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WAR AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORISM:
WINNING THE HEARTS, MINDS AND SOULS
OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

by

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Preface

As an international officer in Air War College, I hope to provide a different perspective on the ongoing Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Throughout the paper, I have chosen to use the term *global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements* instead of GWOT in order to better reflect my understanding of the origin and nature of the threat that the United States and its allies are facing. Coming from a multi-ethnic and religious society in the Southeast Asia, my perspective on this topic is no doubt colored by my own cultural biases, perceptions and experiences. However, we have learned in this course that “perception is everything” in a fast-changing, uncertain world. It is therefore important for me to share and articulate how US policies are perceived and understood in another part of the world.

I am grateful to my advisor Col Karen W. Currie for her patience and mentorship, despite my fickle-mindedness in changing the topic of the paper from a logistics- to a terrorism-related one. I would also like to thank my wife for her support and understanding throughout the drafting of this paper.

Abstract

The current US-led global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements focuses on the direct approach of physically eliminating terrorist cells, depriving them of safe haven and cutting off their sources of financial funding. There is an urgent need to formulate a broader plan that would stop radical Islamic groups such as al Qaeda from subverting the Muslim population worldwide and inciting hatred against the western ideals of civil liberty, democracy, modernity and progressive thinking.

This paper proposes that the United States and its allies should, in parallel with the above direct approach, adopt an indirect approach of waging an information campaign to win the hearts, minds *and* souls of the international Muslim community. This information campaign would have two main thrusts: first, to undertake reform in Islamic education; second, to establish Iraq and Afghanistan as positive models of Islamic states. These main thrusts will address the issue of Islam's compatibility with modernity and democracy respectively.

The paper begins with a discussion on the characteristics of Islam, the nature of this war on terrorism as well as the emerging trends and considerations in the post-Cold War strategic environment, within which the US policy makers are operating. This is followed by an elaboration on the proposed approach. Finally, the paper concludes by drawing a parallel with relevant lessons learned from the Cold War.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States today is at a critical juncture, not unlike the one that it faced at the end of WWII. Then, a strategy of containment and deterrence was eventually chosen to prevail against the rising red tide of communism. Had the United States adopted a different strategy from the onset, such as that of a preventive war against the Soviet empire, the outcome would have been very different. Emerging from the Cold War with a healthy economy, and as the world's only superpower with overwhelming military and technological capabilities, the United States is faced with another threat very different from its Cold War adversary – global terrorism waged by radical Islamic elements against the Western ideals of democratic liberties, open economy and progressive modernization. Nonetheless, as before, the United States again has at its disposal a number of strategic options available to deal with the new global security threat, symbolized by the September 11 tragedy. What type of strategic approach is necessary to effectively neutralize this threat?

This paper aims to advance the argument that the backbone of any chosen strategic approach should be winning the hearts, minds *and* souls¹ of an international Muslim community through the promotion of a progressive Islamic culture and teaching. This would be an information campaign waged in a manner, and at levels, unprecedented in US history.

The paper will begin with a discussion on the characteristics of Islam, the nature of this war on terrorism as well as the emerging trends and considerations in the post-Cold War strategic environment, within which the US policy makers are operating. This will be followed by an elaboration on the proposed approach. Finally, the paper will conclude by drawing a parallel with relevant lessons learned from the Cold War.

In his award winning essay, “New Century, Old Problems: The Global Insurgency within Islam and the Nature of the War on Terror,” Grant R. Highland rightfully cautions against casting the problem too narrowly as just a fringe or radical movement that can be discredited among the greater Muslim population.² Indeed, the problem should be framed as a cancerous growth, feeding on and drawing strength from the mainstream Islamic body; where efforts to eliminate the growth and its nefarious effects cannot but also cause extreme discomfort to the healthy mainstream.

Highland further proposes that the United States strive to reach a better understanding of the enemy, citing Sun Tzu’s Art of War: “Know your enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.”³ A doctor needs to perform a thorough health examination of a cancer patient and understand his medical history and background before prescribing a course of action. Likewise, it is necessary to understand Islam from all its diverse perspectives, not just from al Qaeda’s viewpoint, but also from its historical perspective, and certainly, through the contemporary lenses of millions of other Muslims around the globe, including those living in the United States.

Chapter 2

Characteristics of Islam

As a religion that spans 14 centuries of history and binds more than a billion people with diverse cultural and ethnic background together in a common faith, the practice of Islam from a historical perspective has four key characteristics, the understanding of which would be important in the subsequent discussion.

Understanding the Islamic Politico-Religious Relationship

First, in the history of Islam, religion and politics have been closely related. In his book, *The Crisis of Islam*, Bernard Lewis notes that, unlike early Christians who were persecuted and suffered under Roman rule until their religion became adopted by the Roman Empire with the conversion of the emperor Constantine, the first few generations of Muslims became at once a political and a religious community, with the Prophet as head of state.⁴

Lewis further observes that, as the community expanded within less than a century into a vast empire, these early Muslims viewed religious truth and political power as indissolubly associated. As such, the notion of secularism is totally alien to fundamental Islamic thought and practice, even though it has been possible to label governments of Muslim countries as being on a more or less secular continuum. The shari'a, the Holy Law, has provisions that parallel the Western constructs of constitutional law and political philosophy, such as the acquisition and exercise of power, the nature of legitimacy and authority, the duties of ruler and subject.⁵

Given that the religion and politics of Islam are inextricably linked and “war is ... a continuation of political commerce” according to Clausewitz, the planners of global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements should consider the politics from within the religion of Islam itself. As such, any attempt to de-link the September 11 political provocation by al Qaeda, and the religion of Islam, is only politically correct, and misrepresents the true nature of the issues at hand. Likewise, any efforts for political reform within Muslim countries would have to begin with religious reforms to ensure that there is no conflict between Islam and the associated underlying principles such as liberty, democracy, modernity and progressive thinking.

Acknowledging the Sense of Identity within the Global Islamic Community

Second, besides the strong linkage between the religion and politics, there are common themes in Islam that predispose Muslims to identify themselves as belonging to one single community. In his book, *Islam – Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, John Obert Voll identifies these common themes as follows: firstly, the acceptance in the belief that “there is no god but the one God;” secondly, the common experience of Quran recitations; thirdly, the collective recognition of the Quran’s authenticity and Muhammad’s integrity as the Prophet. As such, there is a strong sense of unity within a community where moral and ethical values are guided by a common religion.⁶

Such a sense of identity has its origin in the history of Islam. To many Muslims, Islam is “not just a matter of faith and practice; it is also an identity and loyalty ... that transcend all others,” including national boundaries.⁷ In the Middle East, the Islamic society was a single state under one ruler in the early centuries of Muslim era. The Westphalian notion of national sovereignty might have ignited a sense of patriotism and nationalism in Muslims under colonial rule, resulting in the creation of modern nation-states, the boundaries being arbitrarily drawn up

by colonial powers.⁸ But, with a keen awareness of history, the Muslims there today still see themselves as “a religion subdivided into nations” rather than “a nation subdivided into religious groups.”⁹

Although such a notion of religious identity is strongest in the Middle East, it has created a sense of solidarity that permeates across the Islamic world from Morocco to Indonesia. Jihad, or the Holy War, is viewed as a common religious obligation that is conducted offensively or defensively, in spiritual, moral or military terms, with the ultimate aim of bringing the entire world under Muslim influence.¹⁰ The annual pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim seeks to fulfill at least once in a lifetime is another religious act of obligation that unites Muslims in a common faith. Perceived injustice to fellow Muslims in another country, for example the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or a foreign non-Muslim military intervention in a Muslim state, often results in public outbursts and frustrations against their political leaders’ inaction.

What this sense of common identity among Muslims worldwide implies in strategy formulation is the importance of an information campaign as the backbone to support the war against radical Islamic groups such as al Qaeda. This information campaign should be conducted in parallel with direct kinetic attacks on radical Islamic groups such as al Qaeda. Its objective would be to convince Muslims worldwide that these groups are the true enemies of Islam and that the United States and its allies, in its confrontation against them, are sincere in bringing about a brighter future to Islam.

Leveraging on the Diversity in Islamic Interpretation

Third, according to Voll, despite the common themes that exist within the global community, Islam, like many other world religions, is not monolithic. There is a great diversity in the interpretation and application of the common themes cited above. Within the Sunnis and

Shi'ites, there are different approaches and schools of thought. One example is the interpretation of law based on the Quran. Even within the Sunnis alone, Voll describes four main schools of thought, all accepting Islam as the legal basis in a society. The spectrum ranges from the Hanafi school, which “gives emphasis to personal reasoning and free judgment in legal interpretation”, to the Hanbali school, which “allows very little scope for individual reasoning or analogy.”¹¹

In addition, outside the Middle East, the strict interpretation and application of the common themes often give way to strong local customs and traditions. Village spiritual leaders or local holy men play an important role in shaping the Islamic experience, sometimes “diluted” by non-Islamic practices that traditional ulama tend to condemn as magical practices and superstitions.¹²

The non-monolithic nature in the interpretation and application of common Islamic themes across the globe means that a one-size-fits-all approach to the overall strategy of an information campaign would be counterproductive. In his article, “Rolling Back Radical Islam,” Ralph Peters rightly points out that “in terms of both population density and potential productivity, wealth, and power, Islam’s center of gravity lies to the east of Afghanistan, not to the west,” with India and Indonesia being the two countries with the largest Muslim populations. However, given the US perception of Middle East oil as its vital interest, it has “come to see Islam largely through an Arab prism.”¹³

In fact, following the proposal advocated by Peters, non-Middle East Muslim countries may be the source of Islamic religious reformists who are receptive to Western progressive thinking and values. These religious reformists, who will probably be non-state actors, would benefit from the support of United States and its allies, in this spiritual struggle to “roll back radical Islam.”

Believing in the Potential of Islam

Fourth, historical evidences show that Islam is not incompatible with progressive thinking that is associated with the application of intellectual and scientific knowledge to advance human civilization. In the wake of radical and militant Islamic attacks on Western civilization culminating in the September 11 tragedy, most Western analysts on international security affairs focus on the failure of modernity within the Islamic world and seem to ignore the glorious golden age of Islamic civilization between the eighth and thirteenth centuries.

Contemporary lack of awareness about this golden age, even on the part of some Muslims, prompted Dr. Iftekhar Mahmood, a Muslim pharmaceutical scientist, to write a book, *Islam – Beyond Terrorists and Terrorism*, listing the most influential Muslims who had contributed significantly in the areas of medicine, science, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, history and political science. It was these Muslims who had “preserved the Greek, Persian and Indian heritage and introduced new dimensions to the knowledge of Aristotle and Plato,” during a time Europe was groping through the dark ages.¹⁴

Moreover, despite a desire for global influence, history has shown Islam as a religion of tolerance and respect for other religions. In return for certain disabilities or penalties such as a poll tax on every adult male, non-Muslims in Muslim states were “tolerated and enjoyed a very large scale of autonomy in the conduct of their internal communal affairs, including education, taxation, and the enforcement of their own laws of personal status, notably marriage, divorce, and inheritance.”¹⁵ This contrasts greatly with the intolerance of current radical groups, which advocate strict and universal adherence to shari’a laws.

Just as the Muslim scholars and intellectuals of the past had served as a bridge between the earlier European Greek-Roman civilizations and the European Renaissance, the modern Western

civilization of the twenty first century has a moral calling to help moderate and enlightened reformists within the Islamic community in reviving the progressive thinking facet of the religion. More importantly, forging alliances with Muslim reformists would greatly facilitate the task of reversing the current trend of radical Islamic thinking with its associated terror unleashed on the West.

Beliefs define behavior, actions and reactions. For as long as the prevailing wisdom holds that Islam and progressive thinking are incompatible, the strategies and methods that can be found for working with progressive Islamic elements to fight against radical Islamic elements will be limited and weak. However, if prevailing wisdom were to accept and embrace the possibilities inherent in believing that Islam and progressive thinking can be compatible, whole new vistas of opportunities to collaborate and fight terrorism open up.

To summarize the above discussion, the four characteristics of Islam underscore a need for a new approach in countering terrorism employed by radical Islamic elements. This new approach should have the following ingredients: firstly, a religious reform, which must accompany, if not precede political reform for the latter to be successful; secondly, an information campaign that must be coordinated with direct kinetic attacks on radical Islamic groups to convince Muslims worldwide of the vision of a brighter and more desirable future end-state for Islam; thirdly, the presence of religious reformists who may or may not be state actors outside the Middle East. Finally, implicit in this new approach is the need for conviction, on the part of US policy makers, that such a religious reform to instill progressive thinking and modernity in Islam is achievable.

Having reviewed the “medical history and background” of Islam, it is now appropriate to address the “nature of the illness” itself.

Chapter 3

The Crisis of Islam

It is hardly an overstatement to describe the current malaise within the Muslim community as an illness. Lewis alludes to “a failure of modernity,” citing the poor economic performances in terms of gross domestic products, industrial output, productivity and job creation. For example, in 1999, the combined Gross Domestic Product of all Arab countries is less than that of Spain alone. Other areas of underdevelopment include technology, education and human development.¹⁶ In order to understand how the Muslim community has arrived at this state of affairs, there are three issues that need to be examined.

Failure in Modernity

First, the underlying condition for this failure in modernity is that Islam, as a religion, has stood still even as the rest of the world has evolved and been transformed. A measure of how the Islamic world has stagnated is its receptivity to new foreign ideas. Annual translation of books within the Arab world is about one-fifth that of Greece and the accumulative total number of books translated since the ninth century is almost the average that Spain translates in a year.¹⁷ What is the cause of this stagnation?

Globalization has often been blamed as a relatively new world phenomenon that causes many Muslims to retreat to the comfort of traditional Islamic practice and beliefs. However, it can also be seen from a wider timeline as just a geographical extension of first, the industrial

revolution and next, the information revolution from Europe and the Western hemisphere to the rest of the world. In the economic sense, globalization takes advantage of the cheaper factors of production and requires free trade and free flow of products across national boundaries, hence creating supply at lower cost. In the cultural sense, globalization exports foreign ideas and culture together with consumer goods to indigenous societies, thereby creating further demands for industry to sustain and grow.

Industrialization has been a painful experience for the Western world. In his article, “‘9/11’ and After: A British View,” Sir Michael Howard contends that Western turmoil with modernity traces two centuries back to the Enlightenment period in Europe with “protest against the erosion of traditional values and authorities by the rationalism, the secularism, and the free-thinking that both underlay and were empowered by the American and French revolutions ... creating general disorientation and alienation that was to be exploited by extreme forces on both the Left and Right.”¹⁸ Despite the discovery of the New World that absorbed discontented and dissenting European immigrants, industrialization and modernization with its initial extremes and excesses laid down the necessary conditions for two world wars with millions of lost lives, not to mention the downfall of several European empires.

So, the issue is not whether Islam, as a religion, is compatible with modernity. Instead, just as one’s immune system is weaker as he/she undergoes a stressful experience and is therefore more susceptible to illness, it is about how the Muslim community can transit through this critical phase of inevitable social changes with an outcome that is less traumatic and explosive than the experience of the two world wars in the twentieth century. This is even more challenging if one considers that, given a late start, this tumultuous process has been time compressed in the case of newly independent Muslim-dominated nations in the Third World.

Rejection of Modernity

This leads to the second issue: for most Muslim nations, the initial attempts at transition to modernization and industrialization have been negative experiences. This first trial with industrial age modernity coincided with the Cold War period as developing nations gained independence from their past colonial masters. While there have been isolated cases of successes such as the flourishing economies of the four Tigers in East Asia, many new governments that embarked on modernization and industrialization programs soon faltered due to a number of reasons such as corruption and lack of governance. Many Muslims soon became disillusioned and impatient with the modernization process. The US open support of Israel as well as oppressive and corrupt regimes in the great power politics of the Cold War further fueled the anger against imported Western values and systems that were associated with modernization.

Because the Western model of modernization is secular in nature, the resurgence of Islamic fundamental values becomes an expression for the rejection of Western, and irreligious ideas. Economic and political reforms have therefore failed in the absence of religious reform. According to Lewis, the ensuing Islamic revolutionary movement in Muslim countries, such as Iran, has several components as follows: firstly, a sense of humiliation and frustration at the widening gap between the Muslim world and the rest; secondly, a sense confidence and power made possible by the oil crisis of 1973; and lastly, a contempt for perceived Western decadence as Muslim visitors to Europe and United States “began to observe and describe what they saw as the moral degeneracy and consequent weakness of Western Civilization.”¹⁹ Even in countries such as Malaysia, where there are a majority of moderate Muslims, the misguided perception of Western decadence has entered mainstream politics. Indeed, there is now an increasing tendency and need for both the ruling and the opposition parties in these countries to compete among one

another and proclaim their political legitimacy to their electorate by demonstrating the adherence of a more authentic form of Islam.

This re-orientation, in our medical analogy, is no different from a patient's rejection of medical treatment due to some negative experiences, even as he/she is undergoes a stressful, high-risk, but necessary phase of treatment. The result of treatment rejection is the eventual flourishing of a cancerous growth that threatens the patient's life.

Rise of Radicalism

The third issue deals directly with the nature of this cancerous growth: too weak to counter the perceived threat of Western global dominance in military, economic and cultural arenas, terrorism becomes an effective instrument for the radical Islamic elements to make their voices heard. Lewis observes that, in the eyes of radical Muslims, the Islamic world has taken a wrong turning as its rulers adopt foreign and infidel laws and customs. To them, "the only solution is a return to the authentic Muslim way of life." While they "regard the West as the source of evil that is corroding Muslim society, ... their primary attack is directed against their own rulers and leaders." The Shah of Iran and President Sadat of Egypt were "both seen as symptoms of a deeper evil to be remedied by an inner cleansing."²⁰

Such radical Islamic movements have their origins in the 1970s and 80s. However, since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the confluence of globalization and the exponential Internet growth have increasing and compounding effects on the means and ends of terrorism. Audrey Jurth Cronin studies this phenomenon in her article "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism." She argues that in terms of means, globalization has extended the global reach of terrorist groups in operational efficiency through the use of the Internet, mobile phones and instant messaging; in physical cross-border movement to conduct terrorist acts; and

in sourcing of funds through illegal activities such as money laundering, drug and arms trafficking, alien smuggling and violations of intellectual property rights. In terms of ends, the growing awareness of their global reach through tools made available by globalization has provided radical Muslim groups with the ability to strike at the perceived source of their problems instead of just attacking their government and leaders. Cronin concludes that while globalization is not the cause of the current crisis in Islam, it has certainly enhanced both the means and ends of terrorism that can be waged directly at the United States and its allies.²¹

In short, the failure in and the rejection of modernity led to the rise of Islamic radicalism. The latter found expression in the use of terror as a primary instrument to protest against the onslaught of modernity. While this phenomenon has developed over the past century, the September 11 tragedy brought it to the forefront of US politics. It is therefore more appropriate to term the current Global War On Terror (GWOT) as a global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements.

Chapter 4

Nature of War on Terrorism

So, how can one characterize the nature of the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements? Highland urges policy makers to view this conflict as an insurgency problem as both the radical Islamic terrorists and the insurgency fighters share four similar key characteristics.

First, insurgency fighters all have political goals of overturning the status quo. By capitalizing on the current crisis in Islam, groups such as al Qaeda seek to establish political legitimacy by advocating an alternative shari'a rule. With an understanding of the inextricable linkage between politics and the religion of Islam, they "struck a nerve within the Middle Eastern psyche and tapped into a deep reserve of antipathy and despair that has served to heighten [their] standing within the Muslim community."²²

Second, psychological operations form the core of insurgency fighters' strategy. Groups such as al Qaeda effectively wage an information campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of Muslims.²³ Lewis notes that, in ancient Islam, the madrasa is a center of higher education, scholarship and research, very much akin to the great medieval European universities where academic learning in various fields such as science, mathematics and literature are brought to greater heights. Today, radical Islamic groups have subverted many madrasas. In numerous countries across the globe, where the teaching of Islam in madrasas is not well regulated, madrasas become a center for indoctrination and incitement of violence and hatred against local

governments and Western civilization.²⁴ Such indoctrination of militant Islamic teachings continues in terrorist training camps that are set up around the world by terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiah.

Third, insurgency fighters have the luxury of time on their side to wage a protracted conflict. Indeed, groups such as al Qaeda have been proven to be very resilient and resistant to US-led efforts to curb their ambitions.²⁵ Information technology and funding through clandestine operations made possible by globalization have allowed them to operate on a low budget and set up sleeper cells that can remain dormant for very long periods.

Fourth and finally, most insurgency fighters rely on unconventional forces, tactics and strategies. With complex organization structures and use of low-cost information technology, groups such as al Qaeda are non-state actors who have the potential of unleashing devastating destruction using Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Moreover, with the possibility of striking anywhere and anytime, they are difficult to detect, deter and predict.²⁶

The case put forth by Highland on the “nature of the illness” is convincing as it is consistent with the “medical history and background” of Islam. If Highland is indeed right in characterizing the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements as counter-insurgency warfare, what remedies and strategies should the United States and its allies adopt?

The treatment of any illnesses or diseases such as cancer requires not just direct approaches such as chemotherapy and surgical operations to remove the cancerous cells, but also indirect approaches such as the strengthening of the body’s immune system to prevent side effects. Similarly, past counter-insurgency experiences have demonstrated the need for effective dual application of direct as well as indirect strategies to the problem. The direct strategy consists of

removing insurgency organization and leadership by soft or hard kill while the indirect strategy focuses on psychological operations aiming to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Chapter 5

Current Strategic Security Environment

Just as the cure of a patient may depend on a number of factors such as the choice of treatment, hospital or doctors, and the accessibility and affordability of medical services, any discussion of strategy would need to take into account the current strategic security environment within which the strategy is to be applied. The following paragraphs will summarize and highlight key pertinent issues with regards to the current international politics, the US domestic political and defense considerations, and socio-cultural factors in the post-Cold War era.

Together with the characteristics of Islam and the nature of war on terrorism highlighted earlier on, this discussion will build a foundation upon which a logical approach can be formulated to compete against radical Islamic terrorist organizations such as Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, in order to win the hearts, minds and souls of the world Muslim population.

International Politics

With the end of the Cold War, the "unipolar moment" as predicted by columnist Charles Krauthammer in late 1990 has extended into a "unipolar era" at the dawn of the twenty-first century.²⁷ With its military spending exceeding that of the next 20 nations combined and the ease of successive campaign victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, US military dominance in the world is a consensus among most, if not all, analysts and observers. Such military dominance bestows upon the United States a global power unprecedented in human history. The liberal

internationalist Clinton Administration in the 1990s, however, was cautious not to exert this power and chose instead to exercise self-imposed limits on the use of power and advocated consultative multilateralism in its conduct of international affairs.²⁸

After the Clinton Administration, the subsequent Bush Administration had an initial foreign policy agenda, largely based on a pragmatic realist worldview, with an emphasis on great power politics to contain the rise of China and counter any future threats from potential rivals to the United States such as Russia.²⁹ The new Administration was also determined not to be involved in any futile intervention relating to failed states that the previous administration suffered in places such as Somalia.³⁰ September 11 proved to be the turning point for the United States in the “unipolar era” that changed the perception of the Bush Administration overnight. There was a sudden realization that the information revolution and technology advancements of the twenty first century could now provide non-state actors such as al Qaeda the ability to strike the United States from far-away failed states such as Afghanistan.³¹ By the same token, rogue nations such as Iraq could therefore pose imminent threat to the United States through proliferation and transfer of WMD to non-state terrorist organizations. Such a perception of an abrupt discontinuity in the nature of threats to US national security led the Bush Administration to embrace a new unilateralism advocated by the neo-conservatives.

Right from the onset, the Bush Administration was deeply divided between the unilateralist neo-conservatives and the more traditional multilateral realists. The former strongly believe that the United States should promote its ideals and values by assertion of its current unprecedented position as the world’s only superpower, regardless of whether it obtains the consensus of other nations or not.³² Led by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, this group within the Bush Administration deems that, given the new post-Cold

War environment, it is time for United States to shed the limits imposed by the post-WWII institutional framework that the UN symbolizes. The September 11 event provided the impetus for the view of neo-conservatives to finally prevail within the administration.³³ The outcome is the birth of a new policy called the Bush Doctrine that “postulates an imminent, multifaceted, undeterrable, and potentially calamitous threat to the United States – a threat that, by virtue of the combination of its destructiveness and invulnerability to deterrence, has no precedent in American history. By implication, such a threat demands an unprecedented response.”³⁴

This “unprecedented response” manifested itself in the US efforts to “preemptively” carry out a forced regime change in Iraq. Besides the explicit counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism objectives of destroying Iraqi WMD infrastructure and capability as well as any terrorist network, Operation Iraqi Freedom also demonstrates the US resolve in anti-terrorist efforts by leveraging success in Iraq to convince other countries to cease support for terrorists and to deny access to WMD.³⁵ In addition, the unilateralist neo-conservatives also hold optimism that Iraq offers an opportunity for the United States to showcase an alternative model to the numerous US-friendly but yet oppressive regimes in the Middle East.

The Bush Doctrine fueled many critics. For example, Jeffrey Record observes that, “in transforming an implicit policy option – striking first – into a declaratory doctrine, the Bush Administration has reinforced an image of America, widely held among friends and adversaries alike, of a unilateralist, overbearing ‘hyperpower’ insensitive to the concerns of others.” He also notes that, “the Bush Doctrine invites abuse and establishes a dangerous precedent for others to follow.”³⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, contends that the new unilateralists’ reliance on military power represents a single dimensional thinking that ignores other softer dimensions such as interstate economic and transnational issues where the

United States does not enjoy a monopoly of power. Such “soft power lies in the ability to attract and persuade rather than coerce.” Without a true imperial ability to control other states directly, the United States needs to enhance its soft power by legitimizing its actions through a more multilateral approach in foreign policy.³⁷

Therefore, the Bush Administration’s decision to “preemptively” force a regime change in Iraq has exposed a difference in opinion between the United States and its allies, with a few exceptions such as Britain, on their perceived notions of relationships between rogue nations, failed states and global terrorism, as well as the means to deal with each of these threats. While the post-war coalition in Iraq has become broader and includes more nations than in the pre-war days, the level of contribution is still in great contrast with the overwhelming sympathy and support for US action in Afghanistan to remove the Taliban regime that hosted the al Qaeda. Generally, forced regime change in Iraq has thus far been viewed as a distraction from the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements. Allied coalition support would have been significantly more substantial if the Bush Administration had been convincing in presenting a strong case of linkage between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Instead, it bases its argument on the imminent threat of WMD proliferation and a decade of Iraqi deception and non-compliance of UN resolutions. While the verdict on the US case is still open, the lack of evidence pointing towards any presence of WMD in post-war Iraq has further weakened the US position. Indeed, the current difficulties that the Bush Administration faces in garnering support from the international community for the post-war nation-building efforts in Iraq seems to reinforce Nye’s case on the importance of soft power.

In short, in terms of international politics, there have been differences in the way the United States and its allies perceive the “cure” to be. The neo-conservatives’ approach suggests that of

a direct “chemotherapy” hard-kill approach, facilitated by overwhelming US military dominance in the world. Disagreement over regime change in Iraq reflects differences in vital interests between the United States and some of its allies such as France. But, it also brings to light the fundamental issue of whether Saddam Hussein’s regime presented a “benign growth” – a concern that can be contained; or a “malignant growth” – an imminent threat that needs to be removed preemptively and immediately. The perceived unilateral action by the United States with the subsequent burden of nation-building efforts in Iraq diverts world focus away from the issue of strategy formulation and selection in the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements. There has not been any proposal on how to mitigate the “side-effects of the chemotherapy” that can have adverse impact on both “the benign and cancerous cells.”

US Domestic Political Considerations

International politics aside, the new unilateralist approach of aggressively promoting US ideals and values through regime change measures also assumes continued domestic support for the high cost of protracted involvement in “liberated” nations such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The high cost here refers to both the loss of American lives as well as the manpower and financial resources required to successfully carry out regime changes.

Krauthammer notes that, “America is the first hegemonic power in history to be obsessed with ‘exit strategies.’”³⁸ Such a mindset traces its roots from America’s founding days’ declaration of self-espoused universal values, liberty and democracy, as its basis for existence. But, since the end of the Vietnam War, US politicians are also often concerned with the general public’s actual or perceived aversion of casualties (the Vietnam “body-bag” syndrome). In his 1999 campaign speech, President George W. Bush had expressed his genuine lack of enthusiasm for US armed forces to conduct peacekeeping operations, stating “we will not be permanent

peacekeepers ... sending our military on vague, aimless and endless deployments is the swift solvent of morale.”³⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that US peacekeeping missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan are conducted with the clear objective of stabilizing the internal security situations in the country so as to hand over military control to a local civilian authority or UN-led peacekeeping force as soon as possible. Moreover, public confidence in the handling of post-war Iraq and Afghanistan situations as a result of growing insurgent attacks and mounting US casualties may affect the Bush Administration’s commitment in the long-term post-war reconstruction of these two countries. Failure in addressing on-going insurgency movements within these two countries and the premature departure of US military presence could easily squander away the victories on the battlefields.

In terms of US commitment to manpower and financial resources in the nation-building of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marshall Plan in post-WWII reconstruction of Europe and nation-building efforts in Japan and Germany that spanned as long as seven years must be seen in the context of the perceived urgent need to counter the international communist movement led by Soviet Union. The question remains as to whether the US public sees the current efforts against global terrorism as a total war that necessitates a national level mobilization of the nation’s resources. Thus far, with meager support from the international community to help fund the war, the Bush Administration has estimated a hefty \$87-billion budget for the reconstruction of Iraq alone. Looking ahead, the long-term outlook for domestic support does not offer any comfort. Widening US budget and trade deficits, coupled with the exodus of baby boomers from the work force in the next few years, are likely to place further pressure on the already worsening fiscal situation. This in turn may skew US public perception on the impact of a sustained US

involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan on the economy. With a looming fiscal crisis, future taxpayers may be less generous in supporting any post-war re-construction efforts.

Record notes that,

The Bush Doctrine rightly focuses on the principle of regime change as the most effective means of defeating threats posed by rogue and terrorist-hosting weak states, but actual regime change can entail considerable, even unacceptable, military and political risk, depending upon local, regional and international circumstances.

. . . forcible regime change in the Islamic world, especially given the American position in the Israeli-Palestinian war, risks converting the war on terror into a “clash of civilizations.”

Terminating wars in a manner that produces a better and enduring peace is an inherently difficult task, and the United States has a track record of botching war termination (e.g. World War I, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War).⁴⁰

Indeed, the US performance in nation-building efforts in the past century since 1900 had not been encouraging. Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper examine this issue in their article “Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation-Building.” They found that among the 16 cases of US nation-building efforts after forced regime change, of which 12 were pursued unilaterally, only two (Japan and West Germany) turned out to be unambiguous successes. The majority of cases failed to establish and sustain democracy after the departure of US forces.⁴¹

To sum up the above discussion, the journey towards the establishment of stable, free and democratic governments in Iraq and Afghanistan would be fraught with perils. The Bush Administration has adopted forced regime change as a key component of its strategy in the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements. However, just as cost and risk are key considerations in the sustained administration of a medical treatment, it is important to appreciate that without broad international coalition support, forced regime change may entail high costs and risks with regards to the potential losses of American lives and the deployment of US

resources. This, in turn, may result in a loss of sustainable domestic support and render regime change ineffective.

US Defense Considerations

Another key consideration in the strategic environment is the current and future shape and size of US military capability and capacity because they inherently affect the options of policy instruments available to policy makers. There is no denying that the on-going defense transformation is morphing the US military into a smaller but better trained and more potent armed force through the innovative application of military technology. The US Army, for example, with its current 10 active divisions, two armored cavalry regiments and a single airborne brigade, is only a third of its size during the Cold War.

In “The New American Way of War,” Max Boot remarks that, “coalition forces in the second Gulf War [consisting mainly of one British, one US Marine and two US Army divisions] were less than half the size of those deployed in the first one. Yet they achieved a much more ambitious goal – occupying all of Iraq, rather than just kicking the Iraqi army out of Kuwait – in almost half the time, with one-third the casualties, and at one-fourth the cost of the first war.”⁴² This military success is made possible by the application of information and precision weapon technology in military doctrines and concepts, with the eventual goal of achieving “shock and awe” through network-centric warfare and dominant battle space awareness.⁴³

Critics, however, point out that the current defense transformation pursued by the United States fails to “provide a reliable recipe for translating the destruction of the enemy’s ability to continue to fight into the accomplishment of the political objectives of the conflicts.”⁴⁴ The push for further reduction in the size of the active-duty Army and its reserve in order to fund the implementation of the defense transformation’s vision appears to conflict with the need for more

“boots on the ground” required by a regime-change strategy.⁴⁵ Indeed, the on-going defense transformation reflects the translation of the 1990s e-commerce business concept into military practice, with the use of information technology to reduce business cost and decision cycle.⁴⁶ Just as the euphoria of e-commerce gave way to the bursting of the “internet bubble” at the end of 1990s, there may well be inherent risks in the neglect of the “bricks and mortars” equivalent of military affairs.

The present focus of the Bush Administration is on failed states and rogue nations, where swift and decisive military interventions have to be followed up by nation-building processes and sustained peacekeeping and counter-insurgency operations with substantial ground troop deployment. Despite the current alignment of interests between United States and other regional powers in this war against global terrorism, the on-going defense transformation and force restructuring shows that there is no intention to diminish the military’s primary role of deterrence against conventional threats and the objective of maintaining US military dominance over potential competitors such as China and Russia. Protracted peacekeeping and counter-insurgency operations will be detrimental to the effectiveness of US military in conventional warfare.

In a nutshell, a good “patient-doctor” match and accessibility to appropriate specialist medical services are critical in the remedy of an illness or disease. The immediate need-capability mismatch of nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan implies that it would be difficult for the United States to act alone and the United States would need to call upon multinational allied support to take on some of its peacekeeping roles. This line of reasoning is again consistent with the US eagerness to hand over military control to multinational peacekeepers and civilian authorities in Iraq and Afghanistan. It further reinforces earlier

assertions on the significance of soft power in the post-Cold War era. The implementation of a robust US strategy in the war against global terrorism must be backed by strong and coherent moral justifications to attract and persuade allies to take on peacekeeping roles so as to allow the US military to focus on maintaining global security.

Nation-building alone, as a “cure” to win the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements, is not only inadequate, costly and risky as discussed earlier on, it also requires the availability and consensus of a team of “medical expertise” to carry it to fruition. Why do the US policy makers not consider alternative and complementary “treatments” that will lower the cost and risk as well as facilitate the formation of a cohesive coalition?

Socio-Cultural Factors

Although globalization has made our world smaller, it has not brought a closer and better understanding amongst civilizations and societies. Socio-cultural factors continue to color the lenses of policy makers and men-in-the-street alike, contributing towards misunderstandings and miscalculations of enormous magnitude. Decisions made by US policy makers who are not familiar with local circumstances may be skewed by socio-cultural factors.

A good example is the misplaced confidence that there would be an uprising to topple the Saddam Hussein regime during the second Gulf War in 2003 – the optimistic “liberation” scenario assumption which did not materialize. Such misplaced confidence was probably based on the belief that the Iraqi people would place American-perceived universal values of democracy and liberty above nationalism and sovereignty. It also illustrates that these “liberation” scenario planners probably did not consider the Muslim perspective of suspicion against infidels on Muslim soil.

Socio-cultural factors probably also account for the Bush Administration's linking of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein with that by the radical Islamic terrorist elements. As Record points out, "the Bush Administration's primary focus on regime change in Iraq may be a focus on the periphery rather than the heart of the threat ... [which] is al Qaeda, not Iraq."⁴⁷

This lack of understanding of the Muslim and Arab world, coupled with an apparent reluctance to consult Islamic experts on foreign policy formulation in the Middle East and an inclination to rely on military actions rather than other instruments of policy, all contribute to a blind spot in US foreign policy making. The blind spot is the failure to realize that the "cure" may more effectively include an indirect approach. The global war against Islamic radical terrorist elements should be seen as a struggle to be aggressively fought and won from within the ranks of the Islamic community by aligning the vital interests of United States and its allies with those of friendly moderate Muslims with a desire for reform within Islam.

In their confrontation against radical Islamic groups, the United States and its allies should orchestrate coherent and coordinated efforts to convince Muslims at large, especially the reformists, that the United States and its allies are sincere in bringing about a brighter future to Islam. Today, given the pervasive negative perception of Western values among Muslims, these reformists are increasingly marginalized, weak and do not have the resources and muscle to challenge the views of radical Islamic elements.

Chapter 6

Winning the Hearts, Minds and Souls of Muslims Worldwide

It would be naïve to suggest that a successful religious reform alone would be able to put a stop to the threats of global terrorist acts directed against the United States. Medical interventions such as surgical operations form part of the overall solution to the healthy well being of human bodies. These interventions are just as essential as preventive measures such as regular fitness, balanced diet and health supplements, including the use of both modern and traditional herbal treatments to strengthen the human body's immune system.

Similarly, short-term use of intelligence and military power to eliminate terrorist cells and rogue states that support these cells is an essential component of the overall strategy. At the same time, the United States needs to expand and deepen other instruments of policy. For example, diplomacy plays an important role in the establishment of international legal frameworks and multilateral agreements on financial controls to limit terrorists' source of funding as well as on cross-border law enforcement and sharing of intelligence to limit their movements and deny them a safe haven. Close international cooperation with allies can also help to restore good governance in failed states through political reforms and economic assistance.

Overarching Objective of an Information Campaign

However, as discussed earlier, given the nature of insurgency warfare that is being dealt with, these efforts would not be effective if they are not backed by an information campaign with an overarching objective of winning the hearts, minds *and* souls of an international Muslim community through the promotion of a progressive Islamic culture and teaching. Current thinking in information warfare focuses on how best to exploit the mass media and communication. For example, the “Radio Sawa” (Radio Together) has replaced the Voice of America’s Arabic service with themes that appeal to Arab youths and there are plans to launch a 24-hour Arabic satellite news channel that will compete with Al Jazeera.⁴⁸ While this shift from a hard-sell propaganda approach to a more subtle communication strategy is necessary given the rise of global communication in an Internet age, it lacks a central message in the form of a sincere and deep commitment to the future of the target audience.

This central message should be the promotion of a moderate interpretation of the Quran in order to bring Islam out of the current crisis and restore its prominence in the world. As Howard points out, “if there is indeed ‘a war against terrorism,’ it has to be fought and won within the Islamic world. The role of the West must be to support and encourage those who are fighting that war, and we must take care that we do nothing to make their task more difficult.”⁴⁹ In order to prevent relapse and side effects, rather than just targeting the malignant cells, one should focus on strengthening the body’s immune system.

During the two world wars and the Cold War, the United States had always played the role of a counterbalancing force in the European and Asia Pacific theaters, supporting the weaker allies against the stronger adversary that sought world dominance. The same logic can be applied here in a broader sense, the weaker allies being moderate reformists in the Muslim world

who may be non-state actors and are too weak to speak up against their more radical counterparts. In order to convince these moderate reformists of US sincerity and commitment to this cause, this struggle should take the form of an information campaign waged in a manner, and at levels unprecedented in US history. Two main thrusts of this information campaign would be: firstly, to undertake reform in Islamic education, and; secondly, to establish Iraq and Afghanistan as positive models of Islamic states.

Undertaking of Reform in Islamic Education

Firstly, the centerpiece of this information campaign should be on establishing and educating the compatibility of Islam as a religion with progressive thinking and modernization. Unlike Christianity, Islam did not undergo the equivalent of the Protestant Reformation that resulted in the separation of church and state, and a break away from the medieval religion of Catholics at the end of Europe's Middle Age. While it was triggered by the advent of the Renaissance that took place earlier and separately, mainly as a result of middle class affluence in certain parts of Europe such as Italy, the Protestant Reformation with its subsequent Lutheran and Calvinist movements throughout Europe in turn allowed and secured the continued flourishing of Renaissance art and science discoveries by freeing Western civilization from the shackles of Roman Catholics.

A similar Islamic Renaissance is long overdue. Besides financial assistance to moderate Islamic groups, this Renaissance can be initiated by supporting the setting up of centers of excellence for the study of Islam and the promotion of moderate interpretations of the Quran in the United States and other parts of the world. Prominent moderate Islamic scholars should be mobilized to denounce the militant teachings of radical Islamic elements and to develop accreditation standards for the madrasas. Accredited madrasas should incorporate syllabus and

curriculum that provide adequate coverage on secular subjects such as science and mathematics while retaining emphasis on positive Islamic values such as integrity, honesty, tolerance of other faiths and respect for human dignity.

Such reforms in Islamic education will lift the Muslim community from a vicious downward spiraling cycle where Muslim parents seek refuge from the onslaught of globalization on their religious and cultural heritage by sending their children to madrasas that provide little skills and knowledge relevant in a modern economy. The combination of militant indoctrination and poor job prospects provides fertile ground for radical Islamic groups such as al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah to recruit terrorists from a growing disenchanted youth population. If the United States and its allies do not break this cycle and instead respond to terrorist acts by relying on direct hard-kill military actions alone, it would further reinforce the Muslims' perception of self-vulnerability and Western dominance. This will in turn increase the popularity of madrasas among Muslim parents and the cycle will perpetuate itself generation after generation.

Establishing Iraq and Afghanistan as Positive Models of Islamic States

Secondly, besides undertaking reforms in Islamic education, as part of the information campaign, the United States should leverage on the opportunities presented by the nation-building process in Iraq and Afghanistan to address the issue of Islam's role in state politics.

Since the establishment of modern statehood in Muslim countries in the aftermath of WWII and the demise of colonial power, there has been a wide spectrum of attempts to position Islam and politics with varying degree of success. John L. Esposito chronicles this trend in his book *The Oxford History of Islam*. On one end of the spectrum, Muslim secularists such as the Shah of Iran, who advocated the Western norm of separation of religion from politics, had failed to achieve legitimacy due to poor support from the masses. The difficulty in transplanting a

Western political system to a Muslim society was to be expected given the symbiotic relationship between the political and religious aspects of Islam as described in Chapter 2. On the other end of the spectrum, Muslim governments such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that embrace strict adherence to shari'a and denounce democracy as incompatible with Islam also do not offer a satisfactory political solution, as they are unable to compete in the global economy.⁵⁰

Somewhere between these two extremes are a great diversity of Islamic reformers who seek to re-interpret the religion in order to accommodate modern liberalist and pluralist forms of government. Esposito traces the works of some early scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), who argued for the compatibility of religion and reason and science, and provided the inspiration for these reformers. The former believed in science and technology not only as integral to Islam, but also as a source of strength that had helped to spawn Islamic civilization. The latter argued that, "although the religious observances of Islam were immutable, the social aspects of Islamic law could be reformed in such areas as marriage, divorce, and inheritance." For example, he proposed that the Quranic ideal was monogamy and not polygamy.⁵¹

However, with probably the sole exception case of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who had been relatively successful in redefining Turkey as a secular state, the agendas of many post-WWII reformists were brushed aside in the capitalist-communist ideological struggle of the Cold War. What eventually emerged in most Middle East Muslim countries were repressive regimes supported by the United States and its allies in the name of containment against Soviet expansion. Given the greater awareness made possible by global travel and the information revolution of mass media and Internet communication in the last two decades, Lewis suggests that citizens in these countries increasingly resent what they perceive as a double standard in the

application of human rights norms by the United States and its allies. While Western leaders preach these norms and apply them in their own countries, they generally tolerate the Middle Eastern leaders' violation of civil rights and political freedom as long as the regional stability is maintained and the vital interests of oil and trade are secured.⁵²

Recognizing that such resentment is easily exploited by radical Islamic elements to achieve their political goals, current nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan focus on the establishment of democratic governments that would set positive examples for neighboring Muslim countries. The soundness of this approach is questionable for two reasons. Firstly, there is a risk that radical Islamic elements could seize power through the democratic process and proceed to change the constitutions and impose strict interpretation of shari'a rules, thereby reversing the efforts to encourage mass political participation. Secondly, as noted earlier in the article "Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation-Building" by Pei and Kasper, the United States has a poor record of attempts to establish and sustain democracy in the past. Moreover, the long-term sustainability of US domestic support for newly established democratic regimes in these two countries is questionable.

Democracy should not and cannot be a cure-all solution in the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements. Instead, it is more important to derive a better understanding on the compatibility of democracy and Islam. The answer to this question is complex and requires the broad base participation and debate among eminent scholars and leaders within the world Muslim community to come to a consensus.

The ultimate solution may not be a democratic government as perceived by the West but nonetheless a more sustainable form of governance that tolerates collective participation of the masses. The US-led nation-building team should devote much time, efforts and resources to this

end because the development of a positive model of Islamic states that embraces values consistent with collective political participation would have long-lasting positive effects on the sustainability of democracy in Muslim countries. As a key component of a US information campaign on against radical Islamic terrorist elements, it would send a strong message to Muslims worldwide that this war is targeted specifically against extreme terrorist groups and does not seek to impose secular democratic regimes on Muslim countries. Actions will speak louder than words alone.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This paper takes reference from Grant R. Highland's award winning essay, "New Century, Old Problems: The Global Insurgency within Islam and the Nature of the War on Terror," which characterizes the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements as counter-insurgency warfare. Therefore, in the final analysis, it would be appropriate to draw a parallel between the Cold War and the current global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements, with relevant lessons learned from the Vietnam War.

One significant lesson learned during the Cold War was the need to recognize the importance of local circumstances and craft out appropriate strategies to deal with the threat accordingly. Record writes, "During the first two decades of the Cold War, the United States treated communism as a centrally directed international monolith. In so doing, it failed not only to discern critical national antagonisms within the communist world, but also failed to recognize that communist insurgencies in the de-colonizing Third World were first and foremost the product of unique local circumstances, requiring tailored rather than one-size-fits-all responses. The result of this strategic myopia was intervention and defeat in Vietnam."⁵³

Applying this lesson to the current global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements, there is a need to recognize the different shades of Islam practiced throughout the world – from moderate to radical. While Muslims see one another as part of the same community, and may be

sympathetic to the plight of fellow Muslims, they may not agree on the interpretations and practices of Islam. The US obsession with the Middle East ignores the even larger Muslim community in other parts of the world, where a more moderate interpretation of the Quran is practiced. Even within radical Islamic elements, not all agree with the tactics and methods used by al Qaeda to stop the encroachment of Western culture on Muslim communities.

The implication of the above understanding is that, given the sense of identity within the global Muslim community, direct attack on Muslim countries risks alienating the moderate Muslims from supporting the United States and denouncing the terrorist tactics used by groups such as al Qaeda. This is analogous to medical treatments that have negative side effects and adversely affects benign cells that the body depends upon to combat the viruses. While such treatments may sometimes be necessary, complementary therapies that minimize the resulting adverse effects should be administered. Invasion and occupation of Iraq, for example, places governments of friendly democratic nations with large Muslim populations such as those in Southeast Asia in a very difficult position with respect to their electorates. As such, there is a need to complement military actions with the promotion of progressive Islamic teaching in order to demonstrate that US action is not targeting Islam. This would also allow governments with moderate Islamic outlook to garner internal support in terms of intelligence gathering to root out any terrorist cells within their countries.

Another lesson learned during the Cold War is the importance of understanding the enemy and the nature of warfare it wages. An effective medical intervention requires a good understanding of the health issues that we are dealing with, for example, identifying the virus strains and how they could mutate over time. During the Vietnam War, without a good appreciation of the Vietnamese heritage and determination, the United States failed to take into

account their historical struggle against foreign occupation. It was a limited war to the Americans but a total war to the Vietcong and North Vietnamese. The US military efforts focused on destroying the communist insurgency forces without recognizing the will of the American people as its Achilles' heel. Even though the United States won all the major battles in the Vietnam War including the famous Tet-Offensive, the United States could not prevent the eventual communist takeover of South Vietnam.

Recent events and developments suggest that the United States has not fully grasped the nature of the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements. While there have been calls to win the hearts and minds of Muslims in recognition of the insurgent nature of the war, the efforts merely consist of psychological operations through enhancement of mass media communication. These propaganda campaigns would appear hollow in the absence of an overarching theme and central message to the global Muslim community. The key instrument of policy employed is still the direct hard-kill attacks to eliminate Muslim terrorists, with supporting strategies such as financial control to cut off funding of terrorist organizations and sharing of intelligence among the United States and its allies.

However, these efforts do not address the root causes of the problem: firstly, a perceived threat against Islam posed by the global export of Western cultures and values; and, secondly, a perceived unjustness in the subjugation of the Muslim world by the overbearing world dominance of Western powers. Osama bin Laden has been able to capitalize on these root causes by making references to the "humiliation and disgrace" that Islam has suffered for "more than 80 years" since the fall of the last great Muslim empire, the Ottoman sultanate. His call for Jihad strikes resonance among Muslims, whether they agree with his method or not, and allows

terrorist groups and networks such as al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiah to actively recruit young and willing supporters from unregulated madrasas that preach and incite hatred against the west.

The use of direct hard-kill attacks alone to eliminate Muslim terrorists would have just the opposite effect of generating more of them. Even the removal of the entire al Qaeda organization might not be a permanent solution to the problem, since the existence of underlying conditions may spawn other terror organizations that are much worse. There are signs that DoD has begun to recognize this quandary. In a memo dated 16 October 2003, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld poses the following questions:

Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrasas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?

Does the United States need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The United States is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' cost of millions.⁵⁴

When President Bush “drew the line on the sand” and told the world that “you are either with us or against us,” his message can be easily misconstrued as a duel between the Western and Islamic worlds. If there is indeed a duel, it should be one that pitches those with a moderate and progressive outlook against those with an extremist and radical view of the world. It is with this perspective that this paper puts forth the argument that the problem should be framed as an inevitable internal struggle between moderate and radical elements within Islam in the face of globalization. In this struggle, the radical Islamic elements perceive Western civilization as the source of support for the moderate counterpart that has to be dealt with. Historical references indicate that a similar struggle had taken place in Christianity over a few centuries and been largely resolved with the separation of state and religion after the Hundred Years' War. The

Muslims' experience with this struggle is likely to be equally painful, if not more, and the outcome will be uncertain.

The appropriate response from the United States and its allies should be fourfold: first, to develop an understanding of the politico-religious symbiotic nature of Islam; second, to acknowledge and appreciate the sense of identity within the global Islamic community; third, to leverage on the diversity of Islamic interpretation by forming an alliance with those Muslims who have a more liberal interpretation of the Quran; fourth and lastly, to believe in the potential of Islam and its compatibility with modernity.

Most importantly, in recognition of the current global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements as counter-insurgency warfare, the United States and its allies should adopt an indirect strategy in the form of an information campaign to win the heart, minds and souls of Muslims worldwide, especially moderate Muslims who have reservations about the Bush Doctrine and the US intent in this war. Applied in conjunction with direct hard-kill attacks on radical Muslim terrorists, it will have two main thrusts as follows: to undertake reform in Islamic education, and to establish Iraq and Afghanistan as positive models of Islamic states. Targeting directly the crux of the problem instead of the peripherals, these two main thrusts will address the critical issues of compatibility between Islam as a religion with modernization and democracy respectively.

The United States is specifically targeted by radical Islamic elements because it is the symbol of Western world dominance. The unfortunate September 11 tragedy resulted in the formulation of the new Bush Doctrine that advocates the necessity of pre-emptive war, even if it has to be fought unilaterally without UN authorization. The subsequent war on Iraq reinforced an image of the United States widely held among allies and adversaries of an arrogant

superpower that is insensitive to the concerns of other countries in the world. This degrades US soft power and its ability to lead the rest of the world in the global war against radical Islamic terrorist elements.

In contrast, the information campaign proposed by this paper, together with its two main thrusts of seeking to address the compatibilities between Islam as a religion with modernization and democracy, will demonstrate the US willingness and resolve to tackle the root causes of the problem, enhance its image and revitalize its soft power within the international community. In so doing, the United States will be in a better position to garner material, financial and moral support from its allies towards nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. By reducing its own cost of the war, US domestic support for the war will in turn be more sustainable. Under such a scenario, the US military, given its limited resources and capabilities, will not overstretch itself and can better focus on deterrence and containment of other regional threats such as North Korea.

End Notes

¹ Grant R. Highland, “New Century, Old Problems: The Global Insurgency within Islam and the Nature of the War on Terror,” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2003): 30. Highland coins the phrase “hearts, minds, *and* souls” to reflect the religious dimension of the issue.

² Ibid, 18-21.

³ Quoted in Highland, 18.

⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam – Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 6.

⁵ Ibid, 7-12.

⁶ John Obert Voll, *Islam – Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 15-16.

⁷ Lewis, 17-18.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, xx.

¹⁰ Ibid, 29-36.

¹¹ Voll, 17-18.

¹² Ibid, 19-20.

¹³ Ralph Peters, “Rolling Back Radical Islam,” *Parameters* 32, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 6-9.

¹⁴ Iftekhar Mahmood, *Islam – Beyond Terrorists and Terrorism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), xiv.

¹⁵ Lewis, 45-46.

¹⁶ Lewis, 113-119.

¹⁷ Quoted in Lewis, 115-116.

¹⁸ Michael Howard, “‘9/11’ and After: A British View,” *Naval War College Review* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2002):17.

¹⁹ Lewis, 21-22.

²⁰ Lewis, 24.

²¹ Audrey Jurth Cronin, “Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism,” *International Security* 27, no. 3 (Winter 2002/2003): 45-54.

²² Highland, 23.

²³ Ibid, 23-24.

²⁴ Lewis, 128-129.

²⁵ Highland, 24.

²⁶ Ibid, 25.

²⁷ Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *The National Interest* 70, (Winter 2002/2003): 5-7.

²⁸ Krauthammer, 11-13.

²⁹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “US Power and Strategy After Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July/August 2003): 61.

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- ³⁰ Frederick W. Kagan, "War and Aftermath," *Policy Review*, no. 120 (August/September 2003): 5.
- ³¹ Nye, 62.
- ³² Nye, 63-64.
- ³³ Sam Tanenhaus, "Bush's Brain Trust," *Vanity Fair*, no. 515 (July 2003): 114-123.
- ³⁴ Jeffrey Record, "The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq," *Parameters* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 6.
- ³⁵ Assessment & Analysis Division, CENTAF, *Operation Iraqi Freedom – By The Numbers*, initial report (Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: CENTAF, April 2003): 4.
- ³⁶ Record, 16-19.
- ³⁷ Nye, 60-73.
- ³⁸ Krauthammer, 14.
- ³⁹ Quoted in Kagan, 5.
- ⁴⁰ Record, 14-15.
- ⁴¹ Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper, "Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation-Building," *Policy Brief* 24, (May 2003): 1-7.
- ⁴² Max Boot, "The New American Way of War," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July-August 2003): 44.
- ⁴³ Kagan, 9.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁴⁷ Record, 10-11.
- ⁴⁸ Mark Leonard, "Diplomacy by Other Means," *Foreign Policy* 132, (September/October 2002): 55-56.
- ⁴⁹ Howard, 19.
- ⁵⁰ John L. Esposito, "Contemporary Islam – Reformation or Revolution," *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 675-680.
- ⁵¹ Esposito, 647-649.
- ⁵² Lewis, 103-112.
- ⁵³ Record, 12.
- ⁵⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, memorandum to Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense, Douglas J. Feith, under secretary of defense for policy, Gen Richard B. Myers, chairman, joint chiefs of staff, Gen Pete Pace, vice chairman, joint chiefs of staff, subject: Global War on Terrorism, 16 October 2003.

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