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THESIS

WINNING THE BATTLE OF IDEAS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCY: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH FOR COUNTERING RADICALIZATION IN THE HOMELAND

by

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September 2009

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13. ABSTRACT *(maximum 200 words)*

To defeat the terrorist threat facing the U.S., the 9/11 Commission recommended a balanced strategy to attack the terrorists and prevent recruitment, while protecting against future attack. A review of the national strategies related to counterterrorism and homeland security shows they do not provide a balanced approach. Specifically, they fail to counter the factors influencing individuals to conduct terrorism. Disruption of the radicalization process, becomes more significant, when, considering the threat is no longer just of foreign origins, it is increasingly from within. Adding to this dilemma, evidence shows terrorist networks are becoming less centralized, and placing greater emphasis on individual actions.

Based on the evolving threat, this thesis explores what strategy offers the most balanced approach. To answer this question, an exploratory study was conducted to define the threat and causes of radicalization. The current U.S. strategies were then evaluated to determine if they adequately addressed the research findings. Additionally, international approaches were analyzed to determine if any lessons learned could be incorporated into a U.S. strategy.

The recommendation is to complement existing strategies with a counterradicalization strategy. The proposed multi-dimensional solution offers several options to counter radicalization: traditional and non-traditional educational programs, outreach programs, and community involvement.

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only did this serve to provide a break from school and work, coaching these youths also helped me to keep in perspective that, despite a daily dose of monitoring and studying terrorists, there is still an age of innocence and a hope for the future that the "bad guys" cannot take away. I would be remiss if I did not thank my running "buddies," Kaiser and Koda, who accompanied me on many runs, during which the thoughts contained in this thesis came together. Without those runs, I would have probably become radicalized through the thesis process.

Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to the Shirwa Ahmeds of the world. I hope the implementation of my recommendations will result in persuading others they can make an impact in this world, short of sacrificing their lives and those of innocent others.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fighting terrorism is like being a goalkeeper. You can make a hundred brilliant saves, but the only shot that people remember is the one that gets past you.

Paul Wilkinson, *London Daily Telegraph*, September 1, 1992[1]

Since September 11, 2001, there has not been a successful mass casualty attack in the U.S. by either transnational, transnational-inspired, or domestic terrorists. In comparison, some of the Nation's friends and allies in the "war on terror," have been victimized by terrorist attacks, many of which were executed by "homegrown" militant Islamists. While the U.S. has not been immune to similar transnational or homegrown plots[2] during this time, many were detected early on, and disrupted prior to execution (McNeill and Carafano, 2009). Based on these rudimentary points, one could surmise that the U.S. counterterrorism strategy, combined with the homeland security measures implemented since 2001, has effectively met the challenge.

One might even argue the greatest threat to the homeland is now posed by natural events. Hurricanes, wildfires, pandemics, and economic issues seem to capture the public's attention, and, in a way, have shifted the focus of homeland security efforts toward more of an "all hazards" approach. The *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (*NSHS*) reflects this evolution in thought by stating, "threats come not only from terrorism, but also from nature…certain non-terrorist events that reach catastrophic levels can have significant implications for homeland security" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 3). Even the most recent *Intelligence Community Annual Threat Assessment* starts with the line, "The primary near-term security concern of the United States is the global economic crisis and its geopolitical implications" (Blair, 2009, 2). Terrorism seems to

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[1] Retrieved September 16, 2009, from http://www.notable-quotes.com/t/terrorism_quotes.html.

[2] According to publically available sources, since 9/11, 23 plots by Islamic extremists (homegrown and internationally based) targeting the U.S. have been disrupted (McNeill and Carafano, 2009, 1).

have returned to faraway places like London, Madrid, Baghdad, Kabul, Islamabad, Mumbai, and Jakarta. Therefore, for those not directly involved with countering terrorism, it is easy to miss an event like that occurring on October 29, 2008.

Admittedly, an attack in Somaliland probably would not have registered high on the scale of many counterterrorism experts, or the mass media for that matter. If anything, the attack may have been noticeable, because it was one of multiple synchronized suicide attacks carried out that day in Somalia by a relatively unknown militant Islamist group, al-Shabaab (The Youth) (Meryhew, Shah, and Walsh, 2009). It was long after the dust had settled that the identity of one of the attackers, Shirwa Ahmed (a naturalized U.S. citizen from Somalia), became of interest to authorities and the media. Unlike his counterparts, Ahmed stood out for one particular reason. The graduate of Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is believed to be the first U.S. citizen to be a suicide terrorist bomber (Mudd, 2009). Since this event happened overseas, Ahmed's death has become an afterthought of history, plus a potential warning for the future.

At a time when the 2001 attacks seem so long in the past, and terrorism the problem of other countries, the very radicalization process that created the 9/11 attackers exists all around us; including such places as Minneapolis. One then has to ask—is the threat really that far away? Are the Nation's strategies ready for the next threat?

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (*NSCT*) was last updated to incorporate an "increased understanding of the enemy" (White House, 2006, 1). The threat was characterized as "a transnational terrorist movement fueled by a radical ideology of hatred, oppression, and murder" (White House, 2006, 1). Al-Qa'ida was seen as the vanguard of this movement[3] and, along with its affiliations and those inspired by

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[3] Sometimes referred to as the Jihadi movement, the Salafi-Jihadist movement, radical Islamist movement, or violent Islamic extremism. For consistency sake, militant Islamist movement (or ideology) will be used in this thesis. Similarly, militant will replace the term Jihadist (unless in a title, citation, or direct quote) for reasons explained in Chapter III.

them, "the most dangerous present manifestation" (White House, 2006, 5). Produced the following year, the *NSHS* continued to view al-Qa'ida as "the most serious and dangerous manifestation" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 9).

The past election year saw a significant amount of debate regarding the nature of the risk al-Qa'ida poses to the homeland, some of which played out in such journals as *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. The argument primarily centered around two schools of thought. Bruce Hoffman (2008), a renowned terrorism expert and professor at Georgetown University, believed al-Qa'ida was "alive and well and plotting high profile attacks much as it did before 9/11" (Hoffman). The counter to this argument came from Marc Sageman (2008a), a forensic psychiatrist, political sociologist, and former CIA case officer, who argued the greater threat was posed by a "leaderless jihad" consisting of a decentralized network of self-radicalized individuals without operational direction from al-Qa'ida. A third perspective (provided by President-elect Barack Obama speaking on the significance of Usama bin Laden), was that if al-Qa'ida's leadership infrastructure was "weakened to the point" where it could no longer function, and if U.S. measures have "so tightened the noose" that bin Laden could no longer communicate with his operatives, then the government has met its "goal of protecting America" (Mikkelson, 2009, para. 9–10). However, since assuming office, President Obama believes al-Qa'ida represents a "persistent and evolving threat" (Brennan, 2009, para. 18). Nevertheless, a Gallup poll conducted in July 2009, showed 34% of Americans were "not worried at all" about being a victim of terrorism, while 30% were "not too worried" (Morales, 2009, para. 2). Seventy-three percent of those polled said they had a great deal, or fair amount, of confidence in the U.S. Government to protect against future acts of terrorism (Morales, 2009, para. 4).

These diverse views present a strategy dilemma. If the latter is true, no change is required, as the current strategy must be working. Whereas, the other views require differing approaches in countering the threat—one primarily externally focused, and the other domestically. Determining the nature of the threat is extremely important, as the strategy to address one can actually serve as the catalyst for radicalization of another, as in the case of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Besides, coercive operations

used to combat terrorists and insurgents in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan offer little utility in a homeland setting.

Which of the threat perspectives is correct? Much like in 2006 and 2007, al-Qa'ida remains the vanguard of the militant Islamist movement and its most dangerous manifestation. That said, although al-Qa'ida has managed to reconstitute some of its pre-9/11 operational capabilities in the FATA, there is no denying the U.S. and its allies have degraded al-Qa'ida's ability to attack the homeland. Since September 2001, key personnel have been captured or killed in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iraq, and the Philippines (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2008 and 2009a). The current U.S. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) campaign in the border region of Afghanistan and the FATA is credited with killing several high-level al-Qaida operatives, planners, trainers, and propagandists[4], along with bin Laden's son, Saad (Herridge, 2009). One of al-Qa'ida's top propagandists, Abu Yahya al-Libi, has even acknowledged the impact of the UAV attacks in his recently released *Guide to the Laws Regarding Muslim Spies* (2009) (Levine and Herridge, 2009). Yet, "despite these successes, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and allies remain dangerous and adaptive enemies" (Blair, 2009, 6).

Furthermore, al-Qa'ida's ability to incite or radicalize has not diminished. This is evident by the number of homegrown militant Islamist plots executed or disrupted in Europe and North America and the outflow of persons to fight in places like Somalia. Even if al-Qa'ida has suffered operational setbacks, the "war on terror" is more than just a battle of arms; it is also a battle of ideas. Until it is countered, militant Islamist rhetoric will continue to influence individuals to take action. As the examples of U.S.-based Islamist extremism show, a direct linkage to al-Qa'ida for training or financial purposes is no longer a prerequisite.

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[4] Khalid Habib, Abu Layth al-Libi, Usama al-Kini, Rashid Rauf, Abu Khabab al-Masri, Abdallah Azzam, Abu al-Hassan al-Rimi, Abu Sulaiman al-Jaziri, Abu Jihad al-Masri, Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan, and Abu Sulaiman al-Jaziri (Blair, 2009; Herridge, 2009).

Thus, al-Qa'ida remains a viable threat, both directly and indirectly. Until al-Qa'ida no longer has a safe haven, it will continue to pose a threat to the U.S., both operationally and inspirationally. Even without al-Qa'ida, as long as there are believers of militant ideologies, homegrown extremism will be a threat. Based on the assumption that both threat streams will co-exist for the near future, one has to ask, is the Nation's overall counterterrorism strategy adequate to address both? If not, what threat should the national strategies related to homeland security and combating terrorism focus on?

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the nature of the terrorist threat to homeland security, what strategy represents the most balanced approach to counter? To answer this overarching question, three ancillary questions need addressing. What is the nature of the threat facing the U.S.? What are the ramifications of simply revising the current strategies related to homeland security and counterterrorism to incorporate an increased understanding of the enemy? What alternative strategies are there to counter the threat?

C. ARGUMENT: MAIN CLAIMS, WARRANTS, EVIDENCE AND CHALLENGES

The question posed at the beginning of the research process was—given the terrorist threat to homeland security, what strategy represents the most balanced approach? An instrumental task, required prior to answering this question, is determining the true nature of the threat. As noted in the Problem Statement, correctly characterizing the threat is extremely important, as the strategy to address one threat can actually serve as the catalyst for radicalization of another.

The literature review shows that key aspects of the threat, as envisaged in 2006 and 2007, remain. Al-Qa'ida as an organization is still a valid and persistent threat and terrorist networks continue to be less centralized and more reliant on smaller cells

inspired by a common ideology. Based on the assumption that both threat streams will co-exist for at least the near future, the crucial question is—are the existing national strategies adequate to address both or is a new strategy required?

As a starting point, *The 9/11 Commission Report* provides the initial planning guidance concerning the objectives of the Nation's overall counterterrorism strategy. "Our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (9/11 Commission), 2007, 363). The *NSCT* supports this directive by calling for destruction of al-Qa'ida and countering the radical ideology inspiring recruitment and support for the group (White House, 2006). If one believes al-Qa'ida is no longer the threat as envisaged in 2006, they could argue the current strategies are sufficient. However, if the greater threat to the homeland is self-generating extremists, the current strategies are off target.

With ten national strategy documents related to homeland security and combating terrorism (discussed in Chapter II), it would seem the 9/11 Commission's intent was met. Unfortunately, most of the strategies focus on specific areas. Furthermore, as the literature review shows, the two overarching strategies, the *NSCT* and the *NSHS*, do not provide a balanced approach. Specifically, they fail to adequately address how to counter the radicalization process that is persuading individuals to conduct terrorist acts. The *NSCT* primarily has an outward focus and does not address the homegrown threat, nor does it address how to actually counter the radicalization process, domestically or internationally.   Although the *NSHS* addresses the need to prevent domestic radicalization, related objectives are not covered in any detail, nor does it articulate how to accomplish these objectives. Based on these issues, one could argue that at a minimum, the *NSCT* and the *NSHS* require updating to address how to counter the homegrown self-radicalization phenomenon. However, simply revising these documents may not be enough.

Counterterrorism strategies typically focus on "offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorist acts" (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 2008, 132). As is the case with the current U.S. strategies, they tend to focus primarily on security and law enforcement measures. While such strategies can be effective in containing a threat, a heavy-handed response (perceived or actual) may incite others to act, as with U.S. operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Based on this unintended consequence, at times a non-security based, or non-coercive, approach is a better option, particularly if the goal is preventing domestic radicalization.

Compared to our European allies, the U.S. has not experienced the levels of radicalization among its population resulting from the militant ideology being espoused by groups like al-Qa'ida. This is based on the perception that Muslims have had an easier time assimilating in American society (Silber and Bhatt, 2007). Many of the sources and testimony attribute the reason for this is mainly due to the economic opportunities this country provides. However, based on the number of disrupted homegrown terrorist plots and recent polling data, there are indications that this may no longer be the case. In fact, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder has stated that he is increasingly concerned about Americans becoming radicalized and turning to terrorism (Pierre, Ryan, and Cook, 2009). The radicalization issue does not appear to be limited to any specific religious or ethnic classification. Since 2001, there has also been a significant increase in the number of right-wing and hate groups in the U.S. (Holthouse, 2009).

If the U.S. economy continues to weaken, segments of American society could become even more disenfranchised and, in a worst-case scenario, use violence to act out their frustrations. If this were to happen, the threat to homeland security would be far more significant than any externally-based terrorist threat, as the threat is already here. Since the threat is increasingly consisting of "self recruited wannabes" (Sageman, 2008b, 37) and a portion of the American population holds radical views, instead of revising the existing national strategies, a more practical solution is the creation of a preventive strategy focusing on countering radicalization in the homeland.

However, implementing a counterradicalization strategy is not without risk. Some aspects could infringe on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens. Other aspects, if not executed correctly, could actually facilitate the delivery of the extremist message. A national counterradicalization strategy will most certainly have to take into account a wide variety of constitutional, legal, and foreign policy issues.

D.   SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The research adds to the national discussion regarding the terrorist threat facing the U.S., and how best to counter it. Determining the nature of the threat is vital, as the strategy to address one can actually serve as the catalyst for radicalization of another, as demonstrated by U.S. military operations overseas. The analysis of current strategies related to homeland security and counterterrorism will help to determine if the Nation's strategies are appropriate to address the threat, or if there is unintended risk. An assessment of the international approaches to countering radicalization will help to identify any lessons learned that could be incorporated into a U.S. strategy.

The consumers of this research are homeland security practitioners and leaders at all levels (federal, state, and local). Additionally, academic institutions will benefit from the research by having an increased understanding of the threat and related homeland security policies (domestic and foreign), allowing them to better focus their programs to develop innovative means to address the terrorist threat facing the U.S.

E.   METHODOLOGY

The thesis is structured as a policy analysis, following the methodology proposed in *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* (Bardach, 2007).

Building on the initial literature review (Chapter II), an exploratory study will be conducted to further define the true nature of the terrorist threat (foreign and domestic) facing the U.S. (Chapter III) and the causes of radicalization (Chapter IV) to determine how to best counter. Once the nature of the threat and the key sources of radicalization

are defined, the current U.S. strategies related to counterterrorism and homeland security will be analyzed (Chapter V) to evaluate if they are adequate to address the threat. Part of the analysis will be an assessment of how these strategies, in the collective sense, meet the 9/11 Commission recommendation of a "balanced strategy." Additionally, a comparative analysis of the various international approaches (Chapter VI) will be accomplished to determine if there are any lessons learned that could be incorporated into a U.S. strategy.

If the existing strategies are determined to be deficient, a new strategy will be proposed using the criteria established in the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report *Combating Terrorism: Evaluation of Selected Characteristics in National Strategies Related to Terrorism* (2004).

F.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Some may argue that the various disrupted homegrown terrorist plots are an anomaly and Shirwa Ahmed is the exception. However, the facts suggest otherwise. Ahmed did not travel to Somalia alone. The number of Somali Americans believed to have departed for Somalia is over twenty (Meryhew, et al., 2009, para. 4). This is not an isolated example. In July 2009, seven North Carolina residents (six U.S. citizens and one naturalized) were arrested for conspiring to commit terrorist acts overseas (U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of North Carolina, 2009). This adds an additional, and interesting, twist to the issue of radicalization and transnational terrorism. As reflected in the national-level strategy documents, radicalization is closely linked to the transnational threat. However, this is in the context of groups like al-Qa'ida inspiring others to strike the U.S. Now the U.S. is starting to witness cases of domestic radicalization being exported overseas. What happens should these combat-hardened, radicalized individuals decide to come home? This is an issue that U.S. Attorney General Holder believes "is a great concern" (Pierre, et al., 2009, para. 2). Is the Nation's counterterrorism strategy adaptable enough to address a change in the threat that is fundamentally different from that envisaged in 2006 and 2007?

The Nation's counterterrorism and homeland security strategies do not appear to provide a balanced approach in countering the threat as recommended by the 9/11 Commission. Specifically, they failed to address how to counter the radicalization process persuading individuals to conduct terrorism, domestically or internationally. Even more importantly, they failed to prevent individuals like Ahmed and those arrested in North Carolina from becoming radicalized in the first place. Given the radicalizing dynamic of military operations in places like Iraq and foreign policy decisions involving countries like Somalia, it is time to rethink the country's approach to countering terrorism. Instead of primarily focusing on dismantling groups and networks like al-Qa'ida, it is time to focus on the Ahmeds, before they stop going overseas and decide to take action here.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant amount of literature regarding terrorism and radicalization has been produced since September 2001, some of which is original and thought provoking, some repetitive, and some controversial. As can be expected, a considerable portion of the material focuses on al-Qa'ida and other militant Islamist organizations. Admittedly, these groups do not represent the sole terrorist threat to the U.S. However, many of the key trends and issues emanating from this threat can be used as a basis to analyze non-Islamist groups (e.g., right-wing and special-interest) as well. As such, this literature review tends to focus mainly on the militant Islamist threat that has touched virtually all geographical regions.

For the purpose of this review, the literature will be divided into nine sub-categories: 1) the threat posed by al-Qa'ida; 2) the evolution and devolution of al-Qa'ida; 3) the Internet's impact on terrorism and radicalization; 4) U.S. Government efforts to counter extremist use of the Internet; 5) the root causes of radicalization; 6) the potential for radicalization in the U.S.; 7) U.S. strategies related to combating terrorism and homeland security; 8) U.S. Government efforts to counter radicalization; and 9) international perspectives on countering radicalization.

A.   THREAT POSED BY AL-QA'IDA

When last updated, the *NSCT* depicted the threat as a transnational movement. This movement was not considered monolithic or "controlled by any single individual, group, or state" (White House, 2006, 5). Rather, the unifying force was "a common vision, a common set of ideas" (White House, 2006, 5). Both the *NSCT* and *NSHS* saw al-Qa'ida as the vanguard of this movement and, along with its affiliations and those inspired by them, the most dangerous component. Both the *NSCT* and *NSHS* noted that the threat was constantly adjusting in response to the Nation's counterterrorism and security measures. As a result, terrorist networks were becoming less centralized and more reliant on smaller cells inspired by a common ideology (White House, 2006, 4).

Given this transformation, it is necessary to "continue to advance our understanding of these threats so we are better able to safeguard the American people" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 9) and to "refine our strategy to meet the evolving threat" (White House, 2006, 1).

It has been three years since the publication of the *NSCT* and almost two for the *NSHS*. A reasonable question to ask is, has the threat drastically changed? To help answer this question, there are several open source intelligence assessments available.

Like the *NSCT* and *NSHS*, the most current National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) *The Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland* (National Intelligence Council [NIC], 2007) claimed the U.S. faces a persistent and evolving threat from Islamic radical groups, especially al-Qa'ida. This NIE also addressed the decentralized aspect of the threat by acknowledging the growing number of radical, self-generating cells in Western countries, including in the U.S. It also stated "globalization trends and recent technological advances will continue to enable even small numbers of alienated people to...mobilize resources to attack—all without requiring a centralized terrorist organization, training camp, or leader" (NIC, 2007, 6).

Other national-level assessments during this period support both aspects of the threat. According to Michael McConnell (2008), then Director of the National Intelligence (DNI), during testimony before the U.S. House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates continued to pose a significant threat to the U.S., and its central leadership was its "most dangerous component" Director McConnell (2008) also claimed, "Attacks by 'homegrown' extremists inspired by militant Islamic ideology but without operational direction from al-Qa'ida will remain a threat." *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2008) reported there was a "substantial increase in the number of self-identified groups."

The dual nature of the threat has carried over into the most recent national-level unclassified intelligence assessment. Director Dennis Blair (2009), the current DNI, during testimony to the U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, stated "al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and allies remain dangerous and adaptive enemies, and remains intent on

attacking U.S. interests worldwide, including the U.S. Homeland." Director Blair (2009) was also "concerned about the potential for homegrown extremists inspired by al-Qa'ida's militant ideology to plan attacks inside the United States, Europe, and elsewhere without operational direction from the group itself."

While the dual nature of the threat remains, a noticeable change in the most recent assessments is language deemphasizing the operational capability of core al-Qa'ida and some of its affiliates. Director Blair (2009) claimed that due to U.S. and allied targeting of al-Qa'ida's leadership in the FATA and the decline of "al-Qa'ida's most prominent regional affiliate in Iraq, al-Qa'ida today is less capable and effective than it was a year ago." Director Blair (2009) also discussed how al-Qa'ida is starting to face "significant public criticism from prominent religious leaders and fellow extremists" regarding the use of tactics (especially by its affiliates) that have resulted in Muslim deaths. Similarly, in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, it was assessed that al-Qa'ida and its affiliates continued "to lose ground, both structurally and in the court of world public opinion" (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2009a, 8).

The significance of the blow back from its "franchised" operations is not just limited to public perceptions. One crack in the al-Qa'ida organization that could help to further undermine its operational capability, and to some extent its legitimacy, appeared in July 2009, when the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) announced its disassociation from al-Qa'ida and criticized "wrongful practices like random bombings, destroying private and public property, and targeting civilians" (NEFA Foundation, 2009b, 2). Just as significant, this announcement also criticized former LIFG alumni Abu Yahiya al-Libi for his involvement with al-Qa'ida.

Similarly, mainstream elements of the Indonesian Islamist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (which gained worldwide recognition for the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005) appeared to be distancing themselves from al-Qa'ida. Like the LIFG, these elements were encouraging members not to participate in indiscriminate violence. According to one of the leaders, the Bali bombings damaged the image of the organization and were a disservice to Islam (Ismail and Ungerer, 2009). Ironically, the

day before the Jakarta bombings on July 17, 2009, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute released a report addressing JI's fracturing, and that, combined with the release of former JI members from prison, who had not been properly rehabilitated, could increase the risk of attacks (Ismail and Ungerer, 2009). One of these splinter groups, calling itself al-Qa'ida in the Malay Archipelago (led by former JI member Noordin Mohammed Top), claimed responsibility for the Jakarta attack (Fitzpatrick, 2009).

Believing in a common goal does not necessarily mean there is a common vision in how it may be accomplished. The fractures among JI membership reflect this point, and should be a concern for al-Qa'ida's leadership. One of the underlying issues for JI's problems is a perceived lack of action among its hardliners, who refer to moderate members as "NATO" (No Action, Talk Only) (Ismail and Ungerer, 2009). Similar discontent has been noted within the ranks of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), where indiscriminate violence also seems to be driving an organizational split (Stewart and Burton, 2009b). It would not be a stretch to think that other affiliates, or individuals, have a similar perception of al-Qa'ida's central leadership due to the absence of a significant attack.

While all the issues addressed help to support an assessment regarding the potentially declining operational capability of al-Qa'ida, a very real concern is how these organizational splits and individual defections will influence the nature of the threat. One fear is the "boomerang effect" of militants returning home from places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia, who are not only battle hardened, but have developed insurgent tradecraft skills making them more lethal than prior to their departure (Stewart and Burton, 2009b). With the new generation of the militant Islamists, such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (deceased leader of al-Qa'ida in Iraq), Baitullah Mehsud (deceased leader of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan), and Noordin Top (killed by Indonesian Security Forces at time of publication (Associated Press, 2009)), the tendency appears to be for the fringe elements to be even more violent than those who preceded them.

Despite the changes to the strategic operating environment over the past year, the threat posed by al-Qa'ida is not insignificant. If anything, the organizational fragmentation adds an even more lethal aspect to the threat. To better understand the implications of a greater shift toward a more decentralized conglomeration, it is necessary to take a more in-depth look at al-Qa'ida as an organization.

B.   EVOLUTION AND DEVOLUTION OF AL-QA'IDA

While there are increasing indicators that core al-Qa'ida is operationally degraded, history has shown the group's ability to weather previous setbacks. That said, when looking at past examples, one must also take into account that today's strategic operating environment is far different from the pre-9/11 environment, allowing al-Qa'ida to morph into a global movement. Al-Qa'ida's ability to survive and adapt has been largely dependent on access to a safe haven. Pre-9/11 al-Qa'ida operated unimpeded in Sudan and then Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Al-Qa'ida was able to avoid annihilation by U.S. forces by shifting operations to a new safe haven in the FATA. Now even this safe haven is increasingly coming under pressure through a combination of the U.S.'s UAV campaign and a seemingly reenergized Pakistani counterinsurgency campaign directed at the Pakistani Taliban. However, even if al-Qa'ida was to lose this base of operations, it does not necessarily minimize the threat due to the ongoing evolution of the organization, combined with the impact of the Internet. Both of these factors have served to minimize the requirement of having a physical safe haven for traditional training camps or direct interaction with al-Qa'ida leadership.

Sageman believes the threat the U.S. faces has significantly changed from the old al-Qa'ida. He argues the new generation of "jihadists" consists of "homegrown wannabes-self-recruited, without leadership, and globally connected through the Internet" (Sageman, 2008b, 37). Sageman characterizes this as an offshoot of al-Qa'ida's latest evolutionary stage, but it may actually represent the next stage of the militant Islamist movement.

Al-Qa'ida's first generation consisted of those fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan during the 1980s. The second wave occurred during the 1990s, because of the conflicts in Bosnia and Chechnya, and consisted mainly of Middle Eastern students radicalized while attending western universities. The third wave is the post-2001 generation who joined because of U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Sageman (2008b) sees the "leaderless jihad" as a byproduct of the third wave, as it consists mainly of those who have found it difficult to join up with core al-Qa'ida due to the success of U.S. operations. Unable to join al-Qa'ida, these individuals use the Internet to form an informal, decentralized structure, which may represent an even more dangerous operational model.

Just as al-Qa'ida as an organization has evolved, so has its operational model evolved. The operational models can be categorized as al-Qa'ida 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 (Burton, 2006). During the first and second evolutionary waves, operational commanders were trained in formal camps (al-Qa'ida 1.0), received funding and logistical support, and were deployed abroad to form cells to conduct attacks (e.g., 1993 World Trade Center bombing, 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 2000 USS Cole attack). At the end of the second wave, the operational model (al-Qa'ida 2.0) consisted of the training and deploying of an entire cell, as in the case of the 9/11 attackers. Given the change in the global security environment that led to the third evolutionary wave and the difficultly of deploying intact teams, al-Qa'ida focused on inspiring homegrown cells (al-Qa'ida 3.0) that did not have to forward deploy (e.g., the Madrid and London bombings). While the leaders of these operations may have had some formalized training or contact with core al-Qaida, they were not operationally deployed as with the 1.0 and 2.0 models. The latest iteration (al-Qa'ida 4.0) relies on homegrown cells inspired by al-Qa'ida but lacks any direct operational interaction.

Differentiating the operational models is useful in attempting to understand the threat, but it should not be mistaken that this is a linear evolution. Hoffman (2007) sees al-Qaida's current operational model combining a "'bottom up' approach—encouraging

independent thought and action…and a 'top down' one—issuing orders and still coordinating a far-flung terrorist enterprise" (45). Within this construct, Hoffman (2007) sees four distinct, though not mutually exclusive, categories:

- "Al-Qa'ida Central": the core leadership and organization component residing in parts of Afghanistan and the FATA;

- "Al-Qa'ida Affiliates and Associates": the various regional groups, some of which are "endorsed" by al-Qa'ida and others seeking greater prestige;

- "Al-Qa'ida Locals": dispersed cells or individuals that have or had some contact with the core and possibly some prior terrorist training; and

- "Al-Qa'ida Network": the "homegrown" elements with no contact with the core.

There is no reason to believe that operational models 1.0, 3.0, and 4.0 do not co-exist within this structure. As Hoffman points out, this is exactly how bin Laden envisioned the role of al-Qa'ida, as "a base" to inspire, motivate, and radicalize Muslims to join the "Islamic revolution" while exercising command and control over its capabilities. Besides, mixing and matching organizational and operational styles creates a less definable and more unpredictable threat.

While decentralization has, in theory, given al-Qa'ida a much broader operational reach, or at least a perception of a movement capable of striking in any geographical region (Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, etc.), this has not come without its costs. In some ways, it could be argued the regional players have started to eclipse al-Qa'ida. In the past year alone, the U.S. public has learned from the media about al-Shabaab, Lashkar-e-Taiba (the Mumbai attack), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (linked to Benazir Bhutto's assassination and the source of multiple threats to the U.S.), and JI (Jakarta bombings). However, as previously pointed out, a common vision does not necessarily translate into a common operational picture. As the DNI testified, the very tactics of its proxies in Iraq and North Africa are undermining the support al-Qa'ida garnered after the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

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Just as significant is the cost due to the loss of operational depth and expertise that had traditionally been available in the centrally managed training camps (Burton, 2006). The lack of expertise and experience, combined with significant improvements in the global security environment, may account for the high rate of disrupted plots compared to those successfully executed.

Nevertheless, given the number of disrupted homegrown plots within the U.S., the significance of al-Qa'ida's latest evolution has less to do with operational capability then its influence on the radicalization process. The continued release of the videos and recordings of bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri (al-Qa'ida's second in command), and al-Libi still manage to achieve a sizeable amount of global media coverage, indicating al-Qa'ida is still, and will continue to be, an inspirational influence among groups and individuals believing in the greater militant Islamist movement.

Even if al-Qa'ida's overall operational capability is diminished, the validity of the threat remains as long as it can still inspire others to act. Besides, organizational decentralization, combined with regional fragmentation, further allows the militant ideology to spread well beyond Afghanistan and the FATA. Al-Qa'ida's ability to inspire represents a greater threat than its operational capability, as this not only helps to bring replacements into al-Qa'ida, but the larger movement as well. Just as concerning is the fact radicalization is no longer confined to training camps. The Internet allows radicalization to occur anywhere, including the U.S. Even if al-Qa'ida was to lose its geographical safe haven, the Internet offers a virtual safe haven for its militant ideology.

C.   INTERNET'S IMPACT ON TERRORISM AND RADICALIZATION

Probably one of the most significant technical tools ever made available to terrorists is the Internet. Unlike any period in history, an extremist can contact multiple likeminded persons around the world almost instantaneously. Extremists today have managed to integrate the Internet into all aspects of their organizations and operations. A report prepared by the United Nations (UN) Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) (2009) Working Group on Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist

Purposes, identified the following uses: cyber attacks, fundraising, training, recruitment, secret communications, data mining, propaganda, and radicalization. Of these uses, how the Internet has factored into the radicalization process seems to have the greatest implications for the U.S.

The U.S. Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs (SCHSGA), chaired by Senators Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins, has held several hearings concerning a variety of topics related to violent extremism. The impact of the Internet on radicalization was addressed in testimony during the hearing "The Internet: A portal to Violent Islamist Extremism" (May 3, 2007).[5] The various speakers validated the fact that terrorist organizations use the Internet for a variety of purposes including propaganda, recruitment, fundraising, training, and operational planning. However, the impact of the Internet goes beyond day-to-day operations. All the speakers testified that the Internet has allowed Islamic extremists to spread their ideology to a much wider audience, faster and more effectively than ever before. The Internet has created a condition that makes it possible for an almost virtual terrorist network composed of individuals unknown to each other, but united "by the same ideology and willing to coordinate actions in pursuit of it" (Doran, 2007, 2). Besides the operational implications, the Internet has also changed how individuals become radicalized.

Hsinchun Chen, director of the University of Arizona's Artificial Intelligence Lab, believes the Internet is "the most powerful tool for spreading extremist violence around the world" (Kotler, 2007, para. 4). A view shared by Frank Cilluffo, Director, Homeland Security Policy Institute, George Washington University, who claims, "Internet chat rooms are now supplementing and replacing mosques, community centers and coffee shops as venues for recruitment and radicalization by terrorist groups" (Cilluffo, 2007, 1). Lawrence Sanchez, Assistant Commissioner of the New York Police Department

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[5] Providing testimony during the hearing were Frank Cilluffo (Director, Homeland Security Policy Institute, George Washington University), Michael Doran (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Support to Public Policy), and Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Felter, PhD (Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy).

(NYPD) Intelligence Division, sees the Internet as becoming "the most significant factor in the radicalization process in America today" (SCHSGA, 2008, 11). Sageman (2007) argues that online radicalization is replacing face-to-face radicalization.

The significance of online radicalization should not be underestimated. As demonstrated by the recent election-related turmoil in Iran, social networking tools (e.g., Facebook and Twitter postings, and text messages) not only allowed demonstrators to organize in short time periods, but also to disseminate information in an environment that was, in theory, tightly controlled (Quirk, 2009). Given the amount of media coverage of these applications and their utility, it would be hard to imagine that extremists would not further implement these tools into their organizational processes.

D. U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO COUNTER EXTREMIST USE OF THE INTERNET

Despite the increasing importance of the Internet to facilitate operational planning, recruitment, and radicalization, the U.S. Government has done little to counter extremist use of this medium. During the May 3, 2007, SCHSGA hearing regarding extremist use of the Internet, only one presenter addressed the technical aspect of countering extremist use of the Internet. Cilluffo (2007) identified a need to "deny or disrupt extremist access to…the Internet via legal and technical means." However, he did not offer any solutions. Regarding the utility of even trying to counter extremist use of the Internet, the Director of the Countering Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy claimed, "attempts to shut down Web sites have proven as fruitless as a game of whack-a-mole" (Felter, 2007, 8). The inability of the Iranian government to completely shut down social networking applications over the Internet validates this point.

Following the May 3, 2007, hearing, the SCHSGA held another on "Violent Islamic Extremism: Government Efforts to Defeat It" (May 10, 2007).[6] Of those providing testimony, only one discussed an ongoing technical-based solution. Jeremy Curtin (2007) described the Bureau of International Information Programs' Digital Outreach Team and Arabic web-based programs, which were established to provide a U.S. Government presence in Arabic cyberspace, and to ensure U.S. policies are included in ideological debates. While a virtual outreach program might be a good tool to address the broader Islamic community, it is unfortunately highly unlikely to find its way onto any extremist Web page or chat room. Based on these hearings and available unclassified sources, it appears U.S. Government efforts to thwart extremism on the Internet are minimal to non-existent (based on the unclassified literature available). Of the measures addressed, they were outward focused and did not take into account for the homegrown aspect of the threat (Chapter VII discusses the challenges of doing this in the U.S.).

In 2008, the SCHSGA released *Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat*, which provides a summary of the key findings resulting from the committee's various hearings up to that point in time. The report concluded, "To defeat the homegrown terrorist threat requires an array of government resources in addition to traditional classified counterterrorism tools and tactics used by the intelligence and law enforcement communities" (SCHSGA, 2008, 16). However, as reflected in the testimony provided to the committee, the report did not offer any technical solutions. Rather, it ended with the following question: "What, if any, new laws, resources and tactics other than those already employed by intelligence and law enforcement should be used to prevent the spread of the ideology in the United States" (SCHSGA, 2008, 16)? Instead of focusing on preventing the spread of the ideology, a more appropriate question might be how can you make people less receptive to the

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[6] Providing testimony during the hearing, were John Miller (Assistant Director, Office of Public Affairs, Federal Bureau of Investigation), Chip Poncy (Director, Office of Strategic Policy for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of Treasury, Jeremy Curtin (Coordinator, Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State), and Jeffrey Grieco (acting Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development).

ideology's message? An ideology does not influence behavior in a vacuum, it "can only impact behavior under given conditions, when other necessary factors are present" (Moghaddam, 2008, 2).

E.   ROOT CAUSES OF RADICALIZATION

To discuss the sources of radicalization, the SCHSGA held two hearings, one entitled "The Threat of Islamic Radicalism to the Homeland" (March 14, 2007)[7], the other, "The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It" (July 10, 2008).[8] As could be expected, much of the testimony focused on the militant Islamist ideology fueling the radicalization process and some of the sources of this ideology.

For the most part, modern Islamism[9] dates back to 1928, when Hasan al-Bana established the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Mandaville, 2008). However, modern Islamism was not established as an inherently militant ideology. It was not until being forced underground by the Egyptian government in the 1950s that the Muslim Brotherhood became more radicalized (Mandaville, 2008). Consequently, it was during this time, one of the key ideologues of radical Islamism, Sayyid Qutb, emerged. His ideas provided the ideological underpinnings for many of today's militant Islamist groups, and helped to influence the movement's key figures, such as bin Laden and al-Zawhari (Leiter, 2008).

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[7] Providing testimony during the hearing, were the Honorable Michael Chertoff (Secretary of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)), Charles E. Allen (Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis and Chief Intelligence Officer, DHS), David W. Sutherland (Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, DHS).

[8] Providing testimony during the hearing, were Maajid Nawaz (Director, Quilliam Foundation), Peter P. Mandaville, PhD (Associate Professor of Government and Politics, George Mason University), Zeyno Baran (Senior Fellow and Director of Center for Eurasian Policy, Hudson Institute), Fathali M. Moghaddam, PhD (Professor, Department of Psychology, Georgetown University), and Michael E. Leiter (Director, National Counterterrorism Center).

[9] While the ideological underpinnings of modern Islamism date back to the early 20th century, the theological foundation can be traced back to medieval theologians like Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328) (Hutchings, 2009).

As with al-Qa'ida today, Qutb's theories appealed only to a fringe minority as most Muslims regarded his views as unorthodox when compared to traditional interpretations (Mandaville, 2008). Nevertheless, his radical views continue to serve as a basis for increasing radicalism within segments of the Islamist movement. Take for example, the Muslim Brotherhood. As this group took a more conciliatory approach toward the Egyptian government, the more radical elements chose to split off and form even more recalcitrant and violent groups, such as al-Jihad (also known as Egyptian Islamic Jihad)[10] and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group). This is also the same reasoning behind al-Shabaab's split from its parent organization, the Islamic Courts Union (Menkhaus, 2009). It would appear that the fractional issues currently affecting groups like JI and AQIM are a reoccurring problem with the broader Islamist movement as well. Thus, one cannot simply attribute Islamist ideology in itself as the sole driving factor fueling radicalization among Muslim youths.

A theme common throughout the testimony provided to the SCHSGA, is that ideology is not necessarily the key factor. As already pointed out, while an ideology can influence behavior, other factors are typically present, as it is rare for individuals to commit acts of violence for purely ideological reasons (Moghaddam, 2008; Baran, 2008). Rather, young Muslims who engage in militant activities usually do so for a combination of ideological and social reasons. As in the case of individuals joining al-Shabaab, motivations consist of a combination of "nationalist, Islamist, anti-Ethiopian, anti-American, anti-Western, anti-foreigner sentiments" (Menkhaus, 2009, 4). In fact, there is evidence to suggest that many individuals move into radical circles after already deciding they want to engage in some form of confrontational politics (Mandaville, 2008). Thus, it is not the ideology that serves as the "radicalizing agent," but rather personal experiences, and worldviews. Personal frustrations, perceived social injustice, and other grievances can lead individuals to be more receptive to alternative perspectives.

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[10] Established by Ayman al-Zawahiri.

It is when one begins to look at why individuals decide to conduct acts of terrorism that things become even more complicated. The leading psychosocial theories include a broad range of sociological, psychological and psychiatric approaches. However, trying to evaluate the various theories to find the answer to "why" is difficult at best. The problem is that most of the research has not been tested in a systematic way (Victoroff, 2005). According to terrorism expert Andrew Silke (2001), "terrorism research is not in a healthy state. It exists on a diet of fast-food research: quick, cheap, ready-to-hand and nutritionally dubious." Nonetheless, there are two useful reports that attempt to synthesize the various psychological and sociology theories: *Psychology of Terrorism* (Borum, 2004) and *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes A Terrorist and Why?* (Hudson, 1999). These reports go into some detail regarding the various psychological theories, but ultimately conclude there are no detectable personality traits that would allow one to identify a terrorist.

Despite a common belief that terrorists are psychopaths, most research into terrorist psychology concludes they are "normal" and do not suffer from psychotic disorders (Post, 2007). Based on the research, there also appears to be no evidence of individual psychological traits that would distinguish terrorists from the general population (Taylor and Horgan, 2006; Post, Ali, Henderson, Shafield, Victoroff, and Weine, 2009). Terrorism expert, Martha Crenshaw (1981), found in her research that the most "common characteristic of terrorists is their normality." Even suicide bombers have not been found to be psychologically abnormal or seriously pathological, and their actions and motives seem to have many parallels with "normal depression and normal suicide" (Speckhard, 2008). As such, just like normal behavior, terrorist behavior is "determined by a combination of innate factors, biological factors, early developmental factors, cognitive factors, temperament, environmental influences, and group dynamics" (Victoroff, 2005, 34). Based on the evidence, there does not appear to be a common terrorist mindset, even among members of the same movement (Horgan, 2008). Therefore, there is no useful profile to assist law enforcement or intelligence agencies in determining who is prone to radicalization.

Yet, despite this evidence, counterterrorism efforts still rely on the use of profiles (Horgan, 2008), which from a policy perspective is problematic. By focusing efforts on seeking a common psychological profile, one may not identify other factors contributing to radicalization. The tendency to characterize terrorists as "crazy," "evil," or of the same mindset, diminishes the psychological, social, political, and economic conditions that culminate in a situation triggering some individuals to conduct a terrorist act, whereas these contributing factors may be of more significance.

There is a body of evidence supporting the theory that "situations exert more power over human actions" (Zimbardo, 2004, 46–47) than internal determinants. In fact, as well supported in the book *The Lucifer Effect* (Zimbardo, 2008), the impact of special circumstances can make ordinary people do "evil" things; a fact clearly demonstrated by the Stanford prison experiment and the Milgram obedience studies. What the research tends to indicate is that "any individual, anywhere, at any time, can become an active terrorist" (Zimbardo, 2008, 4).

It would appear, then, radicalization is largely a function of the environment in which people live. Men and woman join terrorist groups for multiple reasons (e.g., psychosocial, economic, religious, nationalistic and political reasons) and for the most part share the same motivations (Speckhard, 2008). However, an individual's motivation for conducting an act of terrorism, particularly suicide terrorism, varies depending upon if the individual is living within or outside a conflict zone (Speckhard, 2007). Inside the conflict zone, motivations are based on trauma, revenge, humiliation, and basic survival needs. In non-conflict zones, motivations for becoming involved in terrorism tend to focus on personal issues of social alienation, marginalization, lack of positive identity, a desire for a meaningful life, and heroism, as would likely be the case for Americans vulnerable to radicalization. As such, a strategy for countering radicalization in the homeland needs to focus on these factors.

F.   POTENTIAL FOR RADICALIZATION IN THE U.S.

The vast majority of Muslims worldwide reject militant Islamist ideology, particularly its extreme interpretation of Islam and justifications for violence (Leiter, 2008). Muslims living in the U.S. are no different. According to a Pew Research Center report (2007), approximately 2.35 million Muslims[11] live in the U.S. (850,000 under the age of 18) (10). Sixty-five percent of this population was born elsewhere (Pew Research Center, 2007, 1). Despite this, nearly half see themselves as an American first, rather than a Muslim, and hold mainstream U.S. outlooks, values, and attitudes (Pew Research Center, 2007, 3).

While Muslim Americans typically express positive views of American society, the Pew Research Center (2007) found that 53% felt life for Muslims was more difficult since September 11, 2001 (Pew Research Center, 2007, 2). There was also a perception that U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts singled out Muslims. For this reason, many Muslim Americans opposed military operations in Iraq (75%) and Afghanistan (48%) (Pew Research Center, 2007, 4). Despite these beliefs, it appears extremism is still lower among Muslim Americans compared to Muslims around the world.

According to a 2008 Gallup poll of Muslims from around the world, 7% of those surveyed supported anti-U.S. terrorism (Esposito and Mogahed, 2008, 48). A more recent poll released by WorldPublicOpinion.org (2009) showed a slightly higher average (9.5%)[12] in support of attacks against American civilians, with an additional 10% displaying mixed feelings (5). Comparatively, 1% of the Muslims living in the U.S. believe suicide bombings against civilian targets are often justified to defend Islam;

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[11] The number of Muslims in the U.S. varies greatly depending on source and political agendas. Estimates range from 1.5 million to 7 million (ReligiousTolerance.Org,, 2006). A September 2009 press article estimated American Muslims make up fewer than 2% of the total U.S. population (Ahmed, 2009, para. 2). Neither of these sources provided substantiating data for their numbers. Lacking current census figures (last official census was conducted in 2000), the Pew Research data is the most current and will serve as the reference point for this thesis.

[12] Countries polled: Egypt (8%), Indonesia (5%), Pakistan (9%), Morocco (7%), Palestinian Territory (24%), Jordan (11%), Turkey (8%), and Azerbaijan (4%) (WorldPublicOpinion.org, 2009, p. 5).

however, 7% believe bombings are sometimes justified (Pew Research Center, 2007, 5). While the numbers are low, this evidence, plus the disruption of multiple terrorist plots, shows a percentage of Muslim Americans is prone to radicalization.

One last point in discussing the potential for radicalization in the U.S. is the tendency to group all Muslims together. The Muslim American population does not represent a monolithic diaspora; rather it is made up of multiple diasporic communities (e.g., Somali, Lebanese Yemeni, Iraqi, Iranian, Palestinian, etc.), each with its own unique cultural, social, and political context (Post and Sheffer, 2007). Then, there are Muslim converts with no ties at all to a Muslim nation or diaspora. Given these facts, a strategy to address radicalization needs to focus on the uniqueness of the affected communities and individuals, not treat them as a common entity. The next step is to look at how national strategies address this potential internal threat.

G.   NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO HOMELAND SECURITY AND COMBATING TERRORISM

There are ten national strategy documents related to homeland security and combating terrorism:

- *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2006);
- *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (2007);
- *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (2006);
- *National Defenses Strategy* (2006);
- *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (2004);
- *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (2002);
- *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets* (2003);
- *National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace* (2003);
- *National Money Laundering Strategy* (2007); and
- *National Strategy for Information Sharing* (2008).

Of these, the *NSCT* and the *NSHS* are the most relevant in the discussion of the homegrown terrorist threat and countering radicalization. The other strategies focus primarily on military operations abroad or the protection of critical infrastructure.

Starting with the *NSCT,* this document primarily has an outward focus and barely mentions the homegrown threat. Language regarding the homeland is primarily defensive in nature, such as "defend potential targets of attack" and "deny terrorists entry to the United States and disrupt their travel internationally" (White House, 2006, 13). From a domestic aspect, "we will continue to guard against the emergence of homegrown terrorists within our own Homeland" (White House, 2006, 10). To accomplish this strategy, "we will continue to engage with, and strengthen, the efforts of Muslims" (White House, 2006, 11) in the U.S., to reject violent extremism. How to accomplish these goals is lacking, and it is implied homegrown radicalization will be resolved by counter radicalization abroad.

References to countering radicalization in the *NSCT* center around the need to "advance effective democracies as the long-term antidote to the ideology of terrorism" and "lay the foundations and build the institutions and structures we need to carry the fight forward against terror and help ensure our ultimate success" (White House, 2006, 1). Nowhere does it address how to actually counter the radicalization process, internationally or domestically.

As for the N*SHS*, it does acknowledge the U.S. "is not immune to homegrown radicalization and violent Islamic extremism" (Homeland Security Council, 2008, 3). It also goes beyond Islamic extremism to include right-wing and special-issue groups. Despite the broader definition of the terrorist threat, the strategy's focus is still on the Islamic threat and Muslim communities. While the *NSHS* identifies four objectives to help prevent radicalization, like the *NSCT*, it does not go into any detail on how to accomplish them.

H.   U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO COUNTER RADICALIZATION

Possibly reflecting the deficiencies identified with the U.S. counterterrorism and homeland security strategy documents, during the SCHSGA hearing, "Violent Islamist Extremism: Government Efforts to Defeat It," of the four testimonies, only the FBI addressed radicalization in the homeland, and this largely dealt with the Bureau's Muslim

community outreach program. According to the Bureau, this program has had some success, and has created new partnerships in the Arab-American and Muslim communities (Miller, 2007).

Similarly, during the SCHSGA hearing "Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland: Six Years after 9/11" (September 10, 2008),[13] there was actually little testimony dealing with radicalization. Rather, the emphasis was on intelligence reform, information sharing, and security measures. As with U.S. strategy, the discussions primarily focused on external threats. Although, Director Mueller (2007) did mention the homegrown threat and the FBI's Muslim community outreach program.

Using law enforcement as a community outreach tool is a reoccurring theme even at the local level. During a SCHSGA hearing on "The Role of Local Law Enforcement in Countering Violent Islamist Extremism" (October 30, 2007)[14], representatives from the Miami-Dade (Ronczkowski, 2007) and Los Angeles (Downing, 2007) Police Departments discussed their outreach efforts. Both of these outreach efforts tend to focus on educating law enforcement personnel on Islamic culture and the public on how to look for signs of radicalization. In short, these programs are more oriented toward identifying radicalized individuals than preventing radicalization.

Community outreach is certainly an important aspect of countering radicalization; however, law enforcement might be limited to the inroads they can make into these communities. As the Pew Research Center poll reflected, the majority of the Muslim American population is of foreign origin, and most come from countries under authoritarian rule. Based on their experiences, they might be suspicious of the law enforcement led programs. Research conducted following the 9/11 attacks found that within some Arab-American communities, individuals "were more afraid of law

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[13] Providing testimony during the hearing were Michael Chertoff (Secretary, DHS), J. Michael McConnell (DNI), Robert S. Mueller (Director, FBI), and John Scott Redd (Director, NCTC).

[14] Lawrence Sanchez (Assistant Commissioner, NYPD), Mitchell Silber (Senior Intelligence Analyst, NYPD), Deputy Chief Michael Downing (Counter Terrorism and Criminal Intelligence Bureau, Los Angeles Police Department), Major Michael R. Ronczkowski (Homeland Security Bureau, Miami-Dade Police Department), Major Thomas Dailey (Homeland Security Division, Kansas City Police Department).

enforcement agencies—especially federal law enforcement agencies—than they were of acts of hate or violence, despite an increase in hate crimes" (National Institute for Justice, 2008, ii).

Community acceptance aside, the greater issue is that "while there are a series of outreach efforts being pursued by federal agencies, those efforts are limited, isolated, and not part of a strategic, government-wide policy to significantly minimize the influence" (SCHSGA, 2008, 15) of militant Islamic ideology in the U.S. The U.S. is not alone in this deficiency, as there are very few countries with an all-encompassing counterradicalization strategy.

I. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

In September 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted a Global Counterterrorism Strategy. To ensure coordination of the Member States' counterterrorism efforts, the CTITF was established. Supporting the CTITF are nine working groups:

- Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism,
- Preventing and Resolving Conflicts,
- Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism,
- Preventing and Responding to WAD Attacks,
- Tackling the Financing of Terrorism,
- Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes,
- Strengthening the Protection of Vulnerable Targets,
- Protecting Human Rights While Countering Terrorism, and
- Addressing Radicalization and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism.

The focus of the Radicalization and Extremism working group is to identify non-coercive approaches policies and practices to prevent violent extremism.

The Radicalization and Extremism Working Group attempted to create an inventory of counterradicalization and deradicalization measures implemented by UN Member States. Of the 192 Member States, 34[15] provided information on their respective policies and programs (CTITF, 2008, 5). Based on the responses, the Working Group identified eleven general categories of counterradicalization programs:

- engaging and working with civil society,
- prison programs,
- education,
- promoting alliance of civilizations and intercultural dialogue,
- tackling economic and social inequalities,
- global programs to counter radicalization,
- the Internet,
- legislation reforms,
- rehabilitation programs,
- developing and disseminating information, and
- training and qualifying agencies involved in implementing counterradicalization policies.

These categories reflect a wide range of efforts; unfortunately, the report did not provide a significant amount of detail on the various Member States' programs. Although, what seemed to be noticeably lacking was an overarching strategy addressing all phases of the radicalization process, the exception being the UK.

The UK's counterterrorism strategy is known as CONTEST.[16] CONTEST has four components referred to as the "Four Ps:" *Prevent, Pursue, Protect,* and *Prepare* (Her Majesty's [HM] Government, 2009). The "Four Ps" are very similar to the objectives stated in the *NSHS* and the *NSCT*. The one noticeable difference is the detailed

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[15] Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Djibouti, Finland, France, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, Italy, Kuwait, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Sweden, Sudan, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Yemen.

[16] Originally published in the 2003, the UK's strategy was updated in March 2009 and this version is sometimes referred to as CONTEST 2.

counterradicalization component (*Prevent*). In addition to the *Prevent* section of CONTEST, there are other documents further explaining the strategy and defining the roles of government and non-government players. Collectively, these documents offer one of the most in depth and detailed strategies to counter radicalization. Chapter VI will go into more detail regarding the *Prevent* component and look at some of the potential issues in implementing such a strategy in the U.S.

After the UK, the Netherlands offers a significant amount of publicly available material on homegrown extremism. One study in particular, *Jihadi terrorists in Europe* (Bakker, 2006), used the methodology in Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) to look at radicalization in Europe. What was interesting is there were more dissimilarities than similarities among the extremists analyzed in the two studies (Bakker, 2006). Besides differences in age, marital status, and socioeconomic status, probably the most significant difference was in the recruitment process. Whereas, Sagemen's (2004) findings showed individuals were "recruited" away from their families and friends, Bakker's (2006) research concluded that most European homegrown extremists joined with "very limited or even no outside" involvement (51). Nevertheless, the study seemed to validate the "self-recruitment" aspect of the evolving threat found in Sageman's later work.

Unlike the UK, the Netherlands does not have a series of formalized strategy documents. However, based on papers provided by national and local officials, the Dutch appear to have incorporated a similar approach to dealing with radicalization issues. At the national level, similar to the U.S., the major elements of the Dutch counterterrorism strategy focus on law enforcement, intelligence, and security measures (Akerboom, 2003). At the local level, the efforts appear to parallel the UK's *Prevent* component, as it focuses on a preventive approach consisting of measures aimed at making individuals more resistant to radicalization (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2007).

Another country that has studied the UK's counterterrorism strategy is Australia. Australia does not have a strategy similar to CONTEST; however, the Australian government is currently in the process of drafting a counterterrorism white paper. In

support of this process, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) examined CONTEST to determine if there were any lessons to be learned. The analysis concluded, although the homeland security setting was different from the UK's, the Australian government could not afford to be complacent and should create a counter extremism strategy (Bergin, 2009). This recommendation was based on evidence that some Australians held extremist views, and some had already traveled overseas to train or engage in extremist activities. Ironically, this report stated that the Australian Federal Police had noted extremism among the Somali-Australian population. On August 4, 2009, a plot involving four Australians, inspired by al-Shabaab, was disrupted (Stewart and Wilson, 2009). Part of terrorists' rationale for planning the attacks in Australia was that it had become too difficult to travel to Somalia (a point that should not be lost when analyzing the Somali-American situation). This latest event is likely to reenergize the debate for a counter radicalization strategy for Australia.

Closer to home, the Canadian government has also studied CONTEST. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) released a report with their analysis of the strategy. Like the ASPI analysis, the report found that *Prevent* or any other aspect of the UK's approach was not "transferable wholesale to a Canadian context" (Prevention of Radicalization Study Group, 4). However, it did acknowledge the need for the "development of a comprehensive prevention of radicalization strategy" (Prevention of Radicalization Study Group, 4). The CACP report also determined that such a prevention strategy must take a "whole-of-government approach that is highly centralized at the policy level and highly flexible at the implementation level" (Prevention of Radicalization Study Group, 4).

Attempting to attain lessons learned from other countries, the SCHSGA held the hearing on "Violent Islamic Extremism: The European Experience" (June 27, 2007);[17] however, only representatives from France and the Netherlands participated. The French

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[17] Providing testimony during the hearing were Lidewijde Ongering (Deputy National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (The Netherlands)), Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere (First Vice President, Investigating Magistrate (France)), Lynn Martin (former U.S. Secretary of Labor), Farooq Kathwari (Chairman and CEO, Ethan Allan Interiors, Inc.), and Marc Sageman, PhD.

representative's testimony centered on his country's legal and judicial measures and did not address countering radicalization. The Dutch representative's testimony did not go into any detail regarding the strategy and approaches previously discussed; however, he did stress that the Dutch were seeking a comprehensive, balanced approach that included "repressive measures against terrorists, but puts an equal emphasis on prevention" (Ongering, 2007, 6). Lidewijde Ongering (2007) also noted that it is "very important that the municipal authorities take the lead in this process," national authorities should provide support where necessary (e.g., providing expertise and guidelines). Also discussed was the importance of using non-traditional means (e.g., social services, schools and other institutions) to "help pull radicalized individuals out of their radical isolation and offer them other social prospects" (Ongering, 2007, 9).

J.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

As documented in various intelligence assessments, there is no doubt al-Qa'ida and its affiliates pose a threat to U.S. interests at home and abroad. While the operational capability may be diminished, the intent to attack the U.S. remains, and is possibly even greater than ever. Even without a significant attack since 2001, the group is still influential among militant Islamists worldwide, as well as, a source of inspiration. However, the threat posed by a leaderless, decentralized organization is also valid, as particularly observed in the West. The unfortunate reality is that both threat streams will continue for the near future, as such, the Nation's strategy needs to address both.

While the devolution of al-Qa'ida can be partially attributed to a conscious leadership decision, global counterterrorism measures and U.S. military operations have also shaped the operational environment. The number of key personnel killed is significant when measured in the loss of expertise and leadership. The success of military operations in Afghanistan and the FATA has had a secondary affect on the organization as well. In *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (Brafman and Beckstrom, 2006), a means of defeating a decentralized or a hybrid organization (containing both centralized and decentralized structural elements) is to force it to become more centralized. The successful U.S. UAV

campaign in Afghanistan and Pakistan has helped to accomplish this in a figurative sense. Al-Libi's accusatory statements in *Guide to the Laws Regarding Muslim Spies* reflect the level of suspicion[18] directed at al-Qa'ida's Islamist allies. Given these misgivings, there is no reason to doubt al-Qa'ida's circle of trust has significantly constricted, making it more targetable. With tighter security measures, it is likely operatives have limited access (if any) to key decision makers, and decision makers have limited access to operational information; both of which impact operational control, placing more reliance on regional players and self-radicalizing elements.

Furthermore, the franchising of operations has not been without its problems. Besides the negative attention brought to the militant Islamist movement by affiliates' use of indiscriminate tactics, internal disagreement over these tactics is leading to the fracturing of some groups (e.g., JI and AQIM). This does not mean these splinter groups do not pose a threat. Given the tendency of these fringe elements to take an even more violent stance than the original organizations, these smaller groups may actually represent a greater threat. Additionally, access to the Internet allows these fringe elements to reach out and inspire individuals and smaller cells globally. Thus, no longer is face-to-face interaction required, individuals can radicalize themselves. Then there is the possibility that members disenfranchised from the larger mainstream organizations may return home and link up with these self-radicalizing elements.

While the majority of "foreign fighters" come from overseas, the issue regarding Somali Americans brings this problem closer to home. However, this problem is not limited to one ethnic group. One of the individuals arrested in North Carolina seeking to wage jihad abroad had fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s (U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of North Carolina, 2009). According to a controversial DHS assessment leaked to the media, there is concern some veterans returning from deployments in Iraq

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[18] Despite following a similar ideology, Islamist groups have been known to turn on each based on group objectives, as in the case of recent fighting between HAMAS and a pro al-Qa'ida group, Jund Ansar Allah (Soldiers of the Supporters of God), after the leader of Jund Ansar Allah declared an Islamic emirate in the Gaza (al-Jazerra English, 2009).

and Afghanistan may turn to extremism (Office of Intelligence and Analysis, 2009). All these factors point toward a more capable and lethal homegrown threat. Based on these facts, the very nature of the homegrown threat is continuing to evolve.

Disruption of the radicalization process is even more significant considering the nature of the terrorist threat facing the U.S. No longer is the threat solely from abroad, it is now increasingly from within. Polling data and the disruption of multiple plots involving domestic terrorists indicates the American population is not immune to radicalization.

Regardless if one believes al-Qa'ida is the primary threat or a more decentralized, leaderless structure, the simple fact is the current U.S. strategies do not adequately address the homegrown threat or radicalization in the homeland. Other countries realize that homegrown radicalization is increasingly becoming a problem and are considering developing their own counterradicalization strategies. It is time for the U.S. to do so as well, before it is too late.

III. DEFINING THE THREAT

To this point, the discussion has focused primarily on the threat posed by al-Qa'ida, including its affiliates and individuals inspired by the militant Islamist ideology. As stated in the various threat estimates, al-Qa'ida represents the greatest threat since it "possesses both the desire to do major damage to Western interests, and the capacity to turn this desire into reality" (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, 2009, 3). However, as Secretary Chertoff (2007) stressed in his testimony to the SCHSGA, it is important that policy makers do not limit their analysis of radicalization to just the Islamist threat, but understand there is a wide range of terrorist threats facing the U.S. To fully grasp the terrorist threat, it is necessary to take a step back and look at the problem in its entirety so as not to take a myopic approach and concentrate on just one aspect. As described in this chapter, the problem is much greater than the militant Islamist threat.

A. DEFINING TERRORISM

Start at a common reference point, it is necessary to define terrorism; unfortunately, attempting to agree on a universal definition is problematic. Alex Schmid, an internationally renowned Dutch scholar in terrorism studies, has compiled 109 academic definitions of terrorism (Victoroff, 2005, 4). Obviously, this word means different things to different people (academics, policy makers, participants, victims, etc.). To some, it is al-Qa'ida; to others the definition might include the Mexican Drug Cartels. Then there is Yasser Arafat's argument, that "The difference between a revolutionary and a terrorist lies in the reasons for which each fights" (Hoffman, 2006, 26). This leads to the much-used cliché, "one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter." Based on the spectrum of views, it is easy to see why there is no universally accepted definition.

Lacking such a definition, it is necessary to look at those framing U.S. homeland security and defense, and counterterrorism operations. Title 6 (Domestic Security) of the *U.S. Code,* which established DHS, offers the following definition of terrorism:

(A) involves any act that:

  (i) is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources; and

  (ii) is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State or other subdivision of the United States; and

(B) appears to be intended:

  (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

  (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

  (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping (Definitions, *6 U.S. Code 101,* 2009, para. (16)).

The *Code of Federal Regulations* (*CFR*), in the section designating the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) as the lead agency for investigating all crimes for which it has primary or concurrent jurisdiction, defines terrorism as:

the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (General Functions, 2008, para. (l)).

Title 18 (Crimes and Criminal Procedure) of the *U.S. Code* adds to this definition by categorizing terrorism as either international or domestic, depending on origin, basing, and objectives of a group or individual. DOJ and the FBI use the Title 18 definitions.

International terrorism is defined as activities that:

(A) involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;

(B) appear to be intended:

  (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

  (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

  (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

(C) occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum (Definitions, *18 U.S. Code 2331,* para. (1))

Domestic terrorism is defined as activities that:

(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;

(B) appear to be intended:

(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

(C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States (Definitions, *18 U.S. Code 2331,* para. (1))

Title 22 (Foreign Relations and Intercourse) of the *U.S. Code* directing DOS to produce an annual country report on terrorism, provides the following definition of terrorism:

premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents (Annual country reports on terrorism, 2008, para. (d)(2)).

This section defines international terrorism as "involving citizens or the territory of more than 1 country" (para. (d)(1)). The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) uses this definition in its *2008 Report on Terrorism.*

Meanwhile, DoD (2008) offers a slightly differing definition. Terrorism is the:

calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological (552).

It is easy to see why it is difficult to create a universally-accepted definition, when even the various U.S. Government departments cannot agree on a common definition. While these definitions are collectively intended to frame U.S. counterterrorism planning efforts, as Hoffman (2006) points out, they tend to mainly reflect the "priorities and particular interests of the specific agency." DHS focuses on the target (population, critical infrastructure, and key resources), DOJ the criminality, DOS the political nature, and DoD as part of asymmetric warfare (Post et al., 2009).

From an international or extremist perspective, it could also be argued that these definitions are all subjective, and created by the U.S. Government, to "justify" their actions. How the term "unlawful" is defined in the U.S., may differ from other countries. While incorporating verbiage from the Law of Armed Conflict and the Geneva Convention may help to further define what is lawful or unlawful, from an international perspective, even these can be interpreted differently, as not all countries are signatories to these agreements. Based on the definitions provided so far, the allied fire bombings of cities (Dresden, Tokyo, etc.) during World War II and the use of atomic weapons against Nagasaki and Hiroshima could be interpreted as terrorist acts. All were calculated decisions to use weapons against noncombatants in order to intimidate the governments and societies in pursuit of political goals. According to the Geneva Convention and the Law of Armed Conflict, these would be considered unlawful acts simply based on the principle of proportionality. Just as Arafat implied, how an act is characterized is largely based on what side of the fight you reside. At times, how policy makers attempt to define a threat can actually help to validate a cause.

Take for instance the use of the terms "war on terror" and "Jihadi." Defining U.S. efforts as a "war on terror" plays right into the narrative that this is a "war" on Islam and a clash of civilizations, particularly since the related strategies primarily focus on al-Qa'ida and other Islamist groups. The use of the terms Jihadi and Jihadists is prevalent throughout the literature to describe militant Islamic extremists. In a western sense, these terms have taken on a negative connotation. However, in the Muslim world, there are no negative connotations. Using terms like Jihadi, or Mujahideen, to define the threat, helps

to validate the "holy warrior" image these groups use to justify their actions. In a battle of ideas, words are the weapon of choice, and if used in the wrong context can easily cost you the fight.

Based on recent remarks by John Brennan (2009), Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, it appears the current administration understands the importance of semantics and that "how you define the problem shapes how you address it." Phrases like "war on terrorism," "global war," and "jihadists" are no longer included in presidential speeches for the very reason that they tend to play into al-Qa'ida's narrative and provide the group some legitimacy. Another rationale for the changes is so the administration is not caught "floundering among the terrorist trees while missing the growth of the extremist forest" (Brennan, 2009, 5).

This is where the official U.S. definitions regarding terrorism tend to fall short—they lack context, which in turn influences the perceived rationality of the act. In the effort to solely focus on the criminality or lawfulness of a particular act, these definitions tend to gloss over why someone would use this tactic in the first place. In the process, the various groups and individuals using terrorism start to blur into a common threat entity. As a result, the policies and strategies to counter the threat take on a "one size fits all" perspective (e.g., a global war on terror). The problem with such a universal approach is that a strategy to counter one group may not necessarily work against another. For example, the tactics used against al-Qa'ida in the FATA are inappropriate for countering domestic terrorism. In fact, the tactics used against al-Qa'ida overseas are a radicalizing factor with Islamic extremists in the U.S. (U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York, 2009; NEFA Foundation, 2009). The only commonality linking the world's terrorists is an extremely passionate desire for change.

B.   TERRORISM TYPOLOGY

With so much media attention focused on Islamic (Sunni and Shia) oriented extremist groups (e.g., al-Qa'ida, Harakat al-Muqawamat al-Islamiyya (HAMAS), Hizballah), it is easy to see why there is a public perception that Islam is the source of

violent behavior (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2009). However, the variety of groups willing to use terror as a tactic is diverse. Based on the terrorist attacks conducted in 2008 attributed to a particular group, Islamic extremists only committed 52% (NCTC, 2009, 22). Terrorist movements can be categorized by their political (right and left wing, nationalists, separatists, anarchists, etc.), religious, and social orientation. In some cases, a group might fall within multiple categories. For example, HAMAS and Hizballah both follow Islamist ideologies (Sunni and Shia, respectively), but are also considered nationalist movements (Palestinian and Lebanese), and political parties. For a counterterrorism policy to be effective, it is necessary to understand what the group is trying to accomplish and why they feel threatened enough to choose to use terrorism. Focusing on the act alone will likely lead to a greater misunderstanding, which may result in an escalated use of violence in order for these groups to feel they are being "heard."

Another issue when discussing terrorist groups, is that not all involved in these groups are terrorists. Like many organizations, there are differing levels of individual operational involvement. There are the terrorists (the operators), people who facilitate support of the operations (e.g., logisticians and financiers), sympathizers, and then the communities or societies from which they come. In focusing on the operators themselves, sometimes it is overlooked that supporters and sympathizers are just as crucial to the successful execution of an attack, especially in out-of-area operations. Sympathizers and supporters are also instrumental to a group's ability to sustain day-to-day operations. The Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands (AIVD) created a simple model consisting of concentric circles to depict the interaction between the various group segments (Figure 1) (Akerboom, 2003). The placement of each ring also reflects the relative proportionality of each segment in the group, with terrorists representing a small segment of society as a whole. It should be kept in mind, that while sympathizers may only be somewhat radicalized, and most of society not at all, using heavy-handed tactics against any of the rings could serve as a radicalizing agent to move individuals toward the inner circle.
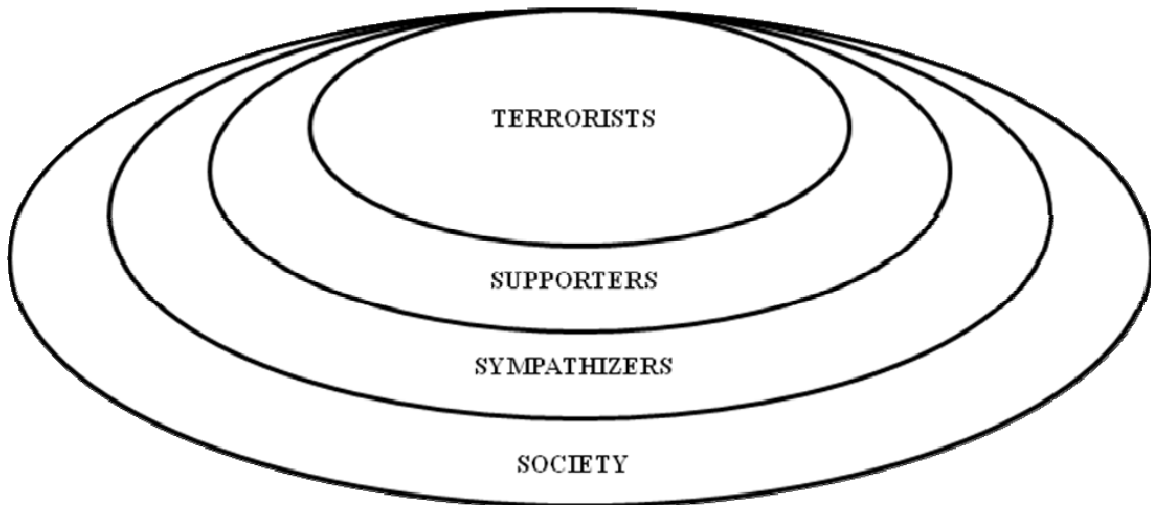
Figure 1.   AVID Ring Model (After Akerboom, 2003, 6).

One last issue, and one that partly contributed to the 9/11 attacks, is U.S. counterterrorism efforts have traditionally been divided along the lines of international and domestic terrorism. In today's security environment, a delineation of responsibilities along geographic borders risks creating a self-imposed seam, which terrorist groups can exploit. Given the transnational nature of these groups, they do not restrict their operational activities based on geographical boundaries. With today's technology, a cell or individual in the U.S. can be controlled or directed from anywhere in the world. Just as important, foreign-based groups can easily serve as a virtual inspiration to those already residing in the U.S.

C.   INTERNATIONAL THREAT

The 9/11 attacks brought international terrorism to the forefront of U.S. domestic attention and made al-Qa'ida a household name. As a result of this event and ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the average American citizen, the stereotypical terrorist is an Islamic fundamentalist willing to kill indiscriminately those he considers not to be of his faith or belief. What many Americans do not realize is, there are many groups willing to use violence to further their causes, and a fair number of these groups threaten either the U.S. or its regional interests.

DOS has designated 45 groups (see Appendix for list) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2009b). To be designated a FTO, a group's activity must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or national security (national defense, foreign relations, economic interests, etc.). A review of the FTO list indicates that not all are based in Southwest Asia or the Middle East, nor do they all have Islamist orientations. While to some the FTOs represent the primary threat, in reality, these groups are responsible for a relatively small proportion of the attacks worldwide.

According to the NCTC's Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS) database, in 2008, there were 11,770 acts of terrorism (NCTC, 2009a, 10). Of these incidents, only 40% (NCTC, 2009a, 20) could be attributed to a specific organization through open source means. Of the 150 organizations identified, DOS designated FTOs make up less than a third (NCTC, 2009a, 10). These numbers reflect that the use of terrorism as a tactic is more widespread than among just a few groups. The evidence also indicates the use of terrorism is on the rise. WITS data shows an annual increase in the number of terrorist attacks since 2005[19] (2005–7,690, 2006–7,914, 2007–8,296, and 2008–8,512) (NCTC, 2009a, 34). The increase in terrorism is not all related to issues in the Middle East or Southwest Asia.

Extremist groups exist in all regions. The following is the regional breakout of the terrorist acts reported in 2008: Africa–718 (2,987 deaths); East Asia and Pacific–978 (762); Europe and Eurasia–774 (292); Near East–4594 (5,528); South Asia–4,354 (5,826); Western Hemisphere–352 (370) (NCTC, 2009a, 19). While most of these groups lack the operational capability to globally project power from foreign bases to the U.S. (like al-Qa'ida or Hizballah), this does not mean they lack a capacity to strike the U.S. As with al-Shabaab, even the smallest of these groups are likely to have followers, supporters, or sympathizers living in the U.S. In the case of Shirwa Ahmed, some of these individuals are quite willing to give their lives for the causes they support. The threat is no longer limited to foreign-based groups.

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[19] These annual totals do not reflect terrorist attacks in Iraq, which actually dropped below 2005 levels (NCTC, 2009a).

D. DOMESTIC THREAT

While the images of the 9/11 attacks are burnt into everyone's mind, the fact is, that in 2001, domestic extremists carried out the majority of terrorist incidents in the U.S. 13[20] of the 14 recorded instances of terrorism in the U.S. and its territories in 2001, along with the two terrorist preventions, were attributed to domestic terrorists (FBI, 2002, 9). According to the WITS database (as of July 2009), since 2004, there were 24 terrorist attacks in the U.S. committed by domestic terrorists (NCTC, 2009b). Despite these numbers, it is still hard for many to grasp domestic terrorism as a significant threat. Yet prior to 9/11, the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil (168 killed) was the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, by Timothy McVeigh (FBI, 2004, 41). While McVeigh did not belong to a particular domestic terrorist group, his beliefs were similar to those found in many hate and right-wing extremist groups currently operating in the U.S. today.

Right-wing extremists[21] tend to be an afterthought compared to Islamic extremists; however, this threat is very real. According to the FBI, right-wing extremists pose a threat because of their continued weapons collecting and their inclination toward violence (FBI, 2004). Additionally, white supremacists, traditionally the most violent right-wing group, have strengthened their recruiting and rhetoric since the 9/11 attacks. Since 2001, 27 disrupted plots and eight attacks were attributed to right-wing groups, or individuals associated with these groups (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 2009). The threat posed by right-wing extremists does not appear to be going away anytime soon.

Two recently released (and controversial) reports, one by DHS and the other from the Missouri Information Analysis Center (both originally classified as For Official Use Only, but widely available on the Internet) addressed the potential resurgence of right-wing extremist groups given the current political and economic climate. Both of these

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[20] At publication, the original number was 12 as the anthrax laced letters were still under investigation.

[21] Of note, much like Islamic extremists, some of these groups place a strong emphasis on religion, as it provides a theological basis for racial separatism. This particular ideology is known as Christian Identity, a "radicalized" theology promoting a Euro-centric version of Christianity.

reports received a significant backlash due to the linkage of right-wing extremists to conservative Republican politicians and veterans returning from the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which, in a way, diminished the significance of these assessments. However, there is data to support increased recruitment and the resurgence of hate groups. The SPLC reported there are currently 926 hate groups active in the U.S., as compared to 602 prior to September 11, 2001 (Holthouse, 2009, para. 1). Given this increasing trend over the past eight years, it is not hard to imagine the election of the U.S.'s first minority president, combined with the Nation's current economic problems, plays into the narrative fueling radicalization within these groups. As with the 9/11 attacks, it would be a "lack of imagination" to assume these groups will not respond with violence.

Another rising concern is the threat posed by what are known as special interest groups (e.g., animal rights, environmental activists, and pro-life). According to the FBI (2004), "Special-interest extremism incidents have increased over the last several years and will continue to be problematic." While it may seem counterintuitive to these groups' agendas, as discussed later on, there are members who are quite willing to take human lives.

Right-wing and special-interest groups are not the only danger; homegrown extremists inspired by al-Qa'ida continue to be a problem. Since 9/11, there have been 23 disrupted terrorist plots targeting the U.S., all inspired by militant Islamist ideology. In the most recent case, four individuals were arrested in May 2009 for conspiring to bomb a synagogue in New York City, and target an aircraft at an Air National Guard base. One of the individuals claimed this was in response to Muslims being killed by U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan (U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York, 2009). The homegrown militant Islamist threat has not gone away.

Compared to their foreign counterparts, domestic terrorist groups, or cells, tend to be relatively small in size and lack resources. Despite their limited operational capabilities and resources, they can still mount a high profile, mass casualty attack, as demonstrated by the Oklahoma City bombing. Unfortunately, such operational planning is often difficult to detect, since members of these groups are able to operate in the

mainstream and not be given a second thought. The ability to detect domestic terrorism (right-wing, special-interest, or transnational inspired) will be even more complicated given the evolution toward the smaller, autonomous and decentralized organizational structures identified by Hoffman, Sageman, and others.

E.   LEADERLESS RESISTANCE (AKA LEADERLESS JIHAD)

Domestic extremists, such as neo-Nazi Tom Metzger and former Klansman Louis Beam, have championed an operational model referred to as "leaderless resistance" (Burton and Stewart, 2008). This concept is based on a cell structure where cells do not report to a central headquarter or a single leader for direction, and operate independently of each other. Lacking a centralized command and control structure, these cells must draw their inspiration from a larger ideological movement, which as al-Qa'ida has proven is very feasible. As Beam (1992) points out, in "any movement, all persons involved have the same general outlook, are acquainted with the same philosophy, and generally react to given situations in similar ways" (para. 29). While not the only factor, this underscores the importance of ideology in the radicalization process (discussed in Chapter IV).

Often attributed to Beam, the originator of leaderless resistance is Colonel Ulius Louis Amoss, an anti-communist who developed the strategy in the early 1960s to counter a potential communist takeover of the U.S. (Garfinkel, 2003). Having been around for some time, this concept is not limited to neo-Nazis and white supremacists.

Besides Beam's essay being is available in multiple languages, the use of a similar autonomous and decentralized organizational structure is also prevalent in militant Islamic literature. This concept was endorsed (prior to his capture in 2005) by one of al-Qaida's most prominent strategists, Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Setmariam Nasar, more commonly referred to by his pen name Abu Mus'ab al-Suri (Lia, 2007, para. 2). Al-Suri discussed this concept in *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, which is among the most frequently mentioned strategy books on extremist Web sites (Lia, 2007, para. 2). Al-Suri's writings sound very similar to Amoss and Beam in that the global

jihadi movement should discourage any direct contact between leadership and cells, leadership should be provided by "general guidance," and operative leaders should exist only at the cell level. What holds this decentralized structure together is a common goal and doctrine along with a comprehensive self-education program.

Despite the appearance of a disorganized structure, given the benefits of the Internet, these cells often possess a remarkable shared connection through online training manuals, audio and video recordings, and chat forums (Kohlman, 2008). Without any formal contact, they can become virtual partners of al-Qa'ida (or any other group) through its online knowledge. Consequentially it is also possible for non-related groups to learn from each other through the indirect sharing of knowledge.

When looking at the various disrupted Islamist terrorist plots (and non-Islamist plots for that matter) in the U.S., it is easy to see the similarities to this leaderless organizational construct. There are no personal or operational connections between the various plots, or back to any transnational extremist group. Inspiration came from a much broader movement and its militant ideology. Training was primarily gained from Internet postings and videos.

Amoss, Beam, and al-Suri are not the only ones to see this as the best strategy for facing overwhelming odds. This concept has also become the strategy for special-interest groups (Garfinkel, 2003). Given the proliferation of this strategy, and the difficulty of tracking and monitoring such an organizational structure, the Nation's counterterrorism strategy needs to consider this, as well as the prospect of implementation by individuals.

F.   LONE ACTORS (AKA LONE OFFENDERS AND LONE WOLVES)

Central to leaderless resistance, is the responsibility of the individual to acquire the necessary skills and tools to accomplish the mission. An extension of leaderless resistance, building on the concept of individual responsibility, is the lone actor (also referred to as lone offender or "lone wolf"). The FBI assesses the most significant domestic terrorist threat to be the lone actor (FBI, 2004). Much like the leaderless

resistance concept, these individuals draw ideological inspiration from larger, more formal organizations, but operate on the fringes of those movements. McViegh is a textbook example.

Al-Suri also sees the value of the lone actor—or what he refers to as the "jihad of individual terrorism" (Lia, 2007, para. 5). Al-Suri actually goes as far as to say, "'the jihad of individual terrorism' becomes, in reality, the only option for most jihadis" (Lia, 2007, para. 5). The lone actor concept has also made it onto various extremist forums. According to postings on one extremist Web site, "It's a well-known fact that the perfect sleeper is the highly trained loner risking less chance of compromise. It takes one mistake by a cell member to compromise the entire cell" (Bakier, 2008a, para. 13). Interestingly, this particular poster used the 2002 Washington, DC, sniper attacks as a case study to help argue his point.

While leaderless resistance literature has been widely disseminated in both domestic and foreign extremist realms, only a few attacks are attributed to lone actors. Nevertheless, these attacks still manage to catch the attention of the media.

In June 2009, a Muslim convert Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammed, formerly known as Carlos Bledsoe, shot two soldiers standing outside a Littlerock, Arkansas, recruiting center. His rationale for this attack was "he was mad at the U.S. Military because of what they had done to Muslims in the past" (NEFA Foundation, 2009a, 2). Muhammed is believed to have attended a mosque in Columbus, Ohio, frequented by convicted terrorists Nuradin Abdi, Iyman Faris, and Christopher Paul (Columbus Mall Plot) (NEFA Foundation, 2009a, 4). Additionally, it is believed that while teaching English in Yemen, Muhammed may have attended the Damaj Institute, an Islamic institute attended by a number of radicalized U.S. converts (e.g., John Walker Lindh) (NEFA Foundation, 2009a, 5).

Shortly after this attack, a white supremacist, James Von Brunn, attempted to attack the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. Von Brunn, a World War II veteran, had a long history with the white supremacist movements and held anti-government views (SPLC, 2009; Fears and Foster, 2009). It would appear that the Holocaust

Museum was not the only target considered, Brunn had a list that included the White House, the, Capitol, and the National Cathedral (SPLC, 2009). It is unknown why, after all these years, Von Brunn finally decided to take action, but it could be the DHS assessment regarding right-wing extremism is not that far off track.

Preceding the Little Rock and DC attacks, a high-profile abortion doctor was killed in Wichita, Kansas. The individual arrested for the crime, Scott Roeder, was an anti-abortionist and had been involved with the anti-government "freemen" movement in the 1990s (SPLC, 2009; Carlson, 2009). An incident like this could easily be written off as a criminal act or the act of a mad man, but the significance may lie in the inspiration it provides to others to act. Since this attack preceded the Little Rock and Holocaust Museum attacks, is it possible that Roeder inspired the other attackers to act on their beliefs? Is it possible that inspiration can cross ideological lines?

In addition to the operational security aspect, the element of surprise in these three examples is what makes the lone actor an effective weapon. The concern is since these individuals operate on the fringes of the movements they support, the ability to detect and prevent these events from happening is problematic at best. As the previous incidents show, lone actors are not limited to any one group or movement.

There is one last point concerning the lone actor threat. In the past, these individuals would have been considered anti-social. However, even the Internet has contributed to the evolution of this threat. Based on research by Sageman (2008a), the Internet allows "loners" to participate in chat rooms to discuss plans and receive encouragement to carry out the attacks. An interesting example is the case of the youth involved in the Red Lake, Minnesota, school shootings. Although a Native American, he was an active member of a neo-Nazi forum, which apparently served as a source of inspiration and encouragement (Sageman). The Internet allows individual extremists to interact with groups in ways that would be inconceivable face-to-face. Even if radicalized individuals, or groups of individuals, do not actively communicate with otherlike-minded individuals in the U.S. or around the world, the Internet can provide an invaluable "handbook" for lone actors, such as the on-line posting of the ten-step manual entitled "Lone Wolves of Al-Qaeda" (Leiter, 2008).

G.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

The first issue in regards to the Nation's counterterrorism strategy is that it focuses on the tactic being used. As reflected in all the related U.S. department definitions, it all boils down to the legality of the act. The freedom fighter versus terrorist debate helps to illustrate how such a view can undermine a country's policies. Take for example, HAMAS and Hizballah, both DOS designated FTOs, which have managed to win seats in parliamentary elections. Despite the ongoing evolution of these groups from primarily terrorist organizations to political parties, they are still treated as terrorists from a U.S. foreign policy perspective. As such, what is the incentive for the groups to participate in their respective governments if the rules continue to change after they win? From a contextual perspective, U.S. policy cannot "see the forest for the trees."

The threat to homeland security is diverse. There are both foreign and domestic aspects to the threat that will continue to exist for some time. The organizational structure of these groups is changing and concepts, such as leaderless resistance or lone actors, are becoming more prevalent on the web. These trends reflect the evolution of terrorism as traditionally characterized. The importance of formal organizations seems to be increasingly overshadowed by the ideology inspiring individuals to conduct terrorist acts. Given the success of military operations abroad and law enforcement measures at home, al-Suri may be correct that individual terrorism is the only option. A more diversified and individual based threat is harder to detect and may require a different strategy to prevent than using just law enforcement measures.

Joshua Ramo (2009), in *The Age of the Unthinkable*, claims, "The power of the individual has never been greater." The devolution of the large terrorist organizations to a leaderless structure and the power of individuals (McVeigh and the DC snipers) to generate wide-scale fear reflects the truth of this statement. However, instead of looking at the negative connotations of this statement, should not the Nation's strategy for countering terrorism focus on tapping into this strength?

To determine if such a strategy is feasible, it is necessary to see if there are certain contributing factors leading individuals down a pathway toward conducting terrorist acts. By identifying these commonalities, it is possible the process can be disrupted before a person becomes radicalized to the point where they feel terrorism is their only option. The next chapter looks at how individuals become radicalized to determine what can be done to derail this process.

IV.   RADICALIZATION

Testifying before the SCHSGA, Secretary Chertoff (2007) stated, once "we understand the process that leads a person to support and/or pursue violence, we will be in the best position to protect our country from the widest possible range of threats" (1). Achieving a better understanding of this process is the key to countering the problem. As Brennan noted, how the problem is defined, shapes the response. However, clear-cut answers regarding this topic are fleeting, as there appears to be no single underlying catalyst for radicalization.

A.   PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS

The literature review showed there was a broad range of sociological, psychological, and psychiatric theories. For the most part, the various theories fall into two categories: dispositional and situational. The dispositional perspective implies there are internal determinates for anti-social behavior and that certain individuals are predisposed to carry out acts of violence. The situationist perspective argues that the situation exerts the greater power over individual actions.

A similar means of categorizing the various theories, is offered by the "syndrome" and "tool" perspectives. As with the dispositional approach, the syndrome perspective focuses on pathological traits and suggests terrorism is "a kind of 'disease' with a definite etiology, developmental trajectory, and consequences" (Kruglanski and Fishman, 2006, 194). On the other hand, the "tools perspective views terrorism as a means to an end, a tactic of warfare that anyone could use" (Kruglanski and Fishman, 2006, 194). Much like the situationist perspective, this perspective focuses on the conditions under which an individual or group decides on a particular course of action.

The research did not find any evidence to support the belief that personality traits can be used as a predictor for understanding why people become terrorists. Thus, the dispositional and syndrome perspectives offer limited utility in this discussion. However, while the situational and tool perspectives offer a better explanation, there is still one

important unanswered question, why are some people more susceptible to a given situation? Not all people exposed to a particular situation respond the same. For example, the psychological affect of violence among Israelis and Palestinians. Both populations live in a conflict zone and are exposed to varying degrees and periodicity of violence. Admittedly, the Palestinians have suffered a greater proportion of causalities and destruction of property. As can be expected, this has taken a greater psychological toll on the Palestinians. Whereas the majority of the Israelis feel optimistic about their future and there appears to be a feeling of universal resilience (possibly reinforced by the experience of the Holocaust), the Palestinian population suffers from a higher percentage of emotional and behavioral disorders and does not appear to possess a similar optimistic outlook (Brandon and Silke, 2007). Yet despite the greater proportion of emotional and behavioral disorders, not all Palestinians exposed to violence become terrorists.

This last point tends to undermine approaches based on identifying "root causes." While many people share similar traumatic backgrounds and experiences, proportionally few become terrorists (Precht, 2007). Instead of focusing on why a person becomes a terrorist, a more practical option is looking at how a person becomes radicalized.

B. RADICALIZATION PROCESS

Based on the literature review, there is not a common terrorist mindset within groups or among individuals. Therefore, there is no useful profile to assist law enforcement or intelligence in determining who is vulnerable to radicalization. While there is no psychological profile to determine who might become a terrorist, there does appear to be a common radicalization pathway, or pattern. Based on a study of disrupted western homegrown plots[22], the New York Police Department (NYPD) Intelligence Division developed a four-stage model (Silber and Bhatt, 2007) (Figure 2) to depict the radicalization process.

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[22] Madrid attack (March 2004), Amsterdam's Hofstad Group, London attack (July 2005), Australia's Operation Pendennis, Canada's Toronto 18 Case, The Lackawana Six (New York), The Portland Seven (Oregon), Virginia Jihad Network, and the 2004 Herald Square Subway Plot (New York City).
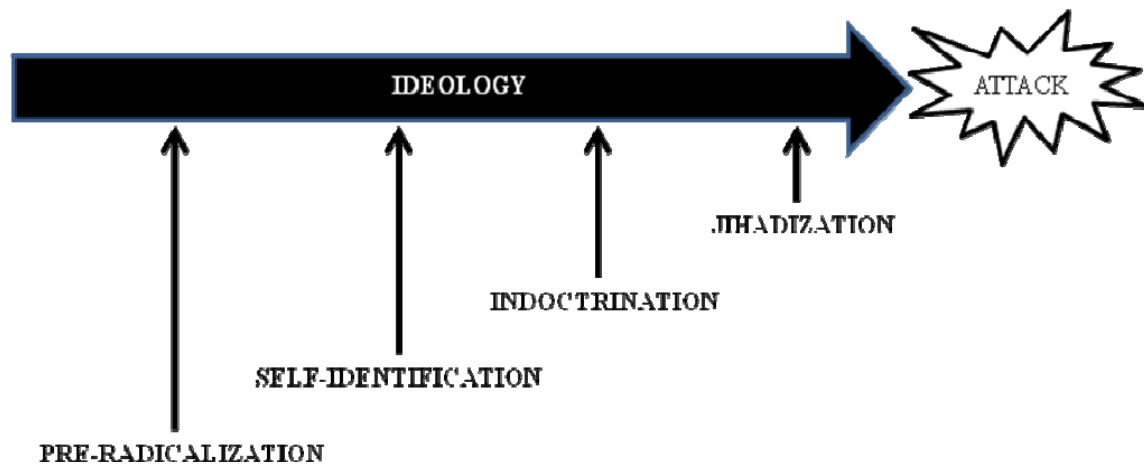
Figure 2.   NYPD Model (After Silber and Bhatt, 2007, 19).

- *Pre-radicalization*: The period before an individual is exposed to an incident or episode making them receptive to an extremist ideology.

- *Self-identification*: Influenced by either internal or external factors, an individual begins to change their worldview and associate with like-minded individuals.

- *Indoctrination*: The individual fully adopts an ideology and becomes willing to take action to further the cause.

- "*Jihadization*": Individual decides to take action and participates in the planning, preparation and execution of an act.

All of the individuals analyzed by Silber and Bhatt (2007) followed this sequential process. However, it should be noted that it is not guaranteed every individual entering this process will follow through to the end. Another key point is there is not a timeline associated with this process. The first three phases could take place over a two to three year period. However, the "jihadization" component can be a very rapid process, taking only a few months, or weeks to run its course.

A report funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice looking at homegrown radicalization in Europe validated the research in the NYPD study. Precht (2007) uses the same model, but offers slightly differing labels for the phases (Pre-radicalization, Conversion and Identification, Conviction and Indoctrination, and Action) that provide a more generic context that can be used for non-Islamist groups (Table 1). One notable

difference is the timetable associated with the radicalization process. According to Precht's analysis, radicalization can happen over several years or a few months, and seems to be occurring quicker than just a few years ago.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Pre-radicalization	**Conversion and Identification**	**Conviction and Indoctrination**	**Action**
Background factors • Identity crisis • Experience of discrimination, alienation, or other perceived injustices • Living environment, neighborhood, and family • Personal trauma • Relative lack of political alternatives **Meeting places (opportunity)** • Religious facilities • Internet • School • Youth clubs • Work • Prison • Family and friends	**Conversion** • From no faith to religious identity • More radical interpretation of faith • Shift from one faith to another (e.g. Christianity to Islam) **Identification** • Increased identification with and acceptance of extremist cause **Triggers** • Activism, "wanting a cause" • Foreign policy • Charismatic person/leader **Meeting places** • Same as Phase 1	**Conviction** • Isolation from former life • Increased training • Assignment of roles • Ready for action **Catalyst** • Overseas travel (religious or camp training) • Group bonding • Local training camp **Meeting places** • Private homes • Places difficult to detect	**Action** • Preparation • Planning • Execution **Reinforcement** • Overseas travel • Group bonding • Training camp • Videos **Key components** • Financing • Target selection • Surveillance • Fabrication of bomb or other means of terror • Test run **Meeting places** • Same as Phase 3

Table 1.   A Model of the Radicalization Process - From Conversion to Terrorism (After Precht, 2007, 34).

Similar to the NYPD model and Precht's adaptation, Fathali Moghaddam (2006) uses a staircase analogy to conceptualize the decision process a person uses in becoming a terrorist. The stairway represents a narrowing passageway suggesting that as individuals progress they see fewer options, until the final culminating point:

- *Ground Floor*: Equivalent to the pre-radicalization stage of the previous two models. What matters most is an individual's feelings of deprivation, and perceptions of fairness and justice, all of which contribute to the formation of their "identity" (how they value themselves).

- *First Floor*: Equivalent to the conversion part of Precht's second phase. A person moves to this level in hopes of improving their living conditions, finding justice, and achieving a satisfactory identity.

- *Second Floor*: Equivalent to the identification phase of both models. Unable to rectify their grievances, individuals become more receptive to messages identifying the causes of their problems. A key aspect of this level involves the displacement of aggression, which creates an "us" versus "them" mentality.

- *Third Floor*: Equivalent to both the identification and conviction stages of Precht's model. This level involves the development of a belief structure that the individual is involved in a struggle to achieve the ideal society by any means possible. This process not only provides them a "meaningful" identity, but also helps to build a morality supportive of the use of violence to further the cause.

- *Fourth Floor*: Equivalent to the indoctrination stage of both models. Psychologically, the individual fully assumes the "terrorist" identity and is socialized into the terrorist organization.

- *Fifth Floor*: Equivalent to the "jihadization" and action phases. A person is ready to commit a terrorist act.

The models discussed show what appears to be a common pathway toward radicalization. However, there is not just one route to this process, rather there are individual routes. There is no guarantee that individuals who begin the radicalization process will pass through all stages (or move to the next floor). The radicalization process seems largely influenced by the environment in which people live, with the primary difference being on whether they are within or outside a conflict zone.

Within a conflict zone, motivations can consist of nationalism, community defense, trauma, and revenge. In many ways, these individuals have a mentality similar to insurgents (Speckhard, 2008).

In non-conflict zones, the motivational factors are entirely different, emanating out of issues, such as immigration, migration, a "clash of cultures," and personal desires:

- A sense of societal alienation and marginalization for those transplanted out of their original cultures;

- A loss of positive self concept or lack of positive identity,

- A desire for a meaningful life;

- A desire to belong to a group provides one a positive identity and a mission;

- A desire for adventure and heroism;

- Secondary traumatization occurring within conflict zones (e.g., identifying with traumas and injustices committed in Chechnya and Palestine, although individual lives elsewhere);

- A desire for personal redemption from some vice or inner corruption; and

- A desire to be seen as attractive and worthy to the opposite sex (Speckhard, 2008).

In regards to domestic extremism, a theme across the various models and motivational factors is individuals seeking a positive identity (individual or collective) and a just cause. Based on this evidence, "group, organization and social psychology, with a particular emphasis on 'collective identity,' provides the most constructive framework for understanding terrorist psychology and behavior" (Post, 2007, 4). This was also the finding at the March 2005 International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, where the Committee on the Psychological Roots of Terrorism emphasized the need to understand the "socio-cultural context, which determines the balance between collective and individual identity" (Post et al., 2009, 19).

C. IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

When discussing radicalization, probably one of the most crucial aspects is identity, both personal and collective. Personal identity is particularly a problem observed among first to third generation immigrants, who feel they no longer fit back home, but as a minority may feel they are not welcomed in their new country (Speckhard, 2008). However, the lack of identity can take on a far broader perspective. For example, it has been argued many Muslims suffer from a collective identity crisis (Moghaddam, 2008b). This identity crisis is fueled by the fact that 60% of the global Muslim population is below the age of 25 (Moghaddam, 2008b, 4) and are desperately trying to improve their identity, but are for the most part limited to two competing options.

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The first involves mirroring the western model, which leads to what Moghaddam (2008b) characterizes as the "good copy problem." By copying the West, Muslims can only hope to become good copies of borrowed Western ideals, which does not allow them to achieve the authentic identity they desire.

In this case, an alternative to the western model is for Muslim youths to develop an identity based on Islamic fundamentalism. The image of a heroic, holy warrior (mujahedeen) resonates among young Muslim men who are most vulnerable to visions of honor, bravery and sacrifice for what is perceived as a noble cause—the Jihad (Speckhard, 2009).

In the traditional sense, jihad is defined as a spiritual struggle to purify Islam and a physical struggle to defend Islam against its enemies. The destruction of the once great Muslim Caliphate can be attributed to either imperfections in Islamic practice or to foreign "non-Islamic" corruption of Islamic society. It is from this distorted view of history and religion that al-Qa'ida's ideology descends. In the case of the Muslim youths, the militant Islamist ideology provides not only a source of blame for their position in life, but more importantly an opportunity for redemption.

D.   IMPORTANCE OF IDEOLOGY AND THE NARRATIVE

Figure 2 illustrates how ideology plays a key role in radicalization, as it provides a central guiding force throughout the entire process to assist those moving through the various stages (or to the next floor). Ideology also helps to structure individual thoughts during their conversion. However, as discussed in Chapter II, individuals rarely commit acts of violence for purely ideological reasons and an ideology does not influence behavior in a vacuum. Personal frustrations, perceived injustices, and a multitude of other grievances can prompt individuals to reassess their current situation and be more receptive to alternative worldviews, particularly if there is a strong narrative supporting the ideology.

A compelling ideology and a supporting narrative are crucial, as these help to frame the actions of a group, or individual. Both are also important in maintaining an individual's commitment to extremist activities and group cohesion. For example, the militant Islamist ideology espoused by al-Qa'ida offers a universally applicable and easily implemented solution to all problems. Al-Qa'ida's core narrative is that the West and its allies seek to destroy Islam, Muslims must fight against this threat, and just rule under Islamic law is the reward for expelling Western influence (Leiter, 2008). This simple narrative identities the source of the problem, provides a noble identity, a just cause, justifies the use of violence, and offers a reward in just a few lines of text.

It is easy to see how such a message is attractive to those suffering from a collective identity crisis, particularly if they feel the alternative is to be a good copy of those they perceive are trying to oppress them.

E.   DISTANCE-TRAVELED HYPOTHESIS

There is an argument that the "pull" of the narrative is stronger the closer you are to the source of the problem. Moghaddam's (2008) "distance-traveled hypothesis" states the distance an individual has to travel in order to settle in a host country determines the resources needed to succeed. Since immigrants from the Middle East, North Africa, and Southwest Asia require greater resources to settle in the U.S. then they would need to settle in Europe, they are more likely to succeed in the U.S., particularly in terms of economic and educational attainment. Thus, in theory, the militant Islamist message may not be as attractive to those living in the U.S. as compared to the UK because they are inherently better off. However, attempting to draw a correlation between socioeconomic status and extremism can actually lead policy makers astray.

Research shows that a significant percentage of the Islamist extremists came from middle- or upper-class backgrounds. Sageman's (2204) study of 102 Islamic extremists found only 27% were considered lower class compared to 18% upper class and 55% middle class, which corresponds to the data that roughly a quarter came from unskilled backgrounds (43% professional, 33% semiskilled). Another study, based only on European Islamic extremist networks, found a greater proportion came from the lower

class (54%,) compared to 4% upper class and 42% middle class (Bakker, 2006, 38). Other research found, that "at the time of joining, the majority of Islamists had professional occupations (e.g., physicians, teachers) or semiskilled employment (e.g., police, civil service, students), less than a quarter were unemployed or working in unskilled jobs" (Silke, 2008, 107). This data tends to weaken an argument drawing a connection between socioeconomic status and extremism, which is often used to rationalize a lack of radicalization in the U.S.

Numerous reports state that Muslim Americans are, for the most part, well integrated in American society, and they achieve statistically higher levels of economic and educational achievement than most other minority groups within the U.S. (Mudd, 2009). For this reason, there is a perception that the U.S. does not have to worry about the same problems that the UK faces. However, recent data shows that immigrants may not be faring as well in light of the current economic crisis. The number of unemployed immigrants has increased 130% since 2007 compared to 81% for native Americans (Camorata and Jensenius, 2009, 14). Such a wide difference indicates some of the assumptions concerning the integration of immigrants may no longer hold true, especially considering some of the hardest hit by unemployment include the most educated immigrants (Camorata and Jensenius, 2009).

Unemployment statistics aside, there are certainly cracks in how minorities view themselves in American society. External influences are increasingly playing a greater role, as indicated by the reaction to military operations in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, as well as U.S. foreign policy related to Somalia. While not as numerous as the disrupted right-wing plots since 2001, there have nonetheless been multiple plots inspired by al-Qa'ida and its militant Islamist ideology. Similarly to the events leading up to 9/11, it is a "failure of imagination" to think that radicalization does not happen in the U.S.

The fact that the Somali community is starting to show some of the same fractures (issues with foreign policy, combined with domestic social, cultural, and economic sources of discontent) as the Southwest Asian communities in the UK (O'Duffy, 2008; Mudd, 2009), indicates the need for engagement with various immigrant communities to prevent this issue from growing into a more direct threat to the Homeland. Shirwa

Ahmed was not the only Somali to become radicalized to the point of traveling to Somalia to fight for al-Shabaab. Since late 2006, the FBI has seen several individuals from the U.S., some with ethnic ties and some without, travel to Somalia to train or fight (Mudd, 2009). The number of individuals observed is comparatively larger than the number of individuals who have left the U.S. for other conflicts. Instead of looking at this as an abnormality, it is possible that this is another indicator of the increasing radicalization in the U.S.

Another issue with the distance-traveled hypothesis is it is based on the assumption that all immigrants come to the U.S. by their own means (resource wise). However, the majority of the Somalis in the U.S. are part of a resettlement program (Mudd, 2009); therefore, the resource part of the equation is not the same. Could similar problems be experienced with individuals being resettled due to the conflicts elsewhere? Alternatively, given the current economic crisis, other ethnic groups or right-wing extremists could become motivated to protect their interests. As discussed in Chapter III, there is a diverse range of extremist threats, some which are indigenous.

F.   RADICAL INFLUENCES IN THE U.S.

Compared to Muslims around the world, extremism among Muslim Americans is statistically lower; however, there is still some acceptance of radical views. Al-Qa'ida realizes the potential extremism and has attempted to improve its ability to translate the messages into English. Al-Qa'ida is soliciting translators and several radical Web sites in the U.S. have re-packaged al-Qa'ida statements with American vernacular and commentary intending to sway Muslim Americans (Allen, 2008).

Besides al-Qa'ida, another Islamist influence in the U.S. is the Muslim Brotherhood. As there are many figures in the Muslim American communities who are associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and many mosques are controlled by their associates, it is considered one of the most influential factors (Haqqani, 2008). While the tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood may be less violent in the West when compared to

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past practices in the Middle East, the group's ideology remains opposed to Western democracies. One of the group's stated objectives in the U.S. is a Jihad to destroy the country from within (Farah, Sandee, and Lefkowitz, 2007).

The Muslim Brotherhood is not without competition in the U.S. (or the rest of the world for that matter). Another Islamist organization gaining momentum in the U.S. is Hizb ut-Tahrir.[23] The goal of Hizb ut-Tahrir is to unite the global Muslim community by overthrowing secular governments and replacing them with a Caliph who would implement Sharia law. Previously hampered by its ability to compete with other Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir has started to make inroads in the U.S. (Gruen, 2009). In accordance with their global strategy, Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks to recruit well-educated professionals (doctors, lawyers, business owners, scientists, engineers and professors) who are influential in their communities. Even though Hizb ut-Tahrir claims it is a non-violent organization, there are several cases of individuals moving on from this group to more militant organizations (Gruen, 2009). Ed Husain, in his book *The Islamist* (2007) offers a detailed account of the process and tactics used by Hizb ut-Tahrir to infiltrate British society.

Just like the splintering of regional terrorist groups, similar fissures exist among the various Islamist groups. Differences within the Muslim Brotherhood led to the formation of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and differences within this group led to the formation of an even more radical group, al-Muhajiroun.[24]

Thus, there are multiple Islamist options in the U.S. for individuals to participate. The "non-violent" Muslim Brotherhood, or Hizb ut-Tahrir, which does not openly advocate for violence but seeks a caliphate under Sharia law, or al-Muhajiroun, which offers another level of extremism short of the terrorist option. However, while these groups do not openly participate in terrorist acts, they can serve as a "conveyor belt" to get someone to the point where they want to act.

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[23] Founded by Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani in 1953 after splinting from the Muslim Brotherhood (Bergin and Townsend, 2006).

[24] Founded by Omar Bakri Mohammed in 1996 after splitting from Hizb ut-Tahrir (Baran, 2008).

Although Muslim Americans seem to be well integrated in society, the message of Muslim unity from al-Qa'ida, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, or al-Muhajiroun, may be attractive to those pre-disposed to support the militant Islamist movement based on the perception that this is a noble cause. In this case, the noble cause links back to the narrative that characterizes all crises involving Muslims as conflicts between believers and non-believers. As such, it is every Muslim's duty to counter this threat.

However, militant Islam is not the only source of radicalization in the U.S. A more ingrained presence is offered by the multitude of right-wing organizations in the U.S. As detailed in the previous chapter, in recent months, individuals with anti-government, racist, anti-Semitic or pro-militia views have committed a series of high-profile attacks. There is also a concern that "militiamen, white supremacists, anti-Semites, nativists, tax protesters and a range of other activists of the radical right are cross-pollinating and may even be coalescing" (SPLC, 2009, 6). If these groups could somehow manage to overcome their differences to form a broader right-wing movement, the U.S. Government could find itself facing an even greater domestic terrorist threat.

G.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

There is no clear psychological answer to why a person becomes a terrorist. Niether does it seem individuals are predisposed to become terrorists. Thus, it is impossible to create a clear-cut terrorist profile. Rather, the research tends to support the theory that situational factors are more influential in the radicalization process.

Some key elements that can play into the radicalization process are the influence of a charismatic leader, the Internet, a sense of alienation, perception of marginalization, political oppression, discrimination, poverty, perceived wrong doings of foreign policy, and a desire to accomplish something important. Yet, this does not explain why all individuals exposed to similar traumatic situations and experiences are not prone to becoming a terrorist. No single factor seems necessary in leading someone down the

path of terrorism (Precht, 2007). Rather, radicalization is a product of a combination of motivational factors (Figure 3). Instead of focusing on why a person becomes a terrorist, a more practical option is to look at how a person becomes radicalized.
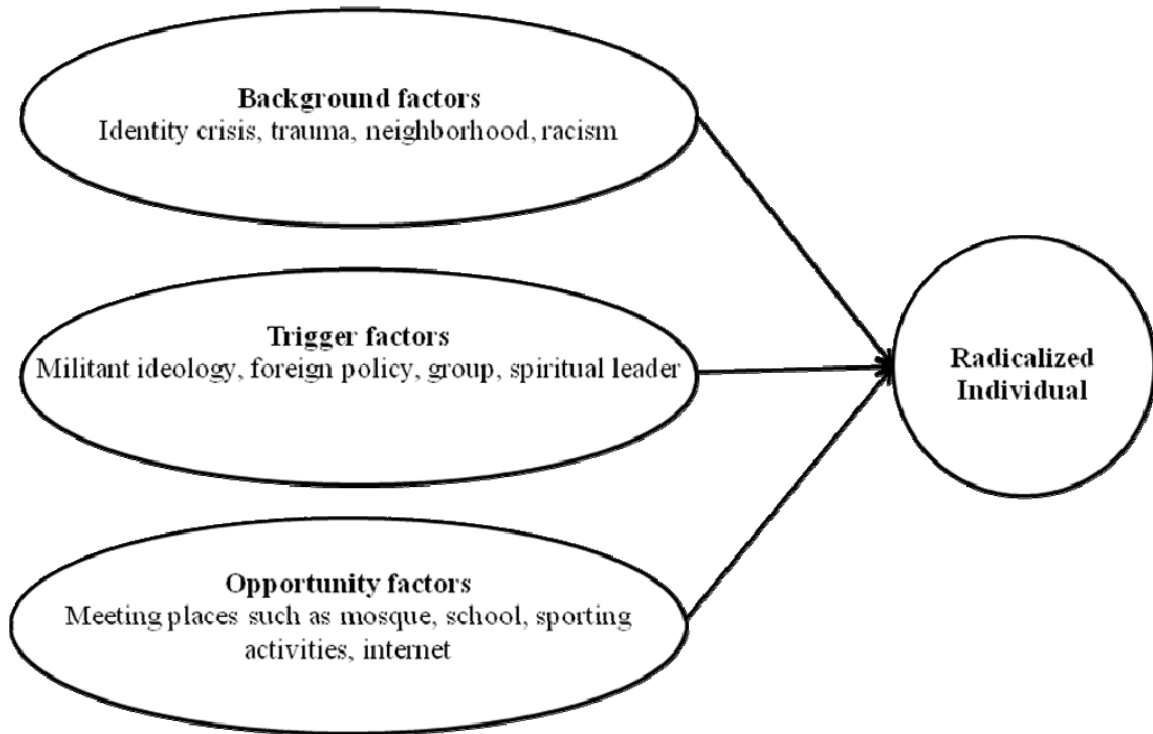

Figure 3. Motivational Factors for Entering the Radicalization Process (After Precht, 2007, 38).

The models discussed help illustrate how an individual becomes radicalized. The early stages of these models offer the best opportunity to dissuade an individual from becoming a terrorist. Thus, the logical conclusion is that preventing an individual from becoming a terrorist requires a strategy focused on disrupting the pre-radicalization and the conversion/identification phases. It should be noted that these are the same phases on which the radicalizing influences in the U.S. are focused. To win the battle of ideas, U.S. strategy needs to be focused on the same "battlefield" as the adversary.

Some may continue to down-play the level of radicalization; however, the presence of Islamic and right-wing extremists in the U.S. shows that radicalization exists. Some of the assumptions and theories used in the past to counter the radicalization argument may no longer be valid, as in the case of distance traveled and socioeconomic

factors. Polling data and the disruption of domestic terrorist plots indicates the American population is not as immune to radicalization as it once was considered to be. The current economic crisis could further influence radicalization, particularly if a population segment perceives that they are being singled out.

Given these trends, there is a need to prevent the levels of radicalization from increasing and turning into a more direct threat to the Nation's security. The next chapter will look at how effectively the existing U.S. strategies address this problem.

V. U.S. GOVERNMENT APPROACH FOR COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

The implied task of the 9/11 Commission was the creation of a counterterrorism strategy, focusing on taking the fight to terrorist networks and preventing them from increasing their ranks or replacing losses. The U.S. has taken the fight to these networks, with some success in targeting key personnel. However, in preventing the replacement of losses, U.S. strategy has not been effective, as radicalization continues to appear from Minneapolis to Melbourne, Australia, and points in between. It can be argued that the success of military operations abroad has indirectly led to this increase in homegrown extremism. Individuals desiring to participate in the overseas conflicts are finding it increasingly difficult to accomplish this goal. Not wanting to let their "brothers" down, some have decided to act in place.

The lesson here is that no direct correlation between attacking a network and countering radicalization can be identified. Physically attacking the network does not necessarily diminish radicalization. However, countering radicalization can directly affect the flow of recruits to a network. Unfortunately, for those already radicalized, counterradicalization tools will have minimal impact on those individuals who have already reached the tipping point. Thus, a balanced strategy needs to address both the organization and the radicalization process to effectively negate the threat.

As indentified in the literature review, there are ten national strategies related to homeland defense and security, and countering terrorism. Most touch on attacking or countering terrorist networks. None focus solely on countering radicalization. Only the *NSCT* and *NSHS* address radicalization, albeit minimally.

A. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COMBATING TERRORISM

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (*NSCT)* starts by explaining the U.S. is at war with a "transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and

individuals…fueled by a radical ideology" (White House, 2006, 5).[25] It characterizes this war of consisting of both a "battle of arms and a battle of ideas" (White House, 2006, 1).

To win the "war on terror," the *NSCT*'s objectives are:

- Prevent attacks by terrorist networks;

- Deny terrorists access to weapons of mass destruction;

- Deny terrorists the support and sanctuary of rogue states;

- Deny terrorists control of any nation they would use to launch operations;

- Advance effective democracies as the long-term solution to the ideology of terrorism; and

- Build the institutions and structures needed to carry the fight forward against terror and help ensure success (White House, 2006, 1).

While the strategy states the importance of ideology and winning the battle of ideas, what is noticeably lacking in the above list of objectives is one specifically focused on countering radicalization or the ideology. In fact, nowhere does it address how to actually counter the radicalization process, domestically or internationally.

The *NSCT* implies the war on terror will be won by "the advancement of freedom and human dignity through effective democracy" (White House, 2006, 9). While the *NSCT* does not specifically mention a particular form of democracy (i.e., Western), the use of this term can be expected to be met with some level of suspicion in the Middle East and elsewhere, based on past U.S. actions. First, it serves as a contradiction in light of U.S. foreign policy decisions to support authoritarian regimes and monarchies in the Muslim world. Then, there is the failure to recognize the 2006 Hamas electoral victory, which was interpreted by Muslims around the world as the U.S. and Europe's unwillingness to accept any electoral decision in the Muslim world, when it differs from their preference (Berger, 2007). From a Muslim perspective, the U.S. Government's attempts to link democratization to countering radicalization lacks sincerity, and this

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[25] It also states there are other groups and individuals that use terror as a means of accomplishing their political objectives; however, no other groups or ideologies are discussed.

credibility issue is actually "the West's main enemy" (Berger, 2007, 6). Besides, as proven in the U.S., democracy is not the solution to everyone's problems or else domestic terrorism would not be an issue.

While the strategy offers democracy as the solution, it acknowledges the fact that "democracies are not immune to terrorism" (White House, 2006, 10), including the U.S. While the strategy addresses the need to guard against the emergence of homegrown terrorists, it frames the solution around engaging with the Muslim community to reject violent extremism. As shown in the previous chapters, there are non-Islamic sources of radicalization in the U.S. this strategy glosses over. Regardless, the *NSCT* does not offer any specific guidance on how to counter the ideology fueling the radicalization process.

B.   NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOMELAND SECURITY (NSHS)

As mentioned in Chapter I, the *NSHS* is not limited to traditional security measures. In addition to terrorism, the strategy also addresses a range of catastrophic events, manmade and natural. To "secure" the U.S., the *NSHS* focuses on four priorities:

- Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks;
- Protect the American people, our critical infrastructure, and key resources;
- Respond to and recover from incidents that do occur; and
- Continue to strengthen the foundation to ensure our long-term success (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 1).

Like the *NSCT*, the emphasis of the *NSHS* is on dealing with al-Qa'ida. The *NSHS* acknowledges the fact that other groups and individuals pose a threat to the U.S., but Hizballah is the only other FTO discussed. The *NSHS* points out that the terrorist threat to the U.S. is not limited to violent Islamic extremist groups, but includes single-issue groups (e.g., animal rights extremists and environmentalists) and right-wing extremists.

Like the *NSCT*, advancing an effective democracy is seen as the long-term solution for countering the militant ideology, hampering recruitment, and defeating homegrown extremism. However, the *NSHS* actually addresses the need to prevent radicalization in the U.S. In this section of the strategy, there are four objectives:

- Identify and counter the sources of radicalization;

- Continue to advance our understanding of radicalization;

- Engage communities as partners in the War on Terror; and

- Enhance Federal, State, local, and Tribal government capacities to address radicalization (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 22–23).

Despite the broader definition of the terrorist threat, the *NSHS* still focuses primarily on the Islamist threat and Muslim communities. That said, the strategy does hit on some key points, such as promoting the values of citizenship, integration, religious tolerance, freedom of speech, and the protection of civil rights. However, like the *NSCT*, the *NSHS* does not go into any detail how to accomplish these objectives.

C.   VIEWS ON IMPROVING U.S. COUNTERRADICALIZATION EFFORTS

Prior to the 2008 presidential election, several articles and publications were released offering the new administration advice on how to counter radicalization. Most of the recommendations offered are a continuation of themes already addressed in the *NSCT* and *NSHS*. Countering radicalization still seems to primarily focus on public diplomacy and strategic communications directed at populations abroad.

One of the articles from last year, offered the following ten recommendations for countering radicalization:

- Exerting presidential leadership in civil liberties and reducing anti-Muslim bigotry;

- Creating an America's Voice Corps;

- Establishing American Centers across the region;

- Implementing an American Knowledge Library initiate;

- Privatizing al Hurra ad Radio Sawa[26];

- Launching "C-SPANs" for the Muslim World;

- Bolstering cultural exchange programs while improving the visa process;

- Harnessing America's diversity by engaging Arab and Muslim Americans;

- Involving the whole federal bureaucracy in public diplomacy; and

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[26] U.S. Government organized satellite TV and radio stations broadcasting in Arabic.

- Empowering private citizens and local legislators to build their own productive international linkages (Amr and Singer, 2008, 217–219).

Only the recommendation dealing with civil liberties and bigotry had a homeland focus, but not really in the sense of countering domestic extremism. Rather, this is aimed at showing the rest of the world the U.S. lives "up to our civil liberties ideals" (Amr and Singer, 2008, 217).

Nevertheless, there are elements of the recommendations that should be considered for implementing domestically. An example of this would be "Harnessing of America's diversity" to help with engagement of the different ethnic communities. Individuals of ethnic descent would be far better messengers than law enforcement personnel in certain communities. Then there is involving the "whole federal bureaucracy in public diplomacy." Countering domestic radicalization is by no means a law enforcement issue. Nor, is it solely a federal government issue. Other agencies at the state and local levels could be used to help expand relationships into communities facing radicalization issues.

Another article argued a new counterradicalization strategy should be part of a broader U.S. foreign assistance strategy. Recommendations focused on two areas: support for good governance and anticorruption programs, and improvements in social service provisions (Von Hippel, 2008). Domestic radicalization was not addressed.

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy also published a report providing a rather detailed strategy for countering radicalization. The report offers the Obama administration several recommendations (categorized as strategic, functional, and organizational), intended to change the course of the Bush administration's approach.

Strategic recommendations from the (Presidential Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremist [Presidential Task Force], 2009, 13) are:
- Expand focus from violent to nonviolent extremism;
- Empower mainstream Muslim voices; and
- Address local grievances, not only global ones.

Functional recommendations (Presidential Task Force, 2009, 13–18) are:

- Rejuvenate efforts to promote prosperity, reform, and democracy in Arab countries;
- Reorient public diplomacy to support our allies efforts;
- Go beyond the American brand;
- Employ nuanced, non-combative rhetoric;
- Challenge extremists in cyberspace;
- Coordinate counterradicalization programs; and
- Improve domestic counterradicalization efforts.

Structural recommendations (Presidential Task Force, 2009, 18–20) are:

- Fix the existing bureaucracy;
- Designate a single address for the coordination of U.S. public diplomacy, strategic, strategic communications, and counterradicalization strategy;
- Strengthen the role and capacity of the State Department; and
- Reorient the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) for strategic communications.

Of the various articles and reports published, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's report offered the most comprehensive solution. However, of the 15 recommendations, only one is truly domestically focused (Improve domestic counterradicalization efforts).

In regards to countering domestic radicalization, the Presidential Task Force (2009) provided four supporting recommendations (17–18):

- Utilize best practices from abroad;
- Broaden Muslim outreach;
- Diversity is essential; and
- Highlight U.S. actions domestically.

The Presidential Task Force's domestic radicalization recommendation does not address any aspect other than Islamic extremism. Nonetheless, there are aspects that could be incorporated into a broader strategy. One of the conclusions is that government should "work with communities to develop alternative non–law enforcement mechanisms at the local level, both governmental and nongovernmental, to deal with radicalization in

these communities" (Presidential Task Force, 2009, 18). Another was highlighting U.S. counterradicalization efforts domestically, as this would help communities to understand the various mechanisms available to them for resolving their grievances.

D.   CONSTITUTIONAL AND CIVIL LIBERTY CONSIDERATIONS

In deciding to implement a domestic counterradicalization strategy, the first item needing to be taken into consideration is the impact on the constitutional rights and civil liberties offered to U.S. citizens.

The most commonly discussed issues related to countering politically or religiously oriented messages in a homeland setting is the First Amendment. As stated in the First Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution*:

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

There are numerous extremist Web sites, but short of making a terrorist threat, what is the legal threshold to determine if these sites have gone beyond what could be considered "free speech"?

Another potential constitutional rights issue that frequently comes up is related to the Fourth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution*:

> The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Measures to monitor extremist use of the Internet could entail the unwarranted capture and retention of private communications data from ordinary citizens. Once again, what is the legal threshold of maintaining extremist literature if no intent of a terrorist act has been determined?

The Fourteenth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution* states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

As in the case of the Shirwa Ahmed and Carlos Bledsoe, what can be done to prevent individuals from going abroad to conflict zones (particularly if taking a circuitous path) or countries like Pakistan and Yemen that have known radical religious and educational institutions?

The creation of a national strategy for countering radicalization would certainly have to balance the various constitutional rights, civil liberties, and privacy issues. Besides the potential for a public backlash, any questionable measures would play right into the narrative of anti-U.S. and anti-government groups.

E.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Both the *NSCT* and *NSHS* acknowledge the fact the war on terror is as much a battle of ideas as it is a battle of arms. One can argue it is primarily one of ideas, as this is what influences individuals to join the battle of arms. Despite the importance placed on ideas, both the *NSCT* and *NSHS* are lacking in this regard, especially in a domestic setting. The strategic objective of advancing "effective democracies" offers little in the way of countering domestic radicalization as the people, in theory, are already operating within the confines of an effective democracy. The irony of this fact is that democracy actually provides an environment where extremists can openly espouse the militant ideologies that would not be allowed elsewhere.

Both strategies have an outward focus concerning countering extremism. Although several reports and articles have been published to address the shortcomings of the Nation's counterradicalization efforts, most of the recommendations offered seem more of a continuation of themes already addressed in the *NSCT* and *NSHS*. Countering

radicalization continues to be primarily focused on populations abroad. Despite the evidence of the threat provided in previous chapters, countering radicalization in the homeland appears to be an afterthought.

Despite the flaws addressed, the *NSHS* may actually contain the core concept needed to counter domestic radicalization. The *NSHS* emphasizes the importance of the individual in helping to secure the U.S. "Individual citizens … perform a central role in homeland security" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 41). Citizen preparedness is "among the most effective means of securing the Homeland, and leadership must continue at all levels to promote and strengthen their preparedness" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 42). "To counter fundamental biases toward reactive responses and approaches," the nation must leverage individual initiatives by encouraging and rewarding "innovation and new ways of thinking" (Homeland Security Council, 2007, 41). Should the Nation's strategy to counter radicalization not try to leverage the "power of the individual," to make them more resilient to the message of militant ideologies? After all, that is exactly what radical ideologies offer, personnel empowerment to help in a "valiant" cause. Once again, the Nation's strategy should be focused on the same "battlefield" as our adversaries.

Based on the suggestion from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the next chapter will look at other countries counterradicalization efforts to determine whether there are any lessons learned that could be applied in the U.S.

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VI. INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES FOR COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

As discussed in the last chapter, current U.S. counterterrorism strategy lacks a robust domestic radicalization component. The *NSCT* primarily has an outward focus and barely mentions the homegrown threat. Furthermore, it does not address how to actually counter the radicalization process, domestically or internationally. Although the *NSHS* mentions the need to prevent domestic radicalization, none of the objectives are covered in detail, nor does it articulate how to accomplish this goal.

Given these shortcomings, one has to look internationally in order to devise a counterradicalization strategy. Unfortunately, the U.S. is not alone in this deficiency, as there are very few countries with a government-wide plan for countering radicalization. The UN CTITF's inventory of counterradicalization and deradicalization measures implemented by UN Member States identified a wide variety of counterradicalization programs, but much like the problem of defining terrorism, defining counterradicalization can be challenging. As the CTITF report reflects, counterradicalization involves both preventive and reactive measures. However, the timing of these measures determines their utility in preventing radicalization.

A. DERADICALIZATION VERSUS COUNTERRADICALIZATION

Several countries have launched deradicalization efforts, including Egypt, Singapore, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Jordan, Malaysia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Indonesia (Mohammed, 2009). These programs have had some level of success in influencing individuals and factions of various Egyptian, Algerian, Saudi, Yemeni, Jordanian, Tajik, Malaysian, and Indonesian Islamist movements to renounce terrorism (Ashour, 2008).

Egypt's deradicalization program is one of the more successful, and has been quite effective in rehabilitating members of Gama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Jihad (Gunaratna, 2009). Gama'a al-Islamiyya has not conducted any armed operations since 1999 (al-Jihad since 2007) and no significant splits have been identified within the group

(Ashour, 2008). Part of the success is that unlike other deradicalization programs, Egypt's deradicalization effort is not totally a government initiative; it involves several key members of the Egyptian terrorist organizations, such as the former leader of al-Jihad (1987–1993) and key al-Qa'ida ideologue, Dr. Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (also goes by the nom de plume Dr. Fadl) (Ashour, 2008). These leaders play a key role in helping to denounce violence and promote a peaceful co-existence with the government. As a result of this program, former Gama'a al-Islamiyya leaders have authored 25 volumes supporting their new ideology with both theological and rational arguments (Ashour, 2008). These writings, as well as those of al-Shariif, have helped in countering the militant Islamist message, much to al-Qa'ida leadership's dismay.

While deradicalization programs offer some utility in countering radicalization and preventing individuals from being repeat offenders, in theory, comes too late in the process. Most of these programs focus on incarcerated terrorists; therefore, the individuals have already exceeded the tipping point. Besides, there is evidence to show deradicalization programs are not always effective in bringing individuals back to society's mainstream. For example, Said Ali al-Shihri, a former inmate of the Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp and participant of Saudi Arabia's deradicalization program, is now deputy commander for al-Qa'ida's operations in Yemen (Mohammed, 2009). Al-Shihri is not the only graduate to return to terrorism, Saudi authorities have admitted the arrest of nine others (Mohammed, 2009, para. 1).

The issue of terrorist recidivism is significant. As many as 74 of the Guantánamo Bay detainees (Bumiller, 2009, para. 12) transferred to other countries are believed to be engaged in terrorist activity. With an original prisoner population of 534, this would make for a recidivism rate of 14% (Bumiller, 2009, para. 12). This recidivism rate is not purely a product of the Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp. An earlier study (Pluchinsky, 2008) found there was a tendency for Muslim extremists to become recidivists. This report did not offer a recidivism rate, but it did note that one of the main sources of manpower for Islamist groups were released extremists. Also of significance, is that recidivists may be better trained and radicalized because of their incarceration with other extremists.

Instead of focusing on those who are already radicalized, a counterradicalization strategy should focus on preventing individuals from reaching the "tipping point" where they feel violence is the only option. It is logical that if the goal is to prevent individuals from becoming a terrorist, a strategy must focus on the early stages of radicalization and countering the extremist narrative. The goal is to keep them on the "ground floor" of Moghaddam's staircase, or the first stage of the NYPD model.

To help achieve these goals, the UK has developed one of the most comprehensive counterradicalization strategies publically available.

B.   UK'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY (CONTEST)

The UK's strategy for countering terrorism is known as CONTEST; the U.S. equivalents to this strategy are the *NSHS* and *NSCT*. Originally released in 2006, the document was updated in 2009. Like the previous version, the strategy consists of four components, also known as the "Four Ps:" *Prevent, Pursue, Project,* and *Prepare*. The "Four Ps" are very similar to the objectives stated in the *NSHS* and *NSCT*, with the noticeable difference being the detailed counterradicalization component (*Prevent*).

The goal of *Prevent* is to stop individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism. *Prevent* is based on the assumption that there are five contributing factors to radicalization in the UK:

- An extremist ideology that relies on a distorted interpretation of religion and history to legitimize the use of violence;

- Ideologues and social groups who promote that ideology, facilitate the recruitment to support the ideology; and who often operate in open institutions in the UK, making effective use of the media;

- There are individuals receptive to the messaging for a range of personal reasons (e.g., identity, faith, frustrated ambition, migration and displacement);

- An absence of resilience in certain communities; and

- Real or perceived grievances, international and local, that include a perception that UK foreign policy is hostile to Islam; the western intervention, or to western indifference, is part of a wider conflict involving Muslims; and a range of domestic issues (racism, inequalities, criminality, and migration) (HM Government, 2009, 82).

Based on the previously discussed Pew Research Center data, the disruption of multiple terrorist plots, and the outflow of fighters to Somalia, these five planning assumptions are valid in a U.S. setting.

To address these underlying factors, *Prevent* has five primary objectives (HM Government, 2009, 83):

- Challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices;

- Disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places they operate;

- Support individuals vulnerable to recruitment, or already recruited by violent extremists;

- Increase resilience of communities to violent extremism; and

- Address the grievances, which ideologues are exploiting.

These five objectives would also be applicable in a U.S. setting.

In addition to the *Prevent* section of CONTEST, there are other documents further explaining the strategy and defining the roles of government and non-government players. *Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery* (HM Government, 2008a) identifies goals for each of *Prevent*'s objectives, as well as the key activities. *The Prevent Strategy: A Guide for Local Partners* (HM Government, 2008b) helps local authorities and community partners to develop and implement actions in support of *Prevent*. Besides proving guidance, this document offers numerous examples of what has been accomplished under *Prevent*. *Preventing violent extremism - Winning hearts and minds* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007) focuses on solutions at the local level for building civic capacity and strengthening the role of faith-based institutions. *Preventing Violent Extremism: Pathfinder Fund* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007) provides guidance and establishes priorities for the funding of counterradicalization programs. Collectively these documents represent one of the most in-depth and detailed counterradicalization strategies.

C.   ASSESSING PREVENT'S APPLICABILITY TO THE U.S.

Using the *Prevent* objectives as a framework, this section will look at what the UK government feels are the keys to success and determine whether these objectives are applicable in creating a U.S. counterradicalization strategy.

1.   Challenge the Ideology behind Violent Extremism and Support Mainstream Voices

Keys to success:

- The voices of violent extremists do not go unchallenged;

- People are able to access a wider range of alternative, authoritative views about Islam and participate in debate;

- Communities have an increased range of tools and support to help them in rejecting violent extremism; and

- Mainstream voices overseas are amplified to resonate with local counterparts (HM Government, 2008, 4).

This objective maps back to countering the message that legitimizes the use of violence. *Prevent* calls for government to work with Muslim scholars, faith-based groups, and other influential "voices" in order to provide a more realistic understanding of Islam to help counter the corrupted message. Regarding this objective, there is nothing unique to the UK environment preventing this from being incorporated into a U.S. strategy. In fact, it is recommended that countering the narrative is the cornerstone of not only the U.S.'s counterradicalization strategy, but its counterterrorism strategy as well. Failure to address radicalization in the homeland makes an external counterterrorism strategy almost pointless.

2. Disrupt Those who Promote Violent Extremism and Support the Places They Operate

Keys to success:

- Organizations such as prisons, colleges and universities are prepared to resist the influence of violent extremists;

- Violent extremists find it more difficult to promulgate their messages over the internet; and

- Communities, authorities, and parents, have tools to filter extremist media on the Internet (HM Government, 2008, 5).

The focus of this objective is disrupting the "messenger" from distributing the message. As evident with the keys to success, this part of *Prevent* is heavily focused on the Internet. In fact, two pages of the strategy are dedicated to this issue, which is not surprising as the Internet allows radicalization to happen anywhere, including the U.S.

Internet denial-of-service tools to counter this medium are an attractive option. However, a common theme related to using network exploitation tools in a homeland setting is the impact on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, particularly those provided by the First and Fourth Amendments. While the objective is applicable, the means to accomplish would be different given the U.S. legal environment.

3. Support Individuals Vulnerable to Recruitment, or Already Recruited by Violent Extremists

Keys to success:

- Fewer individuals are drawn into violent extremism and more actively reject the messages of violent extremists;

- Multi-agency initiatives work closely with community representatives to identify individuals at risk and to develop interventions to support them; and

- The public is more aware of the role police and other agencies can play in support of vulnerable individuals (HM Government, 2008, 6).

This objective has both counterradicalization and deradicalization applications. There is also a significant law enforcement outreach aspect that may have limited utility in the U.S. Since 2001, U.S. efforts to address radicalization have primarily focused on using law enforcement as a community outreach tool. However, these efforts are not necessarily oriented on preventing radicalization as much as they are at identifying those already radicalized. Besides, law enforcement might be limited to the inroads they can make into these communities. As the Pew Research Center poll found, the majority of the Muslim American population is of foreign origin, and most come from countries under authoritarian rule. Based on prior negative experiences in their original countries, they might be suspicious of law enforcement led programs. A point validated by the findings that many Muslim Americans worry about U.S. Government surveillance, discrimination, and harassment.

4. Increase the Resilience of Communities to Violent Extremism

Keys to success:

- Communities actively challenge and resist violent extremists.
- Countries with strong links to the UK will also implement work to support communities overseas.
- Local partnerships and projects with faith institutions and leaders are strengthened (HM Government, 2008, 7).

The overwhelming majority of people in all communities in the UK reject violent extremism, but not all have the capacity and information to effectively challenge it (HM Government, 2009). This statement would likely hold true for some Muslim Americans. This objective's intent is to support individuals and groups (public and private) that are able to provide positive alternatives to those who may be drawn to extremist activity.

Based on the recent appearance of radical behavior in Somali-American communities, this is an area needing to be addressed in U.S. strategy. However, this is not an issue limited to one ethnic or religious group. The disruption of multiple domestic terrorist plots since 2001 shows radicalization has crossed many demographic

boundaries. Building community resiliency will help to address these perceptions by providing the capacity and information needed to effectively challenge militant ideologies.

5. Address the Grievances that Exploit Ideologues

Keys to success:
- There are more 'safe spaces' for individuals and groups to discuss and work through difficult and emotive issues.
- There is greater engagement from Government in these discussions, to tackle ill-founded grievances and increase dialogue and understanding around contentious subjects (HM Government, 2008, 8).

Extremists attempt to exploit and create grievances to justify their acts of violence. Some of these grievances reflect the domestic experiences of individuals: racism, discrimination, inequalities, lack of social mobility, and underemployment. Other grievances are based on perceptions of the host country's foreign policy. While some of these issues are valid, others are perceptions based on individuals being misinformed, either purposely by extremists or not having access to information regarding U.S. Government policies or the knowledge of the resources available to them.

Certainly, this objective is applicable to the U.S. As discussed in Chapter IV, most U.S. Muslims expressed relatively little support for the war on terrorism and many opposed military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, there was a perception that U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts singled out Muslims. More than half of those polled felt life for Muslims had become more difficult since 9/11. These sentiments were validated by another poll showing "Americans [58% polled] see Muslims as facing more discrimination inside the U.S. than other major religious groups" (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2009, 1). Creating platforms for individuals and communities to air their grievances and having access to senior level government officials will help to counter misinformation and the resulting misperceptions.

D.   POTENTIAL ISSUES

Implementing a strategy like *Prevent* in the U.S. has its risks. Some aspects could infringe on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens. Other aspects, if not implemented correctly, could actually facilitate the delivery of the extremist message.

The most commonly discussed issue to countering politically or religiously oriented messages in a homeland setting, is the impact on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens. Some are quick to draw a parallel between countering child pornography and countering extremist literature, and that the measures to counter the former could be used for the latter. However, the legal framework for taking action against child pornography and extremist content is quite different. International laws against child pornography are clear-cut. Just as it is hard to define terrorism, terrorism-related content is not a readily definable category, and the line between such content and legitimate political expression may not always be clear. Specifically targeting Islamists or any other Islamic centric content could infringe on First Amendment rights.

Another potential constitutional rights issue is related to the Fourth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution*: Measures to monitor the Internet could entail the unwarranted capture and retention of private communications data from ordinary citizens.   The argument is whether the gain from exploiting the Internet is worth the possible infringements on civil liberties and personal privacy.

In addition to these civil liberty issues, there is concern that measures to counter extremist usage of the Internet may violate international laws and treaties. Many of the computer systems, networks, and Internet service providers are located overseas. Lacking an international treaty, there would be cases where the U.S. would have to take unilateral action to deny extremists access to the Internet. Given the legal ramifications (domestic and international), such acts are unlikely.

Returning to constitutional issues, the Fourteenth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution* comes into play when considering *Prevent* initiatives, such as the Channel Program. The Channel Program is a law enforcement-led program intended to identify individuals vulnerable to violent extremism and through community-based intervention

move them to other areas across the UK, not necessarily on their own accordance (HM Government, 2009). The legality of such a program would have to be determined before it could be introduced in the U.S.

Another aspect of *Prevent* is the reliance on domestic intelligence to allow authorities to better target related interventions. The most significant difference between the U.S. and the UK is the legal authority to conduct domestic intelligence operations and the restrictions imposed on such operations. To start with, the UK does not have an equivalent of the *Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978* (*FISA*) (West, 2006). The UK's Security Service (MI5) is empowered to tap telephones, intercept mail and other communications, and conduct covert operations on just the authority of a senior minister (West, 2006). Comparatively, the FBI conducts domestic intelligence operations within a very strict legal framework, often requiring a court order. Besides the potential for intelligence oversight violations, it would be unlikely the American public would support the loosening of such restrictions on agencies responsible for collecting domestic intelligence.

In addition to constitutional rights and legal authorities, there are other issues, particularly in identifying individuals and groups for the engagement aspect. A report released by Policy Exchange claimed *Prevent* was not working for this reason (Maher and Frampton, 2009). One of the reports claims it is flawed in theory. The flaw is that some within the British government were convinced that non-violent extremists (e.g., Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb ut-Tahrir) were the solution to winning over the youth (Maher and Frampton, 2009). As a result, some of those chosen to win over the "hearts and minds" were actually at the forefront of attacking the UK's foreign policy. The effect was to empower radical Islamists within some communities, while at the same time marginalizing moderates (Maher and Frampton, 2009).

Obviously, choosing the right people and groups to interact with the public is crucial to the success of a counterradicalization strategy. Selecting the "wrong" voices can result in the wrong message getting out. In one case, an Imam was asked by the West Midlands Police to give a presentation on Islam. Instead, he used the opportunity to preach an anti-West message (Maher and Frampton, 2009). The Policy Exchange report

identifies several other examples where British authorities had unknowingly worked with groups having radical Islamist agendas (e.g., the UK Islamic Mission, the Muslim Council of Britain, and the Islamic Society of Britain) (Maher and Frampton, 2009).

A U.S. strategy could face similar problems. As previously discussed, radical Islamist influences exist within U.S. Muslim communities. Given the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and al-Muhajiroun in some Muslim American communities, it is probable some of their supporters could inadvertently be selected as credible voices.

The second issue identified in the report was that *Prevent* is flawed in practice, due to its primary delivery method of local government and law enforcement. According to the report, these groups lack the knowledge and expertise to distinguish between the various agendas of Muslim groups, in particular, those with political Islamist agendas. As a result, local councils and police forces have made several mistakes in selecting community partners. In some cases, the local authorities actually helped to fund extremist-influenced organizations (Maher and Frampton, 2009).

Despite these potential problems, as already discussed, there are just as many successes. Training could overcome the issues addressed in the Policy Exchange report. Additionally, adequate vetting and confirmation of credentials of individuals and groups will help prevent selecting the wrong "voices." As for the delivery method, a strategy that provides a multi-discipline solution incorporating both a "top down" (government sponsored) and "bottom up" (community sponsored) approach should allow for the appropriate "mix" of expertise to avoid many of the issues identified in this section.

E.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Chapters III and IV discussed the increasing threat posed by domestic radicalization. Given this trend, it was argued there is a need to prevent radicalization from spreading and turning into a more direct threat to the Nation's security. Chapter V showed that the U.S. counterterrorism strategy was lacking in regards to countering radicalization. In this chapter, other countries counterradicalization efforts were analyzed to see whether there are any lessons learned that could be applied in the U.S.

The UN CTITF's inventory of counterradicalization and deradicalization programs reflected a wide variety of measures, both preventive and reactive. However, there are few countries with an all-encompassing counterradicalization strategy addressing all aspects of radicalization, the exception being the UK. In addition to the *Prevent* section of CONTEST, there are supporting documents further explaining the strategy and defining the roles of government and non-government players. Collectively, these documents offer one of the most in depth and detailed strategies to counter radicalization.

However, there are some aspects of *Prevent* that are not applicable or easily exportable to the U.S., as they could potentially impact the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, particularly those provided by the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the *U.S. Constitution*. In addition, the legal authorities provided to UK law enforcement and intelligence agencies are in some cases less restrictive when compared to those of U.S. counterparts. Intelligence oversight issues are also a concern when integrating domestic intelligence into community-based counterradicalization efforts. While the means to accomplish would have to be different given the U.S. legal environment, the *Prevent* objectives serve as an excellent starting point in constructing a counterradicalization strategy for the U.S.

Chapters VII and VIII will look at two strategy approaches for countering radicalization. One is purely a technical solution focused at countering extremist use of the Internet. The other approach offers a far more encompassing solution.

VII. A TECHNICAL SOLUTION FOR COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

The literature review highlighted the Internet's increasing role in radicalization. Prior to September 2001, there were approximately 80 Islamic extremist sites online; by 2007, there were close to 8,000 (Kotler, 2007, para. 2). Some of these forums had up to 20,000 members and half a million postings (Kotler, 2007, para. 7). Unfortunately, the Internet's impact goes well beyond radicalization, it has fundamentally changed how terrorist groups operate. Just as society has benefited from Web2.0 technology, so have terrorists who now use the Internet for a variety of purposes including information sharing, research and data mining, operational planning, publicity and propaganda, fund raising, recruitment, and training. Additionally, the Internet provides an environment where it is possible to create a virtual terrorist network composed of individuals who are not personally known to each other but who are linked by a common ideology and a willingness to coordinate actions in pursuit of it.

Based on the significant role the Internet plays in the radicalization process and day-to-day operations, any counterterrorism strategy needs to consider incorporating tools to counter extremist use of this medium. However, this issue is much broader and more complex than bringing down a few Web sites. Besides the technical solutions necessary to accomplish this task, there are policy and legal issues to consider.

A. TECHNICAL MEANS FOR COUNTERING EXTREMIST USE OF THE INTERNET

To eliminate, or at least disrupt, the extremists' capability to utilize the Internet there are two primary courses of action: targeting the hardware or the data. This can be accomplished through electronic or kinetic means. However, given the legal and political implications of kinetically attacking computer systems or networks, either domestically or internationally, the focus of this section will be on the digital means.

The most obvious means to block Internet content is for Internet Service Providers (ISP) to use Webfiltering, or content-control software. As the name implies, web-filtering software blocks the content available on a network. While possibly the easiest tool to use, it is also the most controversial and likely to draw public criticism as this has freedom of speech and censorship implications. Depending on how the filters are implemented, it could actually affect legitimate organizations.

Another option, and one that can target specific computers and networks, is the use of malicious software, sometimes referred to as malware. Malware consists of computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, and spyware. As most users of the Internet have likely experienced, these programs are quite prevalent. As indicated in the *Symantec Internet Security Threat Report* (2008), malware is becoming easier to obtain and use, and already widely deployed. In 2007, there were 54,609 unique applications deployed on Microsoft Windows PCs, 65% considered malicious (Symantec, 2008, 21). It is assessed that the release rate of malicious code has surpassed legitimate software applications. The wide spread availability offers an "attacker" a certain level of anonymity or plausible deniability.

A similar, but more complex, option for denying service is the use of "bot networks," commonly referred to as botnets. Botnets consist of computers infected with malware, which can be operated in unison to disrupt or block Internet traffic, collect information, or affect other computers. As identified in the report *Botnets, Cybercrime, and Cyberterrorism: Vulnerabilities and Policy Issues for Congress* (Wilson, 2008), botnets are very effective in disrupting computer systems due to the number of infected computers at any given time. Approximately 1,400 command and control servers (Wilson, 2008, 6) were found to be active on the Internet in 2007. The number of computers controlled by these 1,400 servers was estimated at more than 3 million (Wilson, 2008, 6). The number of infected computers had steadily increased with the Symantec Corporation (2008) reporting it had detected over 5 million bot-infected computers (16). Based on the deployment rate and the number of systems infected, there

is a strong likelihood many of the computers used by extremists are already part of a third party botnet and could be easily exploited. Once again, the widespread availability provides a level of plausible deniability for U.S. Government.

As demonstrated by recent cyber clashes between Sunni and Shiite extremists, denial-of-service operations are quite effective. In September 2008, Sunni hackers targeted 300 sites (Knickmeyer, 2008, para. 23) operated by Shiite religious leaders including the official site of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the leading Shiite cleric in Iraq. In retaliation, hundreds of sites and forums used by Sunni extremists, including al-Qa'ida, were disabled (Knickmeyer, 2008, para. 25). While denial-of-service operations to counter extremist access to the Internet are attractive, as mentioned, there are policy and legal issues to take into account.

## B.	POLICY ISSUES AND LIMITING FACTORS

An issue discussed in Chapters V and VI, in regards to using network exploitation tools or denial-of-service operations in the U.S., is the impact on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens. In particular, the rights provided by the First and Fourth Amendments to the *U.S. Constitution*. In addition to domestic civil liberty issues, denial-of-service operations could violate international laws and treaties.

Many of the computer systems, networks, and ISP servers are located overseas. Thus, targeting these networks has international law and diplomatic implications. As demonstrated by Russia's use of computer network attack options against Estonia and Georgia, such efforts can easily result in international involvement. The cyber attacks against Estonia resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization coming to the assistance of the Estonian government with help in restoring its computer systems and investigating the source of the attacks (Germain, 2008, para. 8). In the case of Georgia, the government relocated its Web sites to U.S. servers (Germain, 2008, para. 11).

Complicating cyber attack options, some foreign-based extremist Web sites actually reside on servers located in the U.S. The Afghan Taliban and other Islamist militants have used U.S. based companies to broadcast propaganda and videos of attacks on U.S. and allied troops (Warrick and Rondeaux, 2009). It is also believed that U.S.

Internet services were used to make Internet phone calls during the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack (Warrick and Rondeaux, 2009). Ironically, these incidents have led to international pressure for the U.S. to do more to restrict extremist access to such services.

One international treaty that could help to address these issues is the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime. This convention is the first international treaty designed to address crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks. To date, 38 of 46 members and 5 non-members (the U.S., Canada, Japan, Montenegro, and South Africa) have signed the Convention (Archick, 2006, 1). However, one of the potential issues is that the signatories of the Convention's negotiations are not necessarily the problem countries in which cyber criminals operate freely. It could be assumed that, in some cases, this would be true for extremists. Therefore, even if the U.S. entered into similar agreements, there would still be cases where the U.S. would have to take unilateral action to deny extremists access to the Internet.

Another significant issue in regards to network attacks is the second order of effects. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. reportedly did not carry out computer network attacks against non-military Iraqi systems out of fear of affecting friendly countries (Wilson, 2006). For example, U.S. officials rejected cyber attacks against Iraqi financial computers because Iraq's banking network was connected to European financial networks. These concerns were present during an armed conflict, so it is likely the U.S. Government would be even more hesitant to use this in less lethal situations, unless there were guarantees non-terrorist entities would not be impacted.

Given the potential second order of effects and legal issues associated with denial-of-service attacks, the utility of these options is marginal until agreements similar to the Convention of Cybercrime are reached to address extremist use of the Internet.

C. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

While the first policy inclination may be to directly target the virtual safe haven and negate the means of delivering extremist content, the ability of the U.S. Government to disrupt use of the Internet as a tool for radicalization, or day-to-day operations for that matter, appears minimal. Countering radicalization over the Internet is not easy.

Extremist use of the Internet is constantly in flux, with Web sites appearing and disappearing regularly. While there are several technical tools to help counter extremist use of the Internet, there are also policy, civil liberty and legal issues that influence their usage, particularly in regards to computer or network attack options.

Despite the challenges in implementing the solutions addressed in this report, the U.S. should not limit the "cyber arsenal" it can use for countering terrorism. There are certainly scenarios where denial-of-service attacks could disrupt the planning and execution of terrorist operations. However, in the end, technical solutions offer minimal utility in countering radicalization. While the Internet can facilitate the radicalization of an individual, it is not the source of the problem.

Identity issues of individuals, such as a personal sense of alienation, perception of marginalization, political oppression, discrimination, poverty, and perceived wrong doings of foreign policy, and a desire to accomplish something important, will not be addressed by bringing down radical Web sites. In fact, it may actually fuel the radicalization process. Besides the civil liberty issues, such action could easily be interpreted as censorship and exploited by those trying to be countered in the first place.

In the end, winning the battle of ideas will not be accomplished on a cyber battlefield. As demonstrated by recent events in Iran, no matter how hard a government tries to prevent the spread of individual thought, where there is a will there are means to circumvent. This partially reflects what was described in Chapter III as the "power of the individual." Instead of focusing on blocking individual access to extremist material, the focus should be on making individuals more resilient and less receptive to the radical message. By increasing resiliency, the power of the individual can be tapped to counter extremism. The next chapter will propose how to accomplish.

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VIII. A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL SOLUTION FOR COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

The U.S. faces a diverse terrorist threat. Other than a desire for change, the only commonalty among the various extremist movements (transnational and domestic) is that these groups are made up of radicalized individuals. These individuals are the key to the success of movements and to their demise. Without followers, sympathizers, and supporters, a movement will most certainly die. To defeat the threat requires winning over the minds of current participants, as well as dissuading future recruits. This cerebral battleground is where a counterradicalization strategy must focus.

Reaching these individuals before it is too late is the challenge. Just as the terrorist threat has evolved, so has the radicalization process. Radicalization is no longer something emanating from madrassas and training camps overseas, it is taking place in such locations as Minneapolis and Raleigh. No longer requiring face-to-face contact, individuals are now self-radicalizing via the Internet. Furthermore, the Internet is allowing the radicalization process to proceed at an accelerated pace. Unfortunately, the Nation's efforts to counter this process appear to be lagging behind.

The UK's *Prevent* component offers a conceptual framework for countering radicalization in the U.S. Unfortunately, creating a U.S. counterradicalization strategy is not as simple as replacing UK with U.S. As noted in the ASPI and CACP analysis, *Prevent* is not "transferable wholesale" due to differences in each country's homeland security setting. Just as radicalization is a function of the environment in which people live, so is the strategy to counter. Thus, while accomplishing the same goal, a counterradicalization strategy for one country will look different from one of another. Helping to shape a country's strategy are the legal framework in which government authorities operate and the constitutional rights provided to its citizens. Nevertheless, there are lessons learned through the UK and other countries' attempts to counter radicalization that can be applied to a U.S. strategy.

The following observations and recommendations are by no means all inclusive. This sampling is intended to illustrate the diverse range of options the U.S. has available to counter domestic radicalization.

A.   COUNTERING THE NARRATIVE

A compelling ideology and narrative are crucial to any extremist movement, as these frame the actions of a group, or individual. Both are also important in maintaining an individual's commitment to extremist activities and group cohesion. However, it is not just the message that factors into the radicalization process. As Moghaddam said, an ideology does not influence behavior in a vacuum, a combination of conditions and contributing factors must be present.

Individuals become receptive to a particular message for a range of personal reasons (e.g., identity, faith, frustrated ambition, migration, and displacement). Ultimately, all the contributing factors need addressing to completely counter radicalization. However, as a starting point, the first step is countering the narrative fueling the radicalization process. Simply placing doubt in the mind of those most vulnerable may be enough to disrupt the entire process.

Take for instance al-Qa'ida's core narrative, which is the West and its allies seek to destroy Islam, Muslims must fight against this threat, and just rule under Islamic law is the reward for expelling Western influence. In its most basic sense, this is intended to represent a clash of civilizations. Islam and Muslims are at risk of annihilation. Groups from al-Qa'ida to Hizb ut-Tahrir have found it relatively easy to mobilize followers with this simple argument. Thus, the challenge is countering the effectiveness of this message. Ironically, Shaikh Abu Yahya al-Libi has provided the U.S. a tip to accomplish this objective. Al-Libi says the key is to turn the "Jihadist Movement's" own weaknesses against it (Brachman, 2007).

What is this weakness? Sageman (2008) believes "the main threat to radical Islamist terrorism is the fact it is self-limiting" and "it will most likely disappear for internal reasons" (42) because of al-Qa'ida's tactics. Given the earlier examples of fractures within LIFG, AQIM, and JI (Chapter II), Sageman is not too far off track. This

is also supported by polling data from the non-profit organization Terror Free Tomorrow, which found al-Qa'ida's tactics were a contributing factor in the group's decreasing popularity in such key places as Saudi Arabia (2007) and Pakistan (2008). This illustrates the militant Islamist movement, whether al-Qa'ida focused or as a "leaderless jihad," is at the mercy of its followers. What attracts followers during one stage may not work in another. Based on Sageman's reasoning, the goal of a counterradicalization strategy needs to reduce the "popularity" of terrorism by negating the "glory."

Returning to al-Libi's advice, the focus should be on pointing out how "bankrupt" the ideology is and that "it is al-Qaeda, and not the West, that is truly at war with Islam" (Levitt and Jacobson, 2008, para. 6). This is best accomplished by highlighting how many Muslims are victims of militant Islamic terrorism. In 2007, Muslims made up more than 50% of the victims in al-Qa'ida attacks and approximately 100 mosques were attacked (Levitt and Jacobson, 2008, para. 6). A trend continuing in 2008, with well over 50% of the approximately 50,000 people killed or injured by terrorist attacks being Muslim (NCTC, 2009, 12). Thus, the counter narrative is "The Jihadi message is so weak and unappealing that they have to use violence to persuade people" (McCants, 2006, 2).

1.   Using "Credible Voices" to Counter the Narrative

Communicating this message is not easily accomplished. Despite the facts above, the audience for this message is unlikely to believe the U.S. Government; after all, it is kafir (the concealer of truth). Al-Libi offers some more advice, efforts to weaken al-Qa'ida's message should focus on using ex-militants who have renounced terrorism and recanted their extremist views. These "credible voices" are crucial to creating doubt in those considering joining the militant Islamist movement. As mentioned in Chapter VI, one of these credible voices is Sayyed Imam al-Sharif. This one time associate of Ayman al-Zawahiri, released a book renouncing terrorism called *Wathiqat Tarshid Al-'Aml Al-Jihadi fi Misr w'Al-'Alam* (*Document to Rationalizing Jihadi Action in Egypt and the World*) (2007) (Rashwan, 2008). To understand the significance of this book it must be compared to al-Sharif's early writings. *Al-'Umda fi I'dad al-'Udda* (*The Essentials of*

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Preparing for Jihad) (1988) was originally written to provide the philosophical and religious underpinnings for Mujahideen efforts during the Soviet-Afghan War and it is still used today as a text for Islamist groups, including al-Qa'ida (Rashwan, 2008, 88). Then there is *Al-Jami' fi Talab Al-Ilm Al-Sharif* (*The Compendium for the Pursuit of Divine Knowledge*) (1993) which provides the "theoretical, doctrinal, and legal foundation for the Jihadi movement" (Rashwan, 2008, 89).

Al-Qa'ida, or at least al-Zawahiri, reacted immediately to refute al-Sharif's last book, with his own, *Al-Tabri'ah (Disavowing)* (Bakier, 2008b). The fact that al-Zawahiri felt inclined to respond so quickly reflects al-Qa'ida leadership's fear that credible voices can cause significant damage to their movement.

In the UK, a source of "credible voices" is the Quilliam Foundation, founded by Maajid Nawaz (2008) and Ed Husain (2007), formerly of the UK branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Not only were Nawaz and Husain highly placed in the organization, but they were also successful recruiters and established numerous cells. More importantly, after being incarcerated for their activities, they actually studied Islam and are now able to expose those beliefs Islamist groups distort in order to justify their actions. Based on their experiences from entering at the grassroots levels, being groomed for leadership positions, and acquiring an academic understanding of the religion, Nawaz and Husain have an insider's perspective how militant Islamists can influence a person, and how to best create a counter narrative so a person on the street can relate.

Recommendation: The U.S. Government should help provide a platform to maximize the amplitude of credible voices, as well as help establish and assist with funding organizations similar to the Quilliam Foundation, both abroad and domestically.

2.   Leveraging the News Media

Delivering the "credible" message to the intended audience requires news media support. Given al-Sharif's status in the militant Islamist movement, his ideological reversal is momentous; however, English-language media provided only minor coverage (Brachman, 2007). Obviously, the non-coverage of such an ideological shift reflects few

in the media understand the importance of legitimacy to groups like al-Qa'ida. The U.S. Government needs to work with the media to ensure such stories get maximum coverage.

Recommendation: To ensure the widest dissemination and understanding of news worthy events, DNI should consider issuing press releases, as done by DOJ, to help put such events into context so the public is better informed. The U.S. Government cannot allow extremist organizations to control the media.

3. Public Service Announcements

The government's use of the media should not be limited to news updates. Another option is to use media campaigns similar to those used for the war on drugs and drinking and driving (e.g., "This is Your Brain on Drugs", "Just say No," and "Friends Don't let Friends Drive Drunk" campaigns). Along these lines, in 2005, Saudi Arabia began a media campaign characterized as "just say No to terrorism" which included TV spots of a father who had lost his son, a terrorist, in a suicide attack, and others on the roots of terrorism (Schuster, 2006). In 2009, the British government launched a similar advertising campaign (called "I am the West") aimed at preventing Pakistanis from participating in extremist activity. This campaign consisted of nine 30-second television commercials, supported by radio commercials, broadcasted over multiple Pakistani channels during a three-month period (Butt, 2009). The intent is to introduce this campaign in other potential problem countries, such as Yemen, Indonesia, and Egypt.

The main idea behind a counterradicalization media campaign is to use "simple rhetoric and strong symbols" (Speckhard, 2007, 19) that create revulsion instead of acceptance of terrorism. Commercials focusing on Muslim victims and destruction of mosques, with commentary of former extremists, would send a very strong message. Media campaigns can also be used to "strengthen the social focus on the benefits of integration and positive participation in society" (Pressman, 2006, 18).

Recommendation: The U.S. Government should fund counterradicalization media campaigns. However, these campaigns must not focus on a particular religion or ethnic group; they need to address the entire extremist spectrum.

4.   Educational Programs to Counter Radical Ideologies

Government sponsored public service announcements may not reach the intended audience, so other vehicles are required to connect with them, such as in the classroom. This concept 1991).   At one point, 5,000 schools and other community agencies nationwide (Gaustad, 1991, para. 15) were using this program. Then there is the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, which focuses on conflict-resolution and offers training in empathy, cooperation, and perspective taking, to help individuals settle differences peacefully. Approximately 400 communities across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam are using this program (G.R.E.A.T. Organizational Chart, n.d.).

These prevention programs could be tailored to address politically motivated violence. For example, in the UK, the Department for Children, Schools, and Families created a toolkit to help schools deal with extremism. The toolkit provides information about what can cause violent extremism, help schools to empower students to create communities more resilient to extremism, and protect those vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremist activity (Department for Children, Schools, and Families, 2008)

Recommendation: The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) should help fund public school systems to develop counterradicalization modules that could be added to existing violence prevention programs, as well as produce toolkits to help educators in developing programs tailored to their student populations.

5.   Non-Traditional Educational Programs to Counter Radical Ideologies

Education does not have to be limited to the classroom. In fact, other media may be more successful in delivering a counter narrative. According to Hartwig Moeller, head of the North Rhine-Westphalia Department of Germany's Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz**:** "Alternative educational platforms are a valuable tool in the effort to speak out against terrorism. The U.S. should leverage these non-traditional mediums in its effort to counter the militant message."

B. PROMOTING POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Countering the militant narrative is not enough. Former extremists have stated they turned to individuals who were willing to discuss politics when mainstream religious figures refused (Leiter, 2008). Potential extremists want to make an impact, so they need to be provided with alternatives allowing them to accomplish this. Al-Libi suggests, "strengthening and backing Islamic movements far removed from Jihad, particularly those with a democratic approach" (Brachman, 2007, para. 13).

Unlike the law enforcement-based programs already discussed, the outreach programs being proposed need to demonstrate that political alternatives and solutions exist, and groups can be effective on a political level without resorting to violence. Such an outreach program is the UK's Radical Middle Way project.

The Radical Middle Way is a partnership between several youth-oriented Muslim organizations and the British government, which displays the views of Muslim scholarly and intellectual voices. According to The Radical Middle Way Web site, they are an intellectual and theological movement "aimed at articulating a relevant mainstream understanding of Islam that is dynamic, proactive and relevant to young British Muslims (The Radical Middle Way, para. 1). The key term here is "relevant." If the intended audience sees no relevancy in what is being said, the counter narrative will go unheard.

While law enforcement should not be the primary means of outreach, the London Metropolitan Police's Muslim Contact Unit shows how law enforcement still has a role. The Muslim Contact Unit, working with the UK branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, was instrumental in the successful rehabilitation of the Finsbury Park Mosque (former home of the radical imam, Abu Hamza al-Masri) (Mandaville, 2008).

Recommendation: The U.S. Government should help establish and fund outreach programs like The Radical Middle Way. Exposure to a variety of Islamic perspectives on non-Islamic issues will help make individuals better prepared to resist militant interpretations.

C.   LEVERAGING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

While the previous examples focused on things government and local authorities can do, local communities can also assist. Being on the "front line," they can detect indications at an early stage and help to shelter those most vulnerable to radicalization. This is particularly important in regards to a homegrown threat. Lacking access to core extremists or groups, friends, family members, authority figures, and the Internet often introduce individuals to extremism. In the case of the 2005 London attacks, Mohammad Sidique Khan, believed responsible for recruiting and radicalizing at least two of the bombers, was a teaching assistant and "mentor" at a youth center (Leiter, 2008).

While not specifically aimed at countering political extremism, an example of community engagement that is applicable to this discussion is provided by Long Beach, California. In the early 1990s, Long Beach was experiencing a situation where cultural diversity and immigration was leading to cultural clashes among the youth population resulting in gang involvement and criminal activity (Blancarte and Azeka, 1992). This led to the development of a program to channel at-risk youth into positive activities.

The components of this program included:

- School classroom anti-gang instruction;
- Recreational programming;
- Employment training and development;
- Collaborative peer counseling program between the school district and the parks and recreational department;
- Training for service providers to at-risk youth;
- Resource directory of services provided to at-risk youth in the area; and
- Parent education (Blancarte and Azeka, 1992, 32).

Recommendation: A proposed community-based program involves local Muslim civic leaders and businesspersons serving as "big brothers and sisters" to Muslim youths most likely to be vulnerable to the radical Islamic ideology. Another option is the creation of a scholarship fund for Muslim students specializing in counseling and related areas, with the "payback" being these individuals return to their respective communities

to work with Muslim youth programs. Similar programs should be established for all communities dealing with extreme and violent behavior (political and non-political).

D.   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

A counterterrorism strategy focused only on security and law enforcement measures can actually incite others to take action, as with the case of U.S. operations abroad. Based on this unintended consequence, a non-coercive approach is the best option, particularly if the goal is countering domestic radicalization.

To effectively deal with radicalization in the homeland requires government (local, State, and Federal), faith-based and community organizations, and businesses to become partners. These institutions must work together in order to produce resilient individuals. If these systems fail, organizations, such as gangs or extremist groups, can move in to fill the void, allowing radicalization to take root. By participating in these fringe elements, individuals can achieve an identity, prestige, and a sense of belonging that does not exist in their lives.

Individuals can be taught about nonviolent methods to voice their opinions and that terrorism is a criminal act. Addressing radicalism early on prepares them ahead of time to reject extremist appeals. While it has not been necessarily proven that violent behavior has been reduced by the programs mentioned in this chapter, there is evidence that violence prevention curriculum has changed attitudes toward violent organizations (i.e., gangs) (Gaustad, 1991). An analysis of the G.R.E.A.T. program in Tennessee schools showed that while it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such programs, students tend to understand the concepts and were "excited and eager to participate" (Ramsey, Rust, and Sobel, 2003, 306). If anything, such programs can help to plant a seed of doubt and establish a foothold in the minds of those vulnerable to radical messages.

Just as important is community involvement. As with existing violence prevention programs in the public school system, there is no need to reinvent the wheel in regards to establishing community involvement. As demonstrated by the Long Beach

example, communities have already been long involved in dealing with non-political forms of extremism. The lessons learned from these communities and their respective programs could easily be adapted to address other forms of extremism.

A key to the success of the Long Beach program was the need for cooperation and sharing of resources among multiple agencies and organizations ("interagency" cooperation at the local level) (Blancarte and Azeka, 1992). Given the complexity of radicalization and the multitude of contributing factors, no single agency (at the federal, state, or local level) will be able to adequately address the problem, thus a multi-discipline and multi-dimensional approach as prescribed in this chapter is required. Another contributing factor was adequate resourcing through a community development grant program.

It should be noted, that a common theme in both the educational and community outreach programs was the focus on prevention, rather than rehabilitation. It seems the consensus is that prevention is considered less expensive than rehabilitation. Besides, as explained in Chapter VI, deradicalization has its challenges. From a homeland security perspective, one could argue it is less expensive to fight a battle of ideas than a battle of arms. "Arming" individuals so they are able to resist the attractiveness and popularity of militant ideologies is how the U.S. will win the battle of ideas.

The Dutch Deputy National Coordinator for Counterterrorism suggested the key to pulling radicalized individuals out of their radical isolation is to offer them other social prospects though the use of non-traditional means (e.g., social services, schools, and other institutions). It was also recommended that municipal authorities need to take the lead in this process, with the national government providing support where necessary. Similarly, the CACP report stated such a prevention strategy requires a "whole-of-government" approach that is centralized at the policy level (federal) and flexible at the implementation level (state and local). The following chapter will recommend how to best incorporate these suggestions in implementing a U.S. counterradicalization strategy.

IX.   CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND THE WAY AHEAD

Any power must be an enemy of mankind which enslaves the individual by terror or force, whether it arises under a fascist or communist flag. All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded to the individual.

-Albert Einstein[27]

The research question posed at the start of this academic endeavor was, given the nature of the terrorist threat to homeland security, what strategy represents the most balanced approach to counter? To answer this overarching question, three ancillary questions need to be addressed. What is the nature of the threat facing the U.S.? What are the ramifications of simply revising the current strategies related to homeland security and counterterrorism to incorporate an increased understanding of the enemy? What alternative strategies are there to counter the threat?

A.   WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE THREAT FACING THE U.S.?

Chapter II and III detailed the diverse terrorist threat facing the U.S. While the preponderance of the research focused on the threat posed by al-Qa'ida and other militant Islamist groups, even within this segment of literature, there was a range of thought concerning whether al-Qa'ida and its affiliates are the greatest threat, or an Islamist variation of a leaderless resistance. The analysis found that both aspects of the threat are valid, and will likely continue to be for some time. Furthermore, there were some disconcerting trends identified that add another dimension to the threat not addressed by the existing counterterrorism and homeland security strategies.

Internal disagreements over indiscriminate mass casualty tactics, and a lack of violent activity, have led to fracturing within some regional militant Islamist groups (e.g., JI and AQIM) and intergroup fighting between others (HAMAS and Jund Ansar Allah, and the various Pakistani Taliban factions following Baitullah Mehsud's death (Waraich, 2009)). However, this does not mean these splinter groups do not pose a threat. Given

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[27] Retrieved September 16 from http://www.quoteworld.org/quotes/4105.

the tendency of these fringe elements to take an even more violent stance than the original organization, these smaller groups may actually represent a greater threat. Then there is the possibility that members disenfranchised from the larger mainstream organizations may return home.

At the same time, the U.S. has witnessed domestic radicalization influenced by militant Islamist and right-wing ideologies, and special-interest groups (e.g., environmentalists and pro-life). Not only is domestic radicalization an internal problem, it has transnational implications. In addition to Somali Americans who have departed to fight with al-Shabaab in Somalia, other U.S. citizens have been arrested for conspiring to commit terrorist acts abroad.

This latter issue adds an interesting twist to radicalization and transnational terrorism. As reflected in the national-level strategy documents, radicalization is closely linked with the transnational threat, most often in the context of groups like al-Qa'ida inspiring others to strike the U.S. Now the U.S. is starting to witness cases of the exportation of domestic radicalization overseas. What happens when combat hardened, radicalized individuals decide to come home? Is the Nation's counterterrorism strategy adaptable enough to address a change in threat that is fundamentally different than envisaged the last time the Nation's counterterrorism was revised?

Adding to this dilemma, the evidence shows terrorist networks, transnational and domestic, are changing. They are becoming more dispersed and decentralized, and concepts, such as leaderless resistance or lone actors, are becoming more prevalent on the Web. Lacking a centralized command structure, these networks are more reliant on a common ideology to serve as their inspiration. In fact, the importance of formal organizations seems to be increasingly overshadowed by the ideology inspiring individuals to conduct terrorist acts. Given the success of military operations abroad and law enforcement measures at home, as Abu Mus'ab al-Suri suggested, individual terrorism may be the only option for these movements to carry on. A more diversified and individually-based threat requires a different strategy of prevention rather than just using security and law enforcement measures.

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B.   WHAT ARE THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SIMPLY REVISING THE CURRENT STRATEGIES TO INCORPORATE AN INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENEMY?

In order to defeat the terrorist threat the U.S. faces, the 9/11 Commission stated, "Our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism" (9/11 Commission, 2007, 363). Unfortunately, as discussed in Chapter V, the *NSCT* and *NSHS* do not provide a balanced approach to addressing the 9/11 Commission's recommendation. Specifically, they fail to address how to counter the militant message fueling the radicalization process and persuading individuals to conduct terrorist acts.

Disruption of the radicalization process becomes even more important when considering the nature of the terrorist threat facing the U.S. No longer is the threat from abroad, the threat is now increasingly from within. The disruption of multiple plots involving domestic extremists and polling data indicates the American population is not immune to radicalization. Recent attacks by individuals supportive of right-wing and special-interest groups proves this phenomenon is not limited to any one ethic group, religion, or political orientation. The current economic crisis and high employment rates are likely to acerbate social tensions in U.S.

Countering domestic radicalization is a complex issue. The research showed there is no single factor leading someone down the path of terrorism; as such, there are no simple means of identifying those vulnerable to radicalization. Instead of focusing on why a person becomes a terrorist, a more practical option is to look at how a person becomes radicalized.

Chapter IV described two models to help illustrate the radicalization process. The early stages of these models offer the best opportunity to dissuade an individual from becoming a terrorist. Thus, the logical conclusion is that preventing an individual from becoming a terrorist requires a strategy focused on disrupting the pre-radicalization and the conversion/identification phases. The radicalizing influences in the U.S. are focused on these same phases. To win the battle of ideas, U.S. strategy must focus on the same "battlefield" as the adversary.

Whether one believes traditional transnational groups or decentralized organizations pose the greater threat, the simple fact is current U.S. strategy does not adequately address the domestic threat or the radicalization process. Based on these two issues alone, one could argue the national strategies, at a minimum, need updating to address the homegrown self-radicalization phenomenon. However, revising the current strategies may not be enough. As Figure 4 illustrates, the focus of a counterterrorism strategy is typically different from one for countering radicalization.
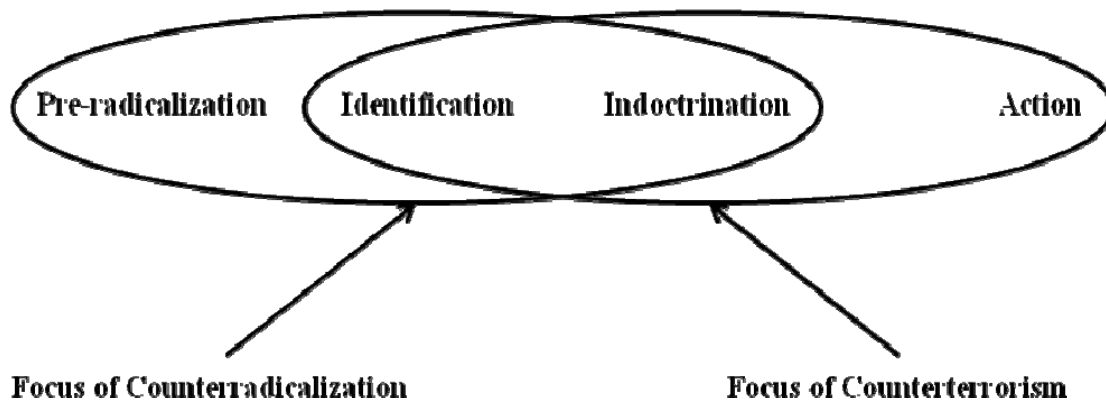
Figure 4.   Focus Areas of Counterradicalization and Counterterrorism Strategies (After Precht, 2007, 71).

Despite the 9/11 Commission's recommendation, the current U.S. counterterrorism strategy does not provide a balanced approach to addressing the problem. Specifically, it fails to address how to counter the militant message fueling the radicalization process persuading people to conduct terrorist acts. It also does not address how to engage those communities most at risk.

Furthermore, counterterrorism strategies typically focus on security and law enforcement measures. While such a strategy can contain a threat, a heavy-handed response (perceived or actual) may incite others to take action, as with the case of U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Based on this unintended consequence, at times a non-security based, non-coercive approach is the best option, particularly if the goal is to

prevent domestic radicalization. Instead of just revising the current *NSCT* and *NSHS*, a more practical solution is to create a standalone national strategy for countering radicalization.

C. WHAT ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES ARE THERE TO COUNTER THE THREAT?

The UN CTITF's inventory of counterradicalization and deradicalization programs reflected a wide variety of counterradicalization measures, both preventive and reactive. However, there are few countries with an all-encompassing counterradicalization strategy addressing all aspects of radicalization, the exception being the UK. In addition to the *Prevent* section of CONTEST, there are supporting documents further explaining the strategy and defining the roles of government and non-government players. Collectively these documents offer one of the most in depth and detailed strategies to counter radicalization. However, there are some aspects of *Prevent* that are not applicable or exportable to the U.S., as they could potentially impact the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, particularly those provided by the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the *U.S. Constitution*.

Chapters VII and VIII offered two solutions for countering radicalization; one a purely technical approach focusing on countering extremist use of the Internet (countering the messenger), the other a far more encompassing multi-dimensional approach focusing on individuals at risk (protecting the target).

The technical solution identified was found to be inadequate. The ability of the U.S. Government to disrupt use of the Internet as a tool for radicalization, or day-to-day operations for that matter, appears to be minimal. Countering radicalization over the Internet is not easy. Extremist use of the Internet is constantly in flux, with Web sites appearing and disappearing regularly. While there are several technical tools to help counter extremist use of the Internet, there are also policy, civil liberty and legal issues that influence their usage, particularly in regards to computer or network attack. While there are scenarios where denial-of-service attacks could disrupt the planning

andexecution of terrorist operations; in the end, technical solutions offer minimal utility in countering radicalization. While the Internet can facilitate the radicalization of an individual, it is not the source of the problem.

Rather, a more effective means of dealing with radicalization in the homeland requires a partnership of government (local, State, and Federal), faith-based and community organizations, and the private sector. These institutions must work together in order to produce resilient individuals. The multi-dimensional solution proposed in Chapter VIII offers a variety of options to countering the militant narrative, including educational programs (traditional and non-traditional), outreach programs, and community involvement. Through these means, individuals can be provided the tools to make them more resistant to the attractiveness and popularity of militant ideologies. By strengthening individual resiliency is how the U.S. will win the battle of ideas.

D.   TERRORISM WILL NOT GO AWAY

Despite evidence provided in the previous chapters, there are still some who might argue the that U.S. does not need a counterradicalization strategy, as the current terrorist threat will not last indefinitely. From an historical perspective, this is technically correct. However, using history as an indicator, the current threat will be followed by another extremist movement; one that has learned from the accomplishments and mistakes of its predecessors.

According to terrorism expert David Rapoport (2001), modern terrorism can be seen as coming in waves. The first wave began with the Russian Anarchist movement.[28] This wave died out with the onset of World War I, to be followed by an anti-colonial movement focused on national self-determination (the beginning of the freedom fighter analogy). This movement was supplanted by the dynamics of the Cold War and the emergence of leftist movements who saw themselves as the vanguard of the third world. The current wave built on the success of the Iranian revolution (1979) and the defeat of

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[28] The Russian anarchist movement is noted for introducing the concepts of bombing and martyrdom operations, as well, as the contemporary usage of the term terrorist. Anarchists called themselves terrorists to distinguish themselves from guerillas (Rapoport, 2001).

the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (1989), and the end of the Cold War. Interestingly, through looking at the history of modern terrorism, one can conclude these movements typically last about a generation, at which point the younger generation tends to follow a different calling (Rapoport, 2001).

What does this mean? Even if the U.S. is successful in defeating al-Qa'ida, the use of terrorism as a tactic will transition to the next extremist movement. Given the trend of increasing violence, from anarchist use of dynamite to al-Qa'ida's weaponization of airliners, the next movement is likely to be even more lethal.

Regardless of the orientation of the next movement, there are two things certain. Those individuals radicalized by the next movement's ideology will follow the same pathway as described in Chapter IV. The process will continue to accelerate due to advancements in information technology. Therefore, there will be a continuing need to counter this process.

E. IS THERE A NEED FOR ANOTHER STRATEGY?

With ten national strategies related to countering terrorism, this is a valid question. What will the proposed strategy add to the Nation's collective effort?

As discussed in Chapters II and IV, there is a significant gap in the nation's collective counterterrorism strategy. Current strategy places a significant emphasis on coercive measures to counter the threat. However, as claimed by individuals recently detained, these measures can factor into the radicalization process. Yet, there is minimal emphasis on radicalization, and what little there is, is focused on issues overseas. The current strategy treats radicalization as an afterthought and as a result, there are few resources dedicated to addressing this problem, especially when compared to the resources dedicated to combating those already radicalized.

As depicted in Figure 5, a separate counterradicalization strategy would help fill in the gaps in the current U.S. strategy. Such a strategy would also help increase dedicated resources required to countering radicalization in the homeland. A successful

strategy would reduce the reliance on coercive (security and law enforcement) measures, helping to eliminate some of the policy issues fueling the radicalization process. Table 2 summarizes the benefits of a domestic counterradicalization strategy.

High

Strategy for countering domestic radicalization

Current counterterrorism and homeland security strategies

Low

| Emphasis on coercive measures | Emphasis on non-coercive measures | Counter the radicalizing ideology | Emphasis on overseas counter-radicalization initiatives | Emphasis on domestic counter-radicalization initiatives | Dedicated resources for countering radicalization | Integrated Federal, state, local, and community initiatives | Multi-discipline approach for countering radicalization | Counter-radicalization grant program for local community initiatives |

Figure 5.   Added Value of a Domestic Counterradicalization Strategy.

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Create	Raise
• A balanced counterterrorism approach • A separate counterradicalization strategy • A counterradicalization grant program	• Awareness of sources of radicalization • Reliance on non-coercive measures • Dedicated resources for countering radicalization at the Federal, State, and local levels
Reduce	**Eliminate**
• Reliance on coercive (security force & law enforcement) measures to counter the threat	• Policy issues that may fuel domestic radicalization

Table 2.   Benefits of a Domestic Counterradicalization Strategy.

F.   RECOMMEND STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

In developing a counterradicalization strategy, the first question that comes to mind is, what should it look like? As a starting point, *Combating Terrorism: Evaluation of Selected Characteristics in National Strategies Related to Terrorism* (GAO, 2004) identifies six desirable characteristics of an ideal strategy: purpose, scope, methodology; problem definition and risk assessment; goals, subordinate objectives, activities, and performance measures; resources, investments, and risk management; organizational roles, responsibilities, and coordination; and integration and implementation (GAO, 2004, 3).   If the decision is to go forward with the creation of a domestic counterradicalization strategy, it is highly recommended the GAO's guidance serve as the framework for the document.

G.   WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE?

The challenge in constructing a counterradicalization strategy is that no single public or private organization can adequately support all the proposed objectives. The means to deliver this program go beyond the capability of government (federal, state, and local). To effectively counter radicalization requires the collective efforts of a variety of government, private, and civil society (e.g., nongovernmental organizations, professional

associations, religious and advocacy groups) sources. Such a strategy requires a collaborative approach as described in *Megacommunities: How Leaders of Government, Business, and Non-profits can tackle Today's Global Challenges Together* (Gerencser, Vann, Lee, Napolitano, and Kelly, 2008). In some situations, government involvement is problematic, as its policies can be perceived as an underlying factor in the radicalization process. In some cases, local communities are best positioned to offer services; however, they are unlikely to be resourced to address all issues. In others, private businesses are the best positioned and resourced, but have no authority to act. Given these shortfalls, all sectors are necessary to maintain a sustainable counterradicalization strategy.

To ensure synchronization of the efforts involved, it is recommended DHS be designated as the lead agency for developing the counterradicalization strategy document. This should be a joint effort between the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the Radicalization and Engagement Working Group.

It is also recommended that DHS establish a national-level working group to help synchronize efforts nationwide. This counterradicalization working group would consist of members throughout the proposed megacommunity. While not all inclusive, some of the organizations to be invited to participate include: DOS, the Department of Education, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Rights Working Group, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Arab American Institute, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, Asian American Justice Center, Center for National Security Studies, Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights & Education Fund, and South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow. In addition, there should be representatives from the media and faith-based organizations (e.g., Interfaith Youth Corp). These are just a few of the organizations required to be involved in the process.

Similarly, working groups should be established at the state level to synchronize planning efforts across the various localities. At this level, the emphasis is on engaging with civic leaders, businesspersons, and educational institutions to develop a multi-discipline engagement and outreach program.

Additionally, it is recommend that DHS temporarily field liaisons to each of the states to ensure efforts at the federal and state levels are synchronized. In states having an existing relationship with DHS, these positions could be leveraged in order to reduce operating costs. Once the state programs are established, the national-level working group will assume the coordination function of these liaisons.

Given the importance of education in the proposed approach, a University and Agency Partnership Initiative, modeled after the program sponsored by the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security, should be established to bring together institutions to further study on radicalization. This academic partnership could also develop counterradicalization and violence prevention curriculum for use at the state and local levels.

H.   WHO WILL FUND?

As illustrated by the Long Beach community outreach program (Chapter VII), one of the keys to success was ensuring that the program was adequately resourced. It is recommended that a grant type program be established to assist state and local governments, and their non-government partners, in creating programs in support of this strategy. This program would be similar to the UK's Pathfinder Fund, established to help authorities and groups develop programs to tackle violent extremism at the local level.

Initially, two existing funding mechanisms could be used to assist in starting such a grant program. DHS manages the Homeland Security Grant Program and a counter radicalization element could be added. An alternative funding mechanism is DOJ's Weed and Seed Communities Competitive Grant program managed by the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO). CCDO already has experience working at the local community level in regards to violent and drug crimes. Such a program could be expanded to help strengthen community capacity to address radicalization and build long-term resilience.

However, this is not only about government funding. Through actively engaging the private sector, other funding sources can be developed (e.g., scholarship funds and internships).

I.   PHASING OF THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Key policy makers must be engaged prior to the start of the process as the proposal calls for these agencies to accept ownership of key strategy components (e.g., White House (approving authority), DHS (strategy author, grant program manager), and DOJ (alternative grant program manager)). Without their acceptance, this initiative is unlikely to move forward beyond the infancy stage. Engagement efforts will focus on securing their support and strengthening interest for such a strategy.

The next phase of engagement will focus on those not directly responsible for constructing policy, but without their support, it is unlikely the strategy could be successfully implemented. Several in this sector have key implementation roles (e.g., the media, DOE, state and local authorities, etc.). Others can influence policy by their ability to mobilize public opinion (ACLU and other advocate groups). Their involvement will ultimately help frame the final product. As with policy makers, engagement will focus on acquiring their support, while at the same time building interest.

Next are those serving as the primary means of delivering the message to the intended audience (e.g., credible voices, civic leaders, businesspersons, community outreach programs, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, etc.). While they may have less power to directly influence the policy, they will be very interested in the product, due to their association. As the primary means of delivery, they will also a role in shaping the strategy. Initial engagement will focus on securing sector support, but as the development of the strategy unfolds, shift toward maintaining a high-level of interest.

Throughout this entire process, the American public will need to be kept informed. Some societal elements will be suspicious of such a strategy, and an effort will have to be made to build trust prior to and during implementation. Failure to effectively communicate the purpose and benefits of this strategy, could lead to public mistrust, which could actually lead to further radicalization in some segments of the American population.

J.   GLOBAL SYNCHRONIZATION

The objectives discussed so far are primarily domestically oriented; however, radicalization is a global challenge. In an age of globalization, where individuals, money and ideas move internationally with ease, the environment is equally conducive to the spread of violent ideologies. To be effective, U.S. counterradicalization efforts must have a global perspective.

Just as the U.S. counterterrorism strategy must be synchronized with those of other countries, this strategy must be coordinated with other counterradicalization and deradicalization efforts. As the UN CTITF inventory of state programs shows, other countries are working to address internal radicalization problems. Incorporating lessons learned "over there" will prevent making past mistakes "over here." Additionally, some countries may require assistance (monetary and non-monetary) in developing or enhancing their programs. As the 9/11 attacks clearly demonstrate, failure to address problems overseas poses dangerous consequences for the homeland. The U.S. Government should reapportion some of its counterterrorism funding to assist in reinforcing counterradicalization and deradicalization measures abroad.

K.   ADDITIONAL AREAS OF RESEARCH

Despite the significant amount of the research conducted to date, the continuing evolution of the threat and the radicalization process ensures there are still areas needing to be addressed.

Based on Rapoport's wave theory, consideration needs to be given to what might be the next wave or "ism." Modern history has already provided a host of radical movements and groups (anarchists, communists, fascists, Islamists, etc.); could special-interest groups represent the next threat? Given the impact of online social applications, like Twitter and Facebook, in the recent election related unrest in Iran, could these tools allow smaller, dispersed networks to rapidly mobilize forces to take action?

Along this line of thought, given the likelihood leaderless resistance will become more prevalent, there is also a need for a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of self-radicalization, and how this contributes to the lone actor threat. In the past, these individuals would have been considered anti-social. However, the Internet allows individual extremists to interact with groups in ways that would be inconceivable face-to-face (such as a Native American interacting with neo-Nazis). Can this source of virtual inspiration and encouragement completely take the place of face-to-face interaction? If so, what is the best means of delivering a counter narrative to lone actors?

Based on the increasing importance of the Internet in the radicalization process, more thought also needs to be given to how virtual communities could play into terrorist training. Massive Multi-Player Online Role-Playing Games, such as the "World of Warcraft" and "Second Life," have become increasingly popular. Could extremist groups use these virtual worlds to radicalize and train members? The study of these virtual worlds could offer an insight into online interaction and virtual sociability.

L. FINAL THOUGHTS

As the threat to homeland security evolves, so must the strategy to counter. However, this is not just a matter of adding a new chapter to existing strategies. "Countering such efforts demands that we treat immigrant and youth populations not as a source of threat to be defended against, but as a target of enemy subversion to be protected and supported" (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2009a, 12).

To provide this level of protection and support, the Nation's counterterrorism strategy needs to be supplemented by a separate strategy focusing on counterradicalization, much like the *Prevent* component of the UK's CONTEST strategy.

Why a separate strategy? Simply because the tools used to win the "war on terror" are not the ones that will help to win the battle of ideas going on in the minds of a disenfranchised youth.

Until the U.S. can effectively counter the attractiveness of militant ideologies and rhetoric, the possibility remains that someone in the homeland will be receptive to the message. It does not take an entire terrorist network to pose a threat to homeland security. As Timothy McVeigh proved, it only takes one to kill hundreds. John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo proved it only takes two to terrorize a large urban area. Shirwa Ahmed proved there are those in the U.S. willing to sacrifice their lives to defend their radical beliefs. Developing a strategy to counter radicalization in the homeland is crucial to preventing others from making the decision today to become tomorrow's terrorists.

APPENDIX FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS (FTOS)

This following list comprises the DOS designated FTOs as of July 2009 (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2009b). Italicized group names are additions since October 2001 (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2001).

- Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)
- Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
- *Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade*
- *Ansar al-Islam (AI)*
- Armed Islamic Group (GIA)
- *Asbat al-Ansar*
- Aum Shinrikyo
- Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)
- *Communist Party of Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)*
- *Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)*
- Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) (IG)
- Harakat al-Muqawamat al-Islamiyya (HAMAS) (Islamic Resistance Movement)
- *Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)*
- Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM)
- Hizballah (Party of God)
- *Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
- *Jaish-e-Mohammed (Army of Mohammed) (JEM)*
- *Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*
- Al-Jihad (Egyptian Islamic Jihad)
- Kahane Chai (Kach)
- *Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)*
- Kongra-Gel (KGK) (formerly Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
- *Lashkar e-Tayyiba (Army of the Righteous) (LT)*

- *Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*
- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
- *Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)*
- *Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)*
- Mujahadin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)
- National Liberation Army (ELN)
- Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)
- Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)
- Al-Qa'ida
- *Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (formerly Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, and (GSPC))*
- Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)
- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
- Revolutionary Nuclei (RN) (formerly Revolutionary People's Struggle ELA))
- Revolutionary Organization 17 November
- Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)
- Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) (SL)
- *Al-Shabaab*
- *Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (QJBR) (formerly al-Qaida in Iraq, Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTJ), and al-Zarqawi Network)*
- United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)

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