, *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (Brookings, November 2008); Hady Amr, *The Need to Communicate: How to Improve U.S. Public Diplomacy with the Arab World* (Brookings, 2004); *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U.S. Public Diplomacy, Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations* (Council on Foreign Relations, September 2003); and *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Defense Science Board, 2008). Compendiums of recent writings on public diplomacy include Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (Routledge, 2009); and Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (Palgrave, 2005). A source of original documents on public diplomacy is J. Michael Waller, *The Public Diplomacy*

Reader (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2007). A survey of relevant history is found in William A. Rugh, *American Encounters with Arabs: The 'Soft Power' of U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006). A broad statement on strategy that includes useful discussion of public diplomacy is Alice E. Hunt, Kristin M. Lord, John A. Nagl and Seth D. Rosen, eds., *Beyond Bullets: Strategies for Countering Violent Extremism* (Center for a New American Security, June 2009).

² These figures are an average of the favorable percentage in each state, calculated from data in Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked* (Times Books, 2006), p. 27. On anti-Americanism, see also Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2007).

³ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Global Opinion Trends 2002-2007: A Rising Tide Lifts Mood in the Developing World* (Pew Research Center: July 24, 2007, retrieved from www.pewglobal.org), pp. 45-46. Percentages of the public mentioning the United States as a threat: Bangladesh, 72 percent; Turkey, 64 percent; Pakistan, 64 percent; Indonesia, 63 percent; China, 66 percent; Russia, 49 percent; Malaysia, 46 percent; Nigeria, 32 percent; and Brazil, 45 percent. In each case, the United States was the most-mentioned threat. Even larger shares of foreign publics expressed fear that the United States could become a military threat to their country in the future. Expressing this fear were 93 percent of the public in Bangladesh, 85 percent in Indonesia, 81 percent in Malaysia, 77 percent in Turkey, 73 percent in Pakistan, 65 percent in Egypt, and 63 percent in Kuwait (!). *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*, June 12, 2006, question 38; retrieved from <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=253>. Disbelievers that Arabs performed the 9/11 attack outnumbered believers by 41 to 16 percent in Pakistan, 59 to 32 percent in Egypt, 59 to 16 percent in Turkey, and 65 to 16 percent in Indonesia. *Ibid.*

⁷ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Global Unease with Major World Powers: Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Pew Research Center, June 27, 2007, retrieved from www.pewglobal.org), p. 22.

⁸ "Egyptian Public to Greet Obama With Suspicion," WorldPublicOpinion.org, June 3, 2009.

⁹ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Global Opinion Trends 2002-2007*, pp. 57, 148.

¹⁰ <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/index.cfm?page=mission>.

¹¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/03/12/shaikh.reward/index.html>.

¹² On six major occasions since 9/11, foreign citizens "dropped a dime" to inform on al-Qaeda members or plots or other terrorist plots, leading to the capture or killing of key terrorist leaders, or thwarting of plots. These instances include the captures of Ramzi Yousef and Khaled Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), and the foiling of the 2006 al-Qaeda airline-bombing plot. The breakup of the 2006 attack is reported here: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=79154&d=12&m=8&y=2006>. Three additional instances include (1) the killing of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Hamsiraji Sali in April 2004 in the Philippines (<http://manila.usembassy.gov/wwwhr393.html>); (2) the capture of Indonesian terrorist leader Riduan Isamuddin (a.k.a. "Hambali"), arrested in 2003 in Thailand on a tip by a group member (<http://www.voanews.com/uspolicy/archive/2003-08/a-2003-08-19-1-1.cfm>); and (3) the killing of Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi by U.S. forces in Iraq in 2006 using data provided by a tip (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR2006060800114.html>). Overall, more than 40 sources have been paid by the U.S. government for tip-offs providing information leading to capture/killing of terrorists since 9/11. These sources were paid for their information (a total of \$62 million) but gaining reward money was not the only motive for the tips. <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/>.

¹³ U.S. officials assert that the shadowy S Wing of Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) gives money, military supplies and planning guidance to the Afghan Taliban. Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Says Agents of Pakistan Aid Afghan Taliban," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2009, p. A1.

¹⁴ Jane Perlez, "Pakistan's Ticking Clock," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2009, p. A1.

¹⁵ In March 2009, the Obama administration announced that it would increase U.S. pressure on Pakistan to end its support for the Afghan Taliban. Peter Baker and Thom Shanker, "New Afghan Strategies for the U.S. and Its Foes: Obama to Add Even More Soldiers to Fight Militants," *The New York Times*, March 27, 2009, p. A1.

¹⁶ Robert O. Keohane and Peter Katzenstein, "The Political Consequences of Anti-Americanism," in Katzenstein and Keohane, *Anti-Americanisms*, p. 273-305 at 275. Keohane and Katzenstein offer similar conclusions at p. 276, 286, 287, 288, 295, and 304.

¹⁷ As defined by the now-defunct U.S. Information Agency (USIA).

¹⁸ The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is an independent federal agency created in 1994 and run by a board of eight members appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, plus the secretary of state. No more than four board members may be from the same political party. The BBG oversees all non-military international U.S. TV and radio broadcasting.

¹⁹ Mark Kilbane, "Military Psychological Operations as Public Diplomacy," in Snow and Taylor, *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 187-200.

²⁰ Figures on U.S. public diplomacy spending directed at the Muslim world are dated and incomplete. The Djerejian Report calculated in 2003 that the U.S. government spent \$313 million on the following public diplomacy activities directed at Muslim-majority countries: \$150 million on State Department public diplomacy activities, including exchange programs and salaries for State Department officials; \$26 million for Radio Sawa in FY 2004; \$37 million for Alhurra in FY 2004; and \$100 million for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Djerejian Report, pp. 25-26, 29-30. Djerejian's figures omit U.S. government spending on Muslim-language training for Americans who are not in government, and English-language training for Muslim-worlders. Also, U.S. spending on public diplomacy worldwide rose from \$1.3 billion in FY 2003 to \$1.6 billion in FY 2008. "A Smart Funding Strategy?" Appendix to Armitage-Nye Testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 24, 2009, Figure 6, from http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com_csis_congress&task=view&id=254. Presumably, some of this spending increase was devoted to activities directed at the Muslim world. If so, \$400 million is a fair rough estimate for total U.S. public-diplomacy spending directed at the Muslim world in 2009.

²¹ A valuable critical assessment of Alhurra's programming is Philip Seib, Nick Cull and Patti Riley, *An Evaluation of Alhurra Television Programming* (USC Center on Public Diplomacy, July 31, 2008, at http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/research/project_detail/alhurra_tv_research_project/).

²² Data on al-Jazeera viewership is from *2009 Annual Arab Public Opinion Survey*, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/0519_arab_opinion/2009_arab_public_opinion_poll.pdf. Data on Alhurra viewership is from Dafna Linzer, "Alhurra Bleeding Viewers, Poll Finds, But Spending Is Up," *ProPublica*, May 29, 2009, online at <http://www.propublica.org/feature/alhurra-bleeding-viewers-poll-finds-but-spending-is-up-529>, quoting *ibid*. Data on al-Manar viewership is for 2008 and is from http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~media/files/events/2008/0414_middle_east/0414_middle_east_telhami.pdf.

²³ "Alhurra, the Free One: Assessing U.S. Satellite Television in the Middle East," *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 4, No. 11, November 2005.

²⁴ Two capable U.S. officials were pilloried in recent years by conservative commentators and members of Congress in this fashion. After a brief tenure, Larry Register was compelled to resign as director of Alhurra in June 2007 in the face of attacks by non-Arabic-speaking journalist Joel Mowbray in the pages of *The Wall Street Journal*. Register had rankled the right by his efforts to improve Alhurra. See Mark Lynch, "The Failure of Public Diplomacy," guardian.co.uk, June 16, 2007; and Abu Aardvark, "Alhurra Controversy: One Good Thing," http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/abuaardvark/2007/05/alhurra_controv.html. In 2006, Alberto Fernandez, director of the State Department media office and the U.S. government's single most effective media spokesman to the Arab world, was widely attacked by conservative commentators, including Andrew McCarthy of *National Review Online* and blogger Michelle Malkin, for acknowledging on al-Jazeera that U.S. policy in Iraq is not perfect. Fernandez remarked, "History will judge American [policy] in Iraq. We tried to do our best, but I think there is much room for criticism because, undoubtedly, there was arrogance and there was stupidity from the United States in Iraq." Fernandez followed this mild preamble with an argument for U.S. policies. Nonetheless, a firestorm of criticism followed, and the Bush administration insisted that he recant his remarks. See Dan Murphy, "Senior U.S. Diplomat's Candor Gets Play in Middle East," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 24, 2006; Abu Aardvark, "The Fernandez Problem," http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/abuaardvark/2006/10/the_fernandez_p.html; and Craig Hayden, "The Fernandez 'StupidStorm': Misunderstanding a Diplomat's Candor," USC Center on Public Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy Blog, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/newsroom/pdblog_detail/061023_the_fernandez_stupidstorm_misunderstanding_a_diplomats_candor/.

Public-diplomacy scholar Marc Lynch notes, "I've been told by all kinds of old public-diplomacy hands that Public Affairs Officers live in fear of having some off-hand comment picked up, translated and sent back to Washington to kill their careers." This "has a chilling effect on would-be public diplomats ... The partisan attack dogs who want to collect a scalp may care nothing about how this might affect the American national interest, but I hope that more serious people do." Abu Aardvark, "The Fernandez Problem."

²⁵ In December 2006, only 10 U.S. foreign service officers in Baghdad had level 3 Arabic speaking and reading skills, and five more had level 3 Arabic speaking skills. This tiny band of Arabic speakers is far too small for the need. The United States has a large stake in the outcome in Iraq, and the U.S. government's inability to staff its Iraq operation with appropriate language specialists shows that the shortage of U.S. Muslim-world language skills is acute. "Only Six Fluent in Arabic at U.S. Embassy-Panel," Reuters Alertnet, December 6, 2006, at <http://alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N06193252.htm>.

²⁶ In 2008, the Department of Defense received \$594.7 billion; the State Department received \$17.5 billion. *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables: Fiscal Year 2010* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009): Table 4.1, Outlays by Agency: 1962-2014, online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy10/sheets/hist04z1.xls>.

²⁷ Offering this argument is Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 32, 37-38.

²⁸ Cull, "Public Diplomacy," pp. 43-44.

²⁹ In contrast, Switzerland successfully upgraded its global brand during 2000-07 with a campaign that rested on careful research on global public views of Switzerland. Cull, "Public Diplomacy," pp. 37-38.

³⁰ Leaders of the al-Qaeda camp where operative Omar Nasiri trained expressed more hatred of Shiites than of Christians or Jews, and voiced more hostility toward Iran than toward Israel or the United States. Omar Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad: My Life with Al-Qaeda* (Basic Books, 2006), p. 179.

³¹ The need for a new label for the "war on terror" is evident in the often-muddled U.S. public discourse about the identity of the terror threat. Commentators conflate groups that pose vastly different levels and types of threat: al-Qaeda, Iran, Hamas, Sunni insurgents in Iraq, Islamists, Hezbollah, Abu Nidal and other groups. In November 2007, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney explained, "I don't want to buy into the Democratic pitch, that this is all about one person, Osama bin Laden. ... This is about Shia and Sunni. This is about Hezbollah and Hamas and al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood. This is the worldwide jihadist effort..." *Perspectives: Bringing Light to Darkness*, June 4, 2009, retrieved from <http://www.perspectives.com/blog/archives/001533.htm>. Commentators also conflate the terror problems of other states (Israel, India, Russia and Colombia) with the U.S. terror problem, as if the United States had contracted to protect all regimes around the world from their local enemies.

³² Discussions of the value of exchange diplomacy include Cull, "Public Diplomacy," pp. 33-34, 40-42, 45-46; Nancy Snow, "International Exchanges and the U.S. Image," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 198-222; and Giles Scott-Smith, "Mapping the Undefinable: Some Thoughts on the Relevance of Exchange Programs within International Relations Theory," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 173-195.

³³ Scott-Smith, "Mapping the Undefinable," p. 174.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cull, "Public Diplomacy," pp. 40-42.

³⁶ The George W. Bush Administration also cut VOA broadcast services in several important non-Muslim languages, including Russian and Hindi. Rugh, "Repairing American Public Diplomacy," p. 8. These cuts should also be restored.

³⁷ Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arseneault, "Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 10-30 at 18-19.

³⁸ Cowan and Arseneault, *ibid.*, p. 19. All U.S. public-diplomacy media are not in monologue format. Starting in 1994, the VOA announced an intent to move from "monologue to dialogue" and launched a range of call-in shows in more than a dozen languages. They have been very popular. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁹ Alternately, some of these officials might be housed in a quasi-independent agency that is insulated from immediate government control. For example, Kristin Lord suggests that Congress create a USA-World Trust, a public/private nonprofit organization that would enjoy some political independence, akin to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or the National Endowment for Democracy. The mission of the trust would be to conduct important public diplomacy

functions. Lord, *Voices of America*, pp. 17-30. The Defense Science Board likewise recommends the creation of an independent nonprofit Center for Global Engagement to conduct public diplomacy functions. *Defense Science Board Report*, pp. xiv-xv, 89-93.

⁴⁰ The success of public diplomacy campaigns often rides on the credibility of the messenger. British public diplomacy toward the United States during 1939-41 was both credible and successful. See Cull, "Public Diplomacy," pp. 42-43. In contrast, U.S. public diplomacy about Vietnam and Soviet cold-war public diplomacy lacked credibility and had little success. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Advocacy can sometimes succeed as well. The Reagan administration persuaded Europeans to support theater nuclear-missile deployment in Europe in 1983. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39. But much of what the United States needs to convey in the war on al-Qaeda can be better conveyed by objective news presentation.

⁴¹ On mismanagement at the BBG see Rugh, "Repairing American Public Diplomacy," pp. 4-5.

⁴² Much of the Taliban's senior leadership graduated from the Haqqania school outside Peshawar, Pakistan, and students from a religious boarding school in Indonesia may comprise the core of Southeast Asian Islamist networks. See Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 80-81. On the effect of madrasas, see also Jamal Malik, ed., *Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?* (Routledge, 2008); and Saleem H. Ali, *Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassahs of Pakistan* (unpublished ms, 2005). On the education and the war on al-Qaeda see also Peter Krause, "Victory by Other Means: The Role of Education in Combating Islamic Extremism" (MIT, manuscript, 2007).

⁴³ The United States could also identify other institutions that spread extremist ideologies, such as publishers, press outlets or educational institutions, and take steps to reduce their access to funds or other resources. Douglas Feith offers this suggestion, in line with the strategy outlined in *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1, 2006), pp. 4-7, 14, 18-19, 24-25.

⁴⁴ Arguing for reopening American Cultural centers is Canning, "Overseas Post," pp. 11-13.

⁴⁵ Charney and Yakatan, *New Beginning*, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁷ Djerejian Report, p. 66.

⁴⁸ Charney and Yakatan, *New Beginning*, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁹ "A Smart Funding Strategy?" Figure 6. The total number of U.S. public diplomacy officers performing in overseas posts fell by over 60 percent — from over 7,500 to just over 2,800 — from 1967 to 1999. Canning, "Overseas Post," p. 6.

⁵⁰ Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11* (Congressional Research Service, May 15, 2009, at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>).

⁵¹ Total U.S. defense spending was \$613 billion in FY 2008 (excluding homeland security and veterans affairs), 383 times total U.S. spending on public diplomacy.

⁵² In FY 2003, the State Department devoted only one-quarter of its \$600 million worldwide public-diplomacy spending to activities directed at Muslim majority states. Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Must Counteract Image in Muslim World, Panel Says," *The New York Times*, October 1, 2003. The United States also spent \$540 million on broadcasts by the Broadcasting Board of Governors in FY 2003 (*ibid.*), but data on the share of this \$540 million that was directed at Muslim-world audiences is not available.

⁵³ Summarizing this leadership failure is Rugh, "Repairing American Public Diplomacy," pp. 7-8.

⁵⁴ Discussing the special skills required for public diplomacy is Canning, "Overseas Post," pp. 3-5.

⁵⁵ Offering this important suggestion is Rugh, "Enabling Public Diplomacy," pp. 6-7.

⁵⁶ Offering this recommendation is Rugh, "Repairing American Public Diplomacy," pp. 5-6, 9.

⁵⁷ Charney and Yakatan, *New Beginning*, pp. 3-4, 56-57, 62-63.

⁵⁸ On al-Qaeda's ideology and narrative, valuable discussions include Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (Yale University Press, 2006); Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (Random House, 2002); Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al-Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* (Brookings, 2008), pp. 24-36, 57-60, and 5-8; Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* (Verso, 2005); and Anonymous [Michael Scheuer], *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Brassey's, 2002), pp. 46-68.

⁵⁹ Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 57-81, 162-63.

⁶⁰ The five pillars of Sunni Islam are affirmation of belief in God and of Mohammed as God's messenger, prayer, charitable giving, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca. These duties are incumbent on every Muslim.

- ⁶¹ Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 109-110.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 21, 31-32, 107-122, 133, 164. See also Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 46.
- ⁶⁴ Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 113-116.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* and Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, pp. 137, 203.
- ⁶⁶ Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 111, 162-63. On Qutb, see also Benjamin and Simon, *Age of Sacred Terror*, pp. 62-68.
- ⁶⁷ Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, p. 111.
- ⁶⁸ In 1998, quoted in Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*, p. 59. See also Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 122-129, 131-133.
- ⁶⁹ 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* (Times Books, 2004), p. 12.
- ⁷⁰ Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner, "Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda's Justification for September 11," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 76-92. See also Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*, pp. 65-68.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ⁷² Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, pp. 21-22, 63-64, 110, 125, 157-58, 164, 166-167, 173; and Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*, p. 65.
- ⁷³ On Taymiyya, see Benjamin and Simon, *Age of Sacred Terror*, pp. 42-52.
- ⁷⁴ As Mary Habeck notes, a prime goal of U.S. public diplomacy should be to make Muslim publics aware that al-Qaeda approves the mass killing of Muslims. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, p. 173.
- ⁷⁵ Bin Laden claims that the United States "attacked us in Somalia," where it "murdered and took possession of the land of Islam." Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 163; and "A statement from qaidat al-jihad regarding the mandates of the heroes and the legality of the operations in New York and Washington," April 24, 2002, p. 2; downloaded from www.mepc.org/public_asp/journal_vol10/alqaeda.html on 5/26/03.
- ⁷⁶ "A statement from qaidat al-jihad," p. 1; and Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes*, p. 47.
- ⁷⁷ Osama bin Laden's phrase, in "A statement from qaidat al-jihad," p. 2.
- ⁷⁸ Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 163.
- ⁷⁹ Bin Laden wrongly alleges that U.S.-led sanctions on Iraq killed 1.5 million Iraqis after 1991. Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 164.
- ⁸⁰ In 1996, Bin Laden also bizarrely blamed "the alliance of Jews, Christians and their agents" for unspecified massacres of Muslims in Burma, Assam, Ethiopia's Ogaden region, Eritrea, Tajikistan and a place bin Laden calls "Fatani" (perhaps a reference to Thailand's Muslim-dominated Pattani province). Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World*, p. 25.
- ⁸¹ The al-Qaeda film *Will of the Martyr*, quoted in Philip M. Taylor, "Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication," in Snow and Taylor, eds., *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 12-16 at 13.
- ⁸² On lives saved and lost in Somalia, see Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 59-60, Table 3.2. He estimates that about 22,000 Somali lives were saved by U.S. action at the cost of some 625-1,500 Somalis killed by Western forces.
- ⁸³ A 1994 study of genocide estimated that 1.4 million Armenians were murdered between 1914-1918 by the Ottoman Turkish government. See Rudolph J. Rummel, "Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 31, No. 1, February 1994, pp. 1-10. An introduction to this genocide is Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 157-166.
- ⁸⁴ On the effectiveness of the South African truth commission see James L. Gibson, "Does Truth Lead to Reconciliation? Testing the Causal Assumption of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 2004, pp. 201-217. On relevant history see James L. Gibson and Amanda Gouws, *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). A valuable discussion of the South African and other truth commissions is Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch, "And the Truth Shall Make You Free: The International Norm of Truth-Seeking" (Ph.D. dissertation, MIT, 2009).
- ⁸⁵ Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch suggests that organized religions could improve their conduct and relations with other faiths by adopting truth commissions. Conversation with SVE, July, 2007. Histories that form a useful starting point

for a Christian truth and reconciliation commission include James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001); David I. Kertzer, *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (Vintage, 2002); Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (Palgrave, 2002); Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, rev. ed. (Paulist Press, 1999); Israel Pocket Library, *Anti-Semitism* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974); and the 2008 film *Constantine's Sword*, which draws on Carroll's book.

⁸⁶ Religious-Hate Watch would also forswear character assassination, instead debating others on the merits of their arguments.

⁸⁷ Arguing that a dangerous millennialism is rising in all major faiths are Benjamin and Simon, *Age of Sacred Terror*, pp. 91-94, 419-446.

⁸⁸ B.A. Robinson, "Attacks on Muslims by Conservative Protestants: Graham, Hinn, Falwell, Robertson, Swaggart, and Baldwin," *Religious Tolerance*, updated May 13, 2003, retrieved from http://www.religioustolerance.org/reac_ter18b.htm.

⁸⁹ Jesus is likewise quoted in Mark 16:16 declaring, "Those who do not believe will be condemned." Echoing these views is R. Albert Mohler Jr. of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: "Any belief system" leading "away from the cross of Christ and toward another way of ultimate meaning is, indeed, wicked and evil." In 2003, quoted in Frank Rich, "A High-Tech Lynching in Prime Time," *The New York Times*, April 24, 2005.

⁹⁰ A summary of the role of false history in causing World War I is Stephen Van Evera, "Why Cooperation Failed in 1914," *World Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 1, October 1985, pp. 80-117, at 93-95. On historical mythmaking in Germany after World War I, see Holger H. Herwig, "Clio Deceived: Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War," *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Fall 1987, pp. 5-44. A general discussion of historical mythmaking as a cause of war is Stephen Van Evera, "Causes of War" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1984), pp. 393-452.

⁹¹ These commonizing efforts are described in E.H. Dance, *History the Betrayer* (Hutchinson, 1960), pp. 126-150. The results are described in Paul M. Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 8, No. 1, January 1973, pp. 77-100. Also relevant are Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, eds., *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II* (Barnes and Noble Books, 1985); and Volker R. Berghahn and Hanna Schissler, eds., *Perceptions of History: International Textbook Research on Britain, Germany and the United States* (Berg, 1987).

⁹² The Eckert Institute and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation in The Hague, Netherlands, now do valuable work toward commonizing the historical memories of selected parties in conflict around the world. What is still needed is a more proactive institution that will preemptively audit historical narratives worldwide, contest chauvinist narratives before conflicts develop, and publicly censure mythmakers more aggressively.

⁹³ On the usefulness of the conflicts in Israel-Palestine and Kashmir to al-Qaeda, see Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, pp. 136-147. See also pp. 5-6, 11, 59-60, 129 on the importance of Israel in al-Qaeda thinking.

⁹⁴ Al-Qaeda also uses conflicts involving Muslims to train its followers in arts of war, to recruit, to raise funds and to build networks. The United States should work to end such wars for these reasons as well. Developing this argument is Stephanie Kaplan, who demonstrates in a forthcoming MIT political science Ph.D. dissertation that war eases terrorist propaganda-making, recruiting, network-building, and training, and thus serves as a tonic for terrorist organizations. She concludes that war prevention and war termination should be featured in U.S. counterterror policy.

⁹⁵ An enticing carrot could take the form of a security guarantee to parties that accept U.S.-defined peace terms. An intimidating stick could be a threat to reduce security assistance to those who obstruct progress toward a U.S.-defined peace, or give or increase security assistance to their adversaries. Discussing past U.S. efforts to make peace is Timothy Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁹⁶ See polls of Israelis and Palestinians taken during 2004-2007, available at the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) at <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2007/p26ejoint.html>. In these polls Israeli support for the Clinton plan ranged from 52 percent (in December 2006) to 64 percent (in December 2004 and December 2005). Palestinian support ranged from 46 percent (in December 2005) to 54 percent (in December 2004).

⁹⁷ As he left office in fall 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert revealed his belief that Israel should make peace on terms like those of the Clinton Plan. Specifically, he argued that Israel should withdraw from "almost all" of the West Bank and should share Jerusalem with the Palestinians. See Uri Avnery's column, "Summing Up," October 4,

2008, <http://zope-gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1223200150/>. But Olmert feared to state these positions while serving as prime minister. U.S. pressure for peace might have allowed him to lead Israel toward these goals while in office. He could have had greater confidence that his steps toward compromise would bring reciprocal results from the Palestinians, as he would have known that Washington would use carrots and sticks to persuade the Palestinians to reciprocate.

⁹⁸ The most plausible outline for a settlement would have Pakistan agree to accept the line of control as the international border; in exchange, India would agree to stop stealing elections in Indian Kashmir and grant it greater autonomy.

⁹⁹ Some also argue that a peace imposed by outsiders will not endure because the belligerents have not freely agreed to it, will therefore not embrace it, and will return to war once they are free to do so. The authors are not persuaded by this hypothesis but agree that it needs research.

¹⁰⁰ The George W. Bush administration did publish a public diplomacy strategy, *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, in June 2007. This document includes a number of sound recommendations but does not echo the themes we stress here: dialogue over monologue, objective facts over polemics, showing respect, and creating new U.S. capacity to contest the al-Qaeda narrative and to deflate pernicious ideas that support it.