



Audit of the Conventional Wisdom

The Bush Administration is Weak on Terror¹

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The U.S. public widely credits President Bush with toughness on terror. An August 2006 poll found 55 percent of Americans approving his handling of the campaign on terror and only 38 percent disapproving.² Republican candidates are running successfully on the terror issue in this fall's election campaign. In fact, the Bush administration is weak on terror.

The administration wages a one-front war against al-Qaeda, the main terror threat, when effort on every relevant front is needed. Specifically, it has focused on an offensive military and intelligence campaign abroad while neglecting five other critical fronts: bolstering homeland security, securing weapons and materials of mass destruction from possible theft or purchase by terrorists, winning the war of ideas across the world, ending conflicts that fuel support for al-Qaeda, and saving the failed states where al-Qaeda and like groups can find haven. The administration has also bungled parts of the military offensive by diverting itself into a counterproductive sideshow in Iraq and by alienating potential allies. As a result, al-Qaeda and related jihadi groups remain a potent threat more than five years after the 9/11 attacks.³ Assessments by U.S. intelligence and other analysts actually indicate that the terror threat has increased since 9/11.⁴

The Bush administration's toughness on terror is an illusion. Its counterterror campaign has been inept and ineffective.⁵ President Bush talks the talk of strong action but doesn't walk the walk. And his weakness on terror is a putting the United States in great danger.

Front No.1: The Military/Intelligence Offensive

The Bush administration has focused its counterterror campaign on using force to destroy or coerce regimes that shelter al-Qaeda and on rolling up al-Qaeda's global organization through intelligence and police work. The centerpiece of this offensive was the

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2001 smashing of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had sheltered al-Qaeda. This important success denied al-Qaeda secure access to training bases and isolated al-Qaeda leaders from their global network.

Other elements of the Bush offensive were less successful. The Bush team bungled the battle of Tora Bora in Afghanistan in December 2001, allowing Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders to escape.⁶ Then it bungled Operation Anaconda in March 2002, again allowing important al-Qaeda elements to escape.⁷ Then it offered little security and economic assistance to the new Afghan government of Hamid Karzai. As a result, al-Qaeda and its Taliban allies have re-established a strong presence in southern and eastern Afghanistan and in nearby Pakistan. This endangers all the gains won by ousting the Taliban in 2001-2002. Al-Qaeda is again gaining access to the sanctuaries it needs to train its killers.

The weakness of the Bush administration's offensive against al-Qaeda stems partly from the administration's decision to attack Iraq in 2003. The Iraq war consumed resources needed to battle al-Qaeda.⁸ These diverted resources include management talent, intelligence assets, military forces, lots of money, and political capital at home and abroad. For example, Operation Anaconda failed partly because the Bush team withheld needed forces for the coming war in Iraq.⁹ In warfare, one should concentrate first on the most dangerous threat. Al-Qaeda posed a far greater threat than Saddam's Iraq and should have taken top priority. Although the Bush administration has implied otherwise, Saddam and al-Qaeda had no operational ties and did not work in concert against the U.S.¹⁰ Hence ousting Saddam was a diversion from the war against al-Qaeda.

Even worse, the Iraq war strengthened al-Qaeda by inflaming the Muslim world against the U.S. Al-Qaeda has made effective propaganda from TV images of American troops fighting Muslim Iraqis, alleging that they show the U.S. is trying to destroy Islam. The counter-insurgent character of the U.S. intervention has made this propaganda especially effective. Counter-insurgency is inherently cruel and presents a grim spectacle to onlookers. By falling into the role of counter-insurgent in Iraq, the Bush administration has damaged America's position far beyond Iraq and given al-Qaeda a big boost.¹¹

The Bush administration also wrecked valuable Syrian cooperation against al-Qaeda by its confrontational stance toward Syria. After 9/11, the Syrian government shared intelligence with the U.S. that allowed the U.S. to thwart al-Qaeda attacks on the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and on the U.S. embassy in Ottawa, Canada.¹² The Bush administration's hostility toward Syria has ended this cooperation.

Thus even on the offensive, its favored mission, the Bush team has botched key operations and failed to stay focused on key objectives.

Front No. 2: The Defensive

The Bush administration's homeland defense effort has large holes.¹³ It has increased funding for homeland security functions since 9/11 but should do much more. The FBI remains focused on crime solving, not terror prevention.¹⁴ Local law enforcement, a front line in the war, has not been fully engaged in the struggle against terror. The U.S. government still has no single, coordinated national watch list of terror suspects—a basic and essential tool of counter-terrorism. Yet the United States instead maintains several different watch lists, feeding confusion among security personnel on the front lines.¹⁵

U.S. nuclear reactors and chemical plants remain vulnerable and inviting targets for terrorists. Clever attacks on these reactors and plants could kill tens of thousands or more. U.S. ports remain open to devastating attack. U.S. biodefenses have been strengthened but the U.S. remains vulnerable to bioterror. The U.S. food supply remains vulnerable to attack. U.S. insurance laws governing terror give businesses little incentive to harden their infrastructure against an attack. U.S. borders remain essentially open.

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citation

Stephen Van Evera. "The Bush Administration is Weak on Terror," MIT Center for International Studies Audit of the Conventional Wisdom, 06-15 (October 2006).

The CIA has been damaged by a campaign against CIA employees who were deemed unfriendly to the Bush administration. This campaign caused an exodus of able officers from the CIA when their expertise was badly needed.¹⁶

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

Front No. 3: Securing WMDs

Vast nuclear and biological weapons and materials remain poorly secured in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. Enough nuclear materials remain poorly secured in Russia and other countries to make tens of thousands of Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs. Many Soviet nuclear and biological-weapons scientists also remain underpaid or unemployed, ripe for hiring by terrorists. Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush have all failed to move strongly to lock down these materials and scientists. The U.S. spends only some \$1.3 billion per year on the project (the Cooperative Threat Reduction Initiative, or CTR) and will not have it finished for years.¹⁷ The CTR program lacks a strong, visible leader who can make things happen in Washington and other capitals. Amazingly, in the two years after 9/11 no more loose nuclear weapons and materials were secured than in the two years prior—a testament to the Bush administration's inattention to the problem.¹⁸ Duck and cover! This policy lapse is among the worst failures of government in modern times.¹⁹

Funding for CTR should be tripled. And a strong political figure—a James Baker type—should be put in charge of the effort. The President should empower this leader to use the full array of American carrots and sticks to get results from foreign governments.

Front No. 4: The War of Ideas

To defeat al-Qaeda and its jihadi allies, the U.S. must change the terms of debate in the Arab/Muslim world. Al-Qaeda finds recruits and places to hide because much of the Arab/Muslim public accepts its narrative. It will continue to find recruits and haven until that narrative is answered and discredited.

The al-Qaeda narrative is a farrago of historical fabrications and half-truths. It portrays the last century as a period of vast unprovoked one-way violence by the U.S. and other non-Muslim states against a benign Muslim world that was innocent of wrongdoing. If this narrative were true it would indeed justify Muslim rage. The crimes of the West would cry out for a punishing response. But violence between Muslims and non-Muslims has in fact been a two-way street. Neither side can claim a clear grievance against the other based on history.

Western states have committed great cruelties against Muslim societies. These include horrific barbarism by France, Britain, and Italy in their efforts during 1840-1962 to subdue colonies in Algeria, Libya, Iraq, and elsewhere; the 1953 U.S. coup in Iran; and a cynical U.S. policy toward Afghanistan during 1989-1992 that left it in flames.

On the other hand, Muslim Sudan's government has slaughtered two million non-Muslim South Sudanese since 1983, and it supported the murderous Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. Muslim

Indonesia murdered 200,000 Christian East Timorese during 1975-2000 and 400,000-500,000 of its non-Muslim Chinese minority in 1965. Muslim Turkey massacred 600,000-1,500,000 Christian Armenians in 1895 and 1915, in one of the great genocides of modern times.²⁰ Thus the recent history of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims is marred by great crimes committed by both sides. Both should confess their crimes, hang their heads in shame and ask forgiveness. Both have disqualified themselves from making claims against the other by their own egregious misconduct.

Muslim extremists also have much Muslim blood on their own hands. Their crimes include the slaughter of several hundred thousand Muslims in Darfur by Sudan's Islamist government since 2003, the killing of many thousand Afghan Muslims by the Islamist Taliban during its

bloody rule, the killing of tens of thousands of Algerian Muslims by the violent Algerian Islamist movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), during 1992-1998, and the killing of thousands of Iraqi Shi'a by Sunni jihadis in Iraq since 2003. These crimes put the lie to the extremists' claims of concern for the welfare of fellow Muslims. The extremists should atone for these crimes before seeking vengeance for the crimes of others against Muslims.

Some of the Western crimes cited by al-Qaeda and other jihadis are invented. In their narrative the U.S. interventions in Somalia (1992-94), Bosnia (1995), and Kosovo (1999) are painted as violent predations against Muslim populations. This portrayal grossly distorts the historical record. The U.S. committed serious mistakes in these interventions but it intervened in each case to assist Muslims, not to harm them. Its intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo ended Serb violence against those Muslim-majority populations and its intervention in Somalia saved over 40,000 Muslim Somali lives.²¹

In short, the al-Qaeda narrative leaves much to debate and correct. Muslim rage would be deflated if Muslims understood this. But Bush administration efforts to correct the record are half-hearted. The books, articles and media products one would expect to be produced in a serious war of ideas are not appearing. Missing are films of interviews with the hundreds of African victims maimed by al-Qaeda's 1998 bombings of U.S. embas-

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sies in Kenya and Tanzania. Missing are documentaries on the murderous cruelty of the Taliban government in Afghanistan and the Islamist government in Sudan against their Muslim citizens. A handful of filmmakers could produce these quickly, but the administration is not interested.

As a result, grotesque and malignant misperceptions persist in the Muslim world. For example, large majorities in Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia still do not believe that groups of Arabs carried out the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.²² U.S. efforts to destroy al-Qaeda cannot succeed while such attitudes endure.

U.S. public diplomacy is failing because the Bush team has put only scant resources into it. In FY 2003 the U.S. government spent only some \$1.14 billion on the public diplomacy function,²³ and in FY 2006 it spent only about \$1.36 billion.²⁴ Only \$150 million of the State Department's FY 2003 public diplomacy money was spent in Muslim-majority countries.²⁵ These are paltry sums relative to the task at hand.

This failure in turn reflects the Bush administration's macho approach to foreign policy. It believes that friends abroad are won by using the mailed fist. Allies are gained by instilling fear, not respect. The Caligula theory of statecraft—"let them hate us as long as they fear us"—is believed and applied. Reasoning with others is assumed to be pointless, as others are immoral cowards who understand only threat of force. Public diplomacy is for wimps. This schoolyard bully attitude has led the administration to neglect the war of ideas. The United States has powerful skills of persuasion but the Bush team has failed to use them.²⁶

Will the Islamic world engage in debate about historical truth? Will it agree that it must rest its claims on valid history? The Koran says it must. "Believers, if an evil-doer brings you a piece of news, inquire first into its truth, lest you should wrong others unwittingly and then regret your action."²⁷ The United States should embrace this teaching and propose that both sides fully live by it. This would require that both agree to enquire about and debate the truth of history.

Front No. 5: Ending Inflammatory Conflicts

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict inflames Arabs and Muslims against the United States.²⁸ Al-Qaeda exploits the conflict with great success in its propaganda. Hence the U.S. must move credibly to end it.

To move toward peace, Washington should frame its own final-status peace plan and use carrots and sticks to persuade both sides to agree. This will put the opponents of peace on both sides on the defensive. Most important, it will corner the radi-

cal Palestinian group Hamas by exposing its extremism as an obstacle to a just peace.

Most Palestinians now want a compromise peace with Israel involving two-state solution. More militant Palestinians who reject peace with Israel, including Hamas, have nevertheless maintained their popular support by arguing that a two-state solution was never in the cards, so their extremism does not prevent peace and so does no harm. The U.S. can destroy their argument by making clear that it will lead matters to just such a peace if the two sides will cooperate. Hamas will then be forced to bend toward peace or lose power.

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The U.S. final-status plan should involve a near-full Israeli withdrawal in exchange for full and final peace, in line with the four major peace plans that have been widely discussed in recent years: the Clinton bridging proposals of December 2000, the Abdullah Plan of March 2002, the Geneva Accord of December 2003, and the Ayalon-Nusseibeh initiative, also of December 2003. Polls show majorities on both sides favoring these terms. This gives the United States a lot to work with if it wants to push Israeli-Palestinian peace forward.

The U.S. should also move to dampen other conflicts in the Mideast and Muslim worlds. Al-Qaeda feeds on war. It exploits any war involving Muslims anywhere in the world by painting the Muslims as victims, whether or not they

are, and publicizing their suffering. It exploits in this fashion current wars in Kashmir and Chechnya and past wars in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian war. Accordingly, the U.S. should have a policy of dampening conflict and promoting peace in Kashmir and Chechnya as well as Israel-Palestine. As al-Qaeda feeds on war, so the United States should be the great maker and builder of peace in the region.²⁹

Instead, the Bush administration has done little to push peace. Regarding Israel-Palestine, the administration has offered no final status peace plan. It did offer a general roadmap toward final status negotiations in 2003 but failed to press the two sides to implement it. It did little to bolster the power of the moderate Palestinian leader Abu Mazen after he won election in January 2005, a failure that sent the stage for the Hamas victory in parliamentary elections in January 2006. It failed to exploit Abu Mazen's election by pressing to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Overall it has been almost inert. Nor has it pressed for peace in Kashmir or Chechnya.

Front No. 6: Saving/Resuscitating Failed States

Al-Qaeda and other terror groups grow and thrive in failed states. They use such states as havens where they can establish secure bases that can mass-produce terror. Al-Qaeda grew into

a monster in the 1990s because it found haven in Afghanistan, where it trained thousands of terrorists.

Failed states therefore pose a grave threat to U.S. national security. Preventing or resuscitating failed states should have high priority. Failed states are far more dangerous to the U.S. than authoritarian states, such as Iraq under Saddam or Syria under the Assads.

In contrast, the Bush administration believes that only state-sponsored terrorists can do real harm to the United States, so it sees the hostile authoritarian states that might sponsor terror as a greater danger than failed states. Accordingly, the administration has focused its counter-terror efforts on coercing or ousting hostile authoritarian regimes like Saddam's or the Assads'. Before taking office Bush team members poured scorn on the nation-building activities of the Clinton administration and vowed no further nation building. In office they have not addressed dangerous state failures in the Mideast region. As a result, failed states have proliferated dangerously in the Mideast.

Five failed or semi-failed Mideast-region states now pose a danger: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Lebanon, and Iraq. All are failing partly because the Bush administration has done little to sustain them.

As I noted above, the administration made only half-hearted efforts to stabilize Afghanistan after it ousted the Taliban regime in 2001-2002. Needed security and economic aid was not provided. As a result, al-Qaeda and its Taliban allies have re-established a strong presence in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

Nearby Pakistan remains unstable and cannot police its Northwest Frontier Province. As a result, al-Qaeda and the Taliban have free run of the area. Al-Qaeda uses this base to plot mayhem across the world and the Taliban exploits it to attack into Afghanistan. Thus Afghanistan is failing partly because its neighbor Pakistan is already semi-failed, which illustrates that state failure can be dangerously contagious. Yet the Bush administration has no program to bring order and moderation to Pakistan. It stands pat on Pakistan because Pakistani dictator Pervez Musharraf is friendly to the U.S.—never mind that Musharraf cannot govern his country and the regions he cannot control are a terrorist cauldron.

In Somalia, radical Islamists with ties to al-Qaeda have gained control of Mogadishu after defeating U.S.-backed warlords in June 2006, and civil war threatens there. Yet the administration has no apparent program to bring order to Somalia.

In Lebanon, the administration did little to build up the Lebanese state or army after Syrian forces were pushed out

in 2005. This left Hezbollah with a secure sanctuary in south Lebanon, which it exploited to attack Israel in July 2006, sparking the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war.

Finally, the administration has caused state failure in Iraq by invading and then bungling the occupation. The global jihadi movement is now using Iraq as an effective rallying cry and training ground. Saddam's authoritarian regime was dangerous; failed Iraq is a greater danger.

These state failures are a boon to al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, which will find haven in these states and build themselves up accordingly. To address this danger, the Bush administration should shift its focus from changing regimes to nation building. No such shift seems to be on its agenda, however.

Needed: Large Policy Innovation

Winning the war on terror will require large innovation in U.S. national security policy. The U.S. should put relatively fewer resources into traditional military functions—army, navy, air force—and far more resources into counterterror functions. These include intelligence, homeland security, diplomacy to lock down loose nukes and bioweapons around the world, public diplomacy, diplomacy to end conflicts that breed terror—including the Israeli-Arab conflict and the conflicts in Kashmir and Chechnya—and saving failed states, to

deny terrorists the haven-states they need to build their organizations. But the organizations that carry out these functions are politically weak in Washington, so they lose out in Washington budget battles. And like all governments the U.S. government resists innovation, so the changes needed to defeat al-Qaeda face large political obstacles. Can the U.S. government innovate to the extent required?

Americans should want to hear the pulling and hauling of vast turf fights in Washington. This would tell them that resources and authority were being transferred from yesterday's Cold-War-oriented agencies to counterterror-oriented agencies. Instead, the tenor of national security policy in Washington is largely business-as-usual. The Bush administration is not leading innovation forward.

The agencies that would lead in a serious war on al-Qaeda still take a far back seat to the military services. Specifically, in 2006 the U.S. spent \$454 billion for the military services and their support.³⁰ Meanwhile, the U.S. spent only \$40 billion on homeland security in 2006.³¹ And, as I noted above, in 2006 the U.S. spent only \$1.31 billion on locking down loose nuclear weapons and materials through the CTR and \$1.36 billion on

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public diplomacy. Thus U.S. military spending was 11 times U.S. spending on homeland security, 347 times U.S. spending on locking down nuclear weapons and materials, and 334 times U.S. spending on the war of ideas. The U.S. is like a midjet with a strong right arm: powerful in one regard, but only one.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which frames the plan for future U.S. military programs, is little changed from the Cold War-era. It still recommends spending vast sums on super-high-tech tactical fighters and killer submarines that now have no enemy to fight and little role against al-Qaeda.³² The innovation that victory against al-Qaeda requires is not underway.

Still Missing: A Strong Counterterrorism Policy

Before the 9/11 al-Qaeda attacks, the Bush administration took the terror threat lightly. On taking office in January 2001, the administration downgraded the government's chief counterterror officer, the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, to a non-Cabinet-level position.³³ The President's Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, belittled the al-Qaeda threat in April 2001, only five months before the 9/11 attack, wondering in a meeting "why we are beginning by talking about this one man, bin Laden," and offering the grossly incorrect assertion that Iraq was at least as active in terrorism as bin Laden.³⁴ President Bush himself dismissed a CIA briefer who warned in August 2001 of an impending al-Qaeda attack, telling him "you've covered your ass, now."³⁵ When marked indications of a terror attack were detected in early summer 2001, the administration failed to call the government to alert status—unlike the Clinton administration, which called a government alert in late 1999 on receiving warning of the al-Qaeda Millennium plot (which it thwarted).³⁶ In fact, the administration failed even to hold a meeting of cabinet principals to consider the terror threat until September 4, 2001, despite urgent pleas beginning in January 2001 for a meeting from Richard Clarke, the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism.³⁷

The 9/11 attack should have cured the administration of its torpor toward terror, but its lassitude persists. It talks tough but does too little. Its bark against terror is fearsome but its bite is mild.

Instead, the U.S. should devote the full energy required to defeat al-Qaeda. This requires action on every relevant front and large policy innovation. The U.S. should also avoid further diversions from the campaign against the main enemy—the al-Qaeda network and other jihadi terrorists. For example, a military confrontation with Syria or Iran—urged by some in Washington—should be avoided. Washington must keep its eye on the ball.

Al-Qaeda is the greatest danger we face, and defeating it must be our top priority.

article footnotes

- 1 This article is adapted from: Stephen Van Evera, "Assessing U.S. Strategy in the War on Terror," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 607, No. 1 (September 2006): 10-26. DOI: 10.1177/0002716206291492.
- 2 Carl Hulse and Marjorie Connelly, "Poll Shows a Shift in Opinion on Iraq War," *New York Times*, August 23, 2006: A16.
- 3 A portrait of the jihadis' violent worldview is Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
- 4 Mark Mazzetti, "Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Worsens Terrorism Threat," *New York Times*, September 24, 2006: A1; and David Sanger, "Waging the War on Terror: Report Belies Optimistic View," *New York Times*, September 27, 2006: A6.
- 5 Valuable assessments of Bush administration counterterror policies include Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004): 227-287; Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America* (New York: Random House, 2003): 447-488; and Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for Getting it Right* (New York: Times Books, 2005). Valuable assessments of the Bush administration's broader performance in foreign policy and national security are Carl Conetta, "Pyrrhus on the Potomac: How America's post-9/11 wars have undermined US national security" (Project on Defense Alternatives Briefing Report #18, September 5, 2006, retrieved from www.comw.org/pda/); Sharon Burke and Harlan Geer, "The Neo Con: The Bush Defense Record by the Numbers" (Third Way National Security Project, September 2006, retrieved from www.third-way.com); Flynt Leverett, "Illusion and Reality," *American Prospect Online* (September 12, 2006, retrieved from <http://www.prospect.org/web/printfriendly-view.www?id=11859>); and Lawrence Korb and Caroline Wadhams, "A Critique of the Bush Administration National Security Strategy" (The Stanley Foundation, Policy Analysis Brief: June 2006; retrieved from <http://reports.stanleyfoundation.org>).
- 6 An account is Peter Krause, "Tora Bora: Assessing the Conventional Wisdom" (manuscript, May 2006).
- 7 An account of Operation Anaconda is Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2005).
- 8 Arguing that the Iraq war diverted important resources from the war on al-Qaeda and from other important priorities caused is James Fallows, "Bush's Lost Year," *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2004.
- 9 Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*: 85-86; and Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (New York: Presidio Press, 2005): 359-60.
- 10 See *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, authorized ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004): 66, reporting that the 9/11 Commission found "no evidence" of a "collaborative operational relationship" between Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime and al-Qaeda. Debunking more recent false allegations of Saddam-al-Qaeda ties is Peter Bergen, "Enemy of our Enemy," *New York Times* (March 28, 2006).
- 11 The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies reports that al-Qaeda's recruiting was accelerated by the U.S. invasion of Iraq, swelling al-Qaeda's ranks to some 18,000 in the aftermath of the war. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey: 2003/4* (London: IISS, 2004): 6. An April, 2006 U.S. intelligence estimate concurs that the Iraq war has fueled the spread of the jihadi ideology. Mazzetti, "Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Worsens Terrorism Threat."
- 12 Seymour Hersh, "The Syrian Bet," *The New Yorker*, July 28, 2003; and William James Martin, "Clean Break with the Road Map," *Counterpunch*, February 14/15, 2004: 12-14.
- 13 Valuable surveys on homeland security include Stephen Flynn, *America the Vulnerable: How Our Government Is Failing to Protect Us from Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004); and Clarke, *Against All Enemies*: 247-262.
- 14 The 9/11 Public Discourse Project, the non-profit successor organization to the 9/11 Commission, reported in October 2005 that the FBI had failed to reform itself to address the terror threat. Philip Shenon, "9/11 Panel Criticizes Reform Effort At the F.B.I.," *New York Times* (October 21, 2005): A19. In March 2005, the WMD Commission likewise complained that FBI has made "insufficient progress" in areas crucial to recasting itself as a counterterror agency. Eric Lichtblau, "For F.B.I., Not Enough Progress in Combating Terrorism," *New York Times* (April 1, 2005): A11. For example, remarkably the FBI remains unable to develop software to link its case files (Ibid). It has also been unable to provide stable leadership to head its counterterror mission. In early 2006, the FBI counterterror division was on its sixth director since 2001. See Scott Shane, "Year Into Revamped Spying, Troubles and Some Progress," *New York Times* (February 28, 2006): A12. Instead the common practice at the FBI has been to punish employees who point out shortcomings with the FBI's performance. One report notes that "a string of whistle-blowers at the [F.B.I.] ... said they had been punished and effectively silenced for voicing concerns about the handling of terror investigations and other matters since Sept. 11, 2001." Eric Lichtblau, "Justice Department Investigators Find a Cover-Up in an F.B.I. Terror Case in Florida," *New York Times* (December 4, 2005): Section 1, page 37.

The Audit of Conventional Wisdom

In this series of essays, MIT's Center for International Studies tours the horizon of conventional wisdoms that animate U.S. foreign policy, and put them to the test of data and history. By subjecting particularly well-accepted ideas to close scrutiny, our aim is to re-engage policy and opinion leaders on topics that are too easily passing such scrutiny. We hope that this will lead to further debate and inquiries, with a result we can all agree on: better foreign policies that lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world. Authors in this series are available to the press and policy community. Contact: Amy Tarr (atarr@mit.edu, 617.253.1965).

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article footnotes

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- 16 Thomas Friedman, "Saying No to Bush's Yes Men," *New York Times* (May 17, 2006): A23. See also Thomas Powers, "Spy vs. Spy," *New York Times* (May 10, 2006): A23; and Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti, "Top C.I.A. Pick Has Credentials and Skeptics," *New York Times* (May 6, 2006): A1. According to Shane, "Year Into Revamped Spying," former and current U.S. officials warn that U.S. intelligence agencies "remain troubled by high-level turnover, overlapping responsibilities, and bureaucratic rivalry."
- 17 The U.S. spent only \$1.312 billion on the CTR in fiscal year 2006. Matthew Bunn and Anthony Wier, *Securing the Bomb 2005: The New Global Imperatives* (Cambridge, MA: Project on Managing the Atom, 2005): 86, Table 4-8.
- 18 Bunn and Wier, *Securing the Bomb 2005*: vi.
- 19 On U.S. policy toward nuclear materials security see Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 2004): 143-50, 177; Bunn and Wier, *Securing the Bomb 2005*; Graham Allison, "Making America Safer from Nuclear Terrorism," in Stephen Van Evera, ed., *How To Make America Safe: New Policies for National Security* (Cambridge, MA: Tobin Project, 2006; available online at www.makeamericasafe.org): 3-11; Matthew Bunn, "Preventing a Nuclear 9/11," in *ibid.*: 13-22; and resources at the Nuclear Threat Initiative Web site (www.nti.org) and the Managing the Atom Web site (www.managingtheatom.org).
- 20 A 1994 study of genocide estimated that 1.4 million Armenians were murdered between 1914-1918 by the Ottoman Turkish government. See Rudolph J. Rummel, "Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (February 1994): 1-10. A good introduction to this genocide is Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004): 157-166. www.managingtheatom.org.
- 21 On Somalia see Taylor Seybolt, "Knights in Shining Armor? When Humanitarian Military Intervention Works and When It Does Not," (Ph.D. dissertation. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999): 15-17, 115-211. Seybolt estimates that more than 44,000 Somali lives were saved by U.S. action at the cost of some 1,000-1,500 Somalis killed by Western forces. *Ibid.*: 15-17.
- 22 "The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other," *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, June 12, 2006, question 38; retrieved from <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=253>. Disbelievers that Arabs performed the 9/11 attack outnumbered believers by 59 to 32 percent in Egypt, 59 to 16 percent in Turkey, 65 to 16 percent in Indonesia, and 41 to 16 percent in Pakistan. *Ibid.*
- 23 Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Must Counteract Image in Muslim World, Panel Says," *New York Times*, October 1, 2003. This figure includes \$600 million spent by the State Department on its worldwide public diplomacy activities and \$540 million spent by the Broadcasting Board of Governors on broadcasts.
- 24 U.S. Congressional Research Service, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations* (RL32607; May 1, 2006), by Susan B. Epstein; 5, estimated from Figure 1. Accessed on 5/30/06 at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/66505.pdf>.
- 25 Weisman, "U.S. Must Counteract Image in Muslim World."
- 26 Further wisdom on persuading other societies to cooperate with U.S. policies is found in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).
- 27 God in *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2001, first ed. 1934): 49:6. A similar verse is: "Do not confound the truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth." God in *The Koran*, trans. N.J. Dawood (London: Penguin, 1999): 2:42. Also relevant is God's prohibition of undue suspicion of others: "Believers, avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a crime." God in *ibid.*: 49:12.
- 28 I summarize poll data on the harmful impact of the Israel-Palestinian conflict on Arab opinion toward the United States in Stephen Van Evera, "Vital Interest: Winning the War on Terror Requires a Mideast Peace Settlement," *The American Conservative*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (March 14, 2005): 7-10 at 7-8. A footnoted version is online at http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_5_05_VanEvera.pdf.
- 29 My argument is from Stephanie Kaplan, who argues in a forthcoming MIT political science Ph.D. dissertation that war is a tonic for terrorist propaganda-making, recruiting, network-building, and training, and thus serves as a general breeding ground for terrorists. She concludes that war prevention and war termination should be a centerpiece of U.S. counterterrorism policy.
- 30 Miriam Pemberton and Lawrence Korb, *A Unified Security Budget for the United States, 2007* (Foreign Policy in Focus, May 3, 2006, retrieved from www.fpiif.org/fpiftxt/3253): 6, Chart 4. Pemberton and Korb report that total U.S. spending on national defense (the 050 federal budget account) in 2006 was \$463 billion. Of this, \$8 billion went to non-military security assistance and about \$1 billion went to counterproliferation activities, including CTR. The remaining \$454 billion went to the military services and their support. See also Cindy Williams, "Budgets to Make America Safer," in Van Evera, ed., *How To Make America Safe*: 61-67 at 64, Table 1 (also available online at www.makeamericasafe.org).
- 31 *Ibid.* This figure omits spending on security for Defense Department installations in the U.S.
- 32 Fred Kaplan, "Rumsfeld Surrenders: The QDR Dashes His Dreams of Military Transformation," *Slate*, February 3, 2006, retrieved from www.slate.com/toolbar.aspx?action=print&id=2135343.
- 33 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*: 230.
- 34 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*: 231-32.
- 35 Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America's Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006): 2.
- 36 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*: 205-214.
- 37 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*: 237.



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