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Bush's National Security Strategy Is a Misnomer

by Charles V. Peña

Executive Summary

The Constitution of the United States of America makes clear that one of the paramount responsibilities of the federal government is to "provide for the common defense." In the past, the primary threats to the United States and U.S. interests were hostile nation-states. Today, the real threat to America is terrorist groups, specifically the al Qaeda terrorist network. Therefore, al Qaeda, not rogue states, should be the primary focus of U.S. national security strategy.

Many people mistakenly assume that al Qaeda hates the United States for "who we are" as a country. But the reality is that hatred of America is fueled more by "what we do," that is, our policies and actions, particularly in the Muslim world. That does not mean that the United States deserves to be attacked or that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were justified. But if the United States is to take appropriate steps to minimize its exposure to future terrorism, it must correctly understand what motivates terrorists to attack America. The obvious conclusion to be drawn by American policymakers is that the United States needs to stop meddling in the internal affairs of other countries and regions, except when they directly threaten the territorial integrity, national sovereignty, or liberty of the United States.

Thus, 9/11 highlights the need for the United States to distance itself from problems that do not truly affect U.S. national security. Much of the anti-American resentment around the world, particularly in the Islamic world, is the result of interventionist U.S. foreign policy. Such resentment breeds hatred, which becomes a stepping-stone to violence, including terrorism.

But the new *National Security Strategy* promulgated by President Bush in September 2002 does just the opposite. It prescribes a global security strategy based on the false belief that the best and only way to achieve U.S. security is by forcibly creating a better and safer world in America's image. A better approach would be a less interventionist foreign policy.

It is too late to stop al Qaeda from targeting America and Americans. The United States must do everything in its power to dismantle the al Qaeda terrorist network worldwide, but the United States must also avoid needlessly making new terrorist enemies or fueling the flames of virulent anti-American hatred. In the 21st century, the less the United States meddles in the affairs of other countries, the less likely the prospect that America and Americans will be targets for terrorism.

Charles V. Peña is director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute.

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Introduction

In making the case to go to war against Iraq, President Bush said: "America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."[1] That statement was made not long after the release of the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, which outlined a doctrine of preemption: "[A]s a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed."[2] The Iraq war thus became the first test of the administration's national security strategy. But persistent questions about the threat posed by Iraq, the quality of the intelligence about the threat, and how that information was used by the administration to make its case for war[3] are cause to be skeptical about the wisdom of the new national security strategy.

Aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* on May 1, 2003, President Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq and told U.S. military personnel, "Because of you, our nation is more secure."[4] The assertion that the war in Iraq has made the United States more secure is the subject of important debate.[5] But perhaps more important than the Iraq war itself is the larger issue of whether the *National Security Strategy*, which served as the blueprint for going to war, will indeed make the United States more secure.

The Constitution makes clear that one of the paramount responsibilities of the federal government is to "provide for the common defense." Therefore, the security of the American homeland and public should be the primary objective of any national security strategy. September 11, 2001, only further reinforced the need for U.S. national security strategy to focus on protecting America against the threat of terrorism. Yet, the *National Security Strategy* speaks little about directly protecting the U.S. homeland. Indeed, homeland security seems more of a passing reference rather than a central theme:

- "While we recognize that our best defense is a good offense, we are also strengthening America's homeland security to protect against and deter attack."[6]
- "This broad portfolio of military capabilities must also include the ability to defend the homeland."[7]
- "We must strengthen intelligence warning and analysis to provide integrated threat assessments for national and homeland security."[8]
- "At home, our most important priority is to protect the homeland for the American people."[9]

To be sure, protecting America against terrorist attack is implied in these goals:

- "strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends"; and
- "prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction."[10]

But the other goals, however noble and worthwhile, are clearly not directed at protecting the nation against terrorism:

- "champion aspirations for human dignity,"
- "work with others to defuse regional conflicts,"
- "ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade,"
- "expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy,"
- "develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power," and
- "transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century."[11]

Indeed, the new *National Security Strategy* describes itself as "based on distinctly American internationalism," which is "the union of our values and our national interests." The outcome is a strategy whose "aim . . . is to help make the world not just safer but better."[12]

That is a surprising posture for a president who previously talked about a more humble foreign policy and criticized nation building. It draws on Woodrow Wilson's belief that it is America's mission to spread democracy. It also reproduces a rather Clintonesque foreign policy vision of promoting democracy. After all, President Clinton declared in a speech at the United Nations in 1993: "Our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world's community of market-based democracies. During the Cold War, we fought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions."[13] To be sure, the neoconservatives would challenge the liberal interventionists' preference for working with the United Nations and having the support of the international community. But both arrive at the same end point. The result is an alliance of strange bedfellows brought together by the belief that American security is best served by using military power to spread democracy throughout the world. The convergence between neoconservatives and liberal interventionists is highlighted by the issue of sending U.S. troops to Liberia as peacekeepers.[14]

The reality is that "national" security strategy is a misnomer. It is a global security strategy to "defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere"[15] based on the false belief that the best and only way to achieve U.S. security is by forcibly creating a better and safer world in America's image. Although the administration's original argument for military action against Iraq was the purported threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD), at the eleventh hour the larger and more noble goal of spreading democracy was added as a rationale: "The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life."[16]

No one would dispute that promoting democracy is a worthy goal. And certainly the United States should encourage the formation of liberal democracies throughout the world. But U.S. national security is not predicated on spreading freedom and democracy, however desirable they may be. National security is based on being able to counter (by either deterrence or defeat) direct threats. Thus, the litmus test is not whether a country meets U.S.-imposed criteria of democratic government but whether it has hostile intentions and real military capability to directly threaten the United States.

Defining the Threats to U.S. National Security

In the past, the primary threats to the United States and U.S. interests were nation-states. But since the end of the Cold War, the United States is in a unique geostrategic position. The military threat posed by the former Soviet Union is gone. Two great oceans act as vast moats to protect America's western and eastern flanks. And America is blessed with two friendly and stable neighbors to the north and south. Thus, the American homeland is safe from a traditional conventional military invasion, and the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal acts as an effective and credible deterrent against possible nuclear attack—even by rogue states that might eventually acquire nuclear weapons.

Not only is the United States relatively insulated from possible attack; it is defended by the most dominant military force on the planet. Indeed, in 2001 the U.S. defense budget[17] (nearly $348 billion) exceeded those of the next 13 nations combined (most of whom are allies or friendly to the United States).[18] The country closest in defense spending to the United States was Russia ($65 billion). But it is clear that under President Vladimir Putin Russia has charted a course to move closer to

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the United States and the West, both politically and economically. China—which many observers see as the next great threat—had estimated defense expenditures of $47 billion. Moreover, it is not a given that China will become an aggressive great power that challenges the United States.[19] According to a Council on Foreign Relations task force chaired by former secretary of defense Harold Brown:

> [T]he People's Republic of China is pursuing a deliberate and focused course of military modernization but . . . it is at least two decades behind the United States in terms of military technology and capability. Moreover, if the United States continues to dedicate significant resources to improving its military forces, as expected, the balance between the United States and China, both globally and in Asia, is likely to remain decisively in America's favor beyond the next twenty years.[20]

And the combined defense spending of the so-called axis of evil nations (North Korea, Iran, and Iraq) was only $5.3 billion, or 1.5 percent of the U.S. defense budget.[21]

Not only does the United States outspend most of the rest of the world, but its military is technologically superior to that of any other country. The swift and decisive U.S. military victory in Iraq is a testament to that superiority. Thus, it should be abundantly clear that, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States no longer faces a serious military challenger or a global hegemonic threat. The only potential traditional nation-state threat would be the rise of a hostile global hegemonic power, but none is on the horizon. The resulting bottom line is that a conventional military threat to the U.S. homeland is, for all intents and purposes, nonexistent.

This is a welcome situation for America. It does not call for isolationism but demands a judicious, realistic, and prudent deployment of the strengths bestowed by such good fortune.

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The Real Threat Is Terrorism

That is not to say that no threats exist. As September 11 so devastatingly demonstrated, the real threat to the U.S. homeland is not a foreign military power but terrorist groups.[22] Yet the United States remains preoccupied with nation-state threats and an extended forward defense perimeter. The result is fear of overextending the U.S. military to meet the requirements of forward defense.[23]

The real problem, however, is not overextension but overcommitment of military forces that dilutes the United States' ability to focus on the al Qaeda terrorist threat. Despite the demise of the Soviet Union as a military threat to Europe, the United States has nearly 100,000 troops deployed to defend the Continent.[24] In another obsolete, Cold War–era obligation, the United States still has about 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea.[25] Yet the South has more than twice the population of the North (48 million vs. 22 million) and an economy 20 times larger than the North's (on a par with the lesser economies of the European Union).[26] Those characteristics should enable it to defend itself against the North. The U.S. military also maintains in Japan a military presence similar to that in South Korea.[27] But a country with the world's second largest economy certainly possesses the resources to defend itself rather than be a security ward of the United States.

As Ted Galen Carpenter at the Cato Institute points out: "The terrorist attacks on America have given added urgency to the need to adjust Washington's security policy. . . . [W]e cannot afford the distraction of maintaining increasingly obsolete and irrelevant security commitments around the globe."[28] Therefore, the United States should "clear the decks" and focus its national security strategy more pointedly on the terrorist threat posed by those responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks: the al Qaeda terrorist network. More specifically, the core element and primary

objective of a national security strategy should be to protect the homeland against future terrorist attacks. U.S. national security strategy should not aim to make the world a better place; instead, it should be focused more narrowly on protecting the United States itself—the country, the population, and the liberties that underlie the American way of life.

Preventive, Not Preemptive, War

The Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* correctly recognizes the threat posed by al Qaeda: "Our priority will be first to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances."[29] But in many ways, the strategy overemphasizes rogue states and WMD. The guiding principle seems to be "to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use WMD against the United States and our allies and friends."[30] Clearly, that was the administration's rationale for its war against Iraq. In his January 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush said:

> With nuclear arms or a full arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein could resume his ambitions of conquest in the Middle East and create deadly havoc in the region. And this Congress and the American people must recognize another threat. Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own.[31]

Thinking in terms of "terrorist clients" implies state-sponsored terrorism, which has traditionally been defined as nations using "terrorism as a means of political expression."[32] But al Qaeda's terrorism is not state sponsored; it is privatized terrorism,[33] independent of any one nation-state. To be sure, al Qaeda will take advantage of a willing host such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. However, al Qaeda's ideology and agenda are internally driven, not a political extension of a government. And their capabilities are largely self-financed and self-acquired, not bestowed upon them by a nation-state benefactor. So if al Qaeda is not a client of a rogue state, then focusing U.S. national security strategy on rogue states will not address the terrorist threat posed by al Qaeda.

Moreover, there is no evidence that rogue states with (or seeking to acquire) WMD will provide them to terrorists. Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Iran but did not give such weapons to the Palestinian terrorist groups that he supported for use against either Israel or the United States. The same is true of both Iran and Syria, countries that are also believed to possess WMD and known to support terrorist groups. Thus, the administration's national security focus on WMD being provided to terrorists by rogue states is based on sheer speculation

So what is described in the *National Security Strategy* as preemptive action against rogue states to prevent hostile acts by terrorists is not appropriate for dealing with the terrorist threat. And preemption is not even an accurate description because preemption implies an impending attack. A classical example of preemptive self-defense is Israel's military action against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War.[34] Instead, what the administration endorses is preventive war, and its logic—to "act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed"[35]—is a prescription for a state of perpetual war. By the standards set forth in the *National Security Strategy*, the simple existence of conditions from which a threat, however unlikely, might emerge is sufficient. Thus, the litmus test is the plausible allegation of a potential threat, not the convincing proof of

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the existence of such a threat. Speculation about unknown future intentions and capabilities of potential enemies become a causus belli—thus the claim that Saddam "could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists," rather than compelling proof that he *would* take such action, is sufficient.

In more practical terms, the Pentagon lists as "emerging and extant threats" to the United States 12 nations with nuclear weapons programs, 13 with biological weapons, and 16 with chemical weapons.[36] If WMD (possession, programs, or even mere intentions to acquire them) were the primary justification for attacking Iraq, how many other countries are potential threats that the United States must attack? Even as the United States declared military victory in Iraq, the rhetoric turned first to Syria[37] and then to Iran[38] as potential next targets.

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National Security Strategy Stuck in a Cold War Paradigm

Ultimately, the Bush administration's national security strategy seems increasingly like the Cold War paradigm run amok without a superpower enemy to confront. Indeed, the lack of a powerful enemy seems to make the strategy alluring and implementing it possible—the United States is unopposed and the dominant military power in the world. But the U.S. Cold War strategy was based on a zero-sum mentality that assumed that any gain by one side resulted in a commensurate loss by the other. Thus, the United States sought to keep the Soviet Union in check—a strategy of containment—to ensure that it did not make inroads in key strategic areas. However, as Richard K. Betts at Columbia University points out:

> [I]t is no longer prudent to assume that important security interests complement each other as they did during the Cold War. The interest at the very core—protecting the American homeland from attack—may now often be in conflict with security more broadly conceived and with the interests that mandate promoting American political values, economic independence, social Westernization, and stability in regions beyond Western Europe and the Americas.[39]

In the post–Cold War environment, the United States no longer needs to check the advances of a superpower enemy. Instead, it is faced with an unconventional foe in a war that has no distinct battle lines. Indeed, the many layers of the extended U.S. defense perimeter designed to defend against the Soviet threat during the Cold War were not able to prevent al Qaeda from carrying out the attacks on September 11. Nonetheless, U.S. national security thinking remains largely on Cold War autopilot, guided by the belief that a global U.S. military presence is fundamental to making the United States more secure. Most striking is that such thinking permeates the administration's approach to homeland security. According to the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* issued by the White House in July 2002:

> For more than six decades, America has sought to protect its own sovereignty and independence through a strategy of global presence and engagement. In so doing, America has helped many other countries and peoples advance along the path of democracy, open markets, individual liberty, and peace with their neighbors. Yet there are those who oppose America's role in the world, and who are willing to use violence against us and our friends. Our great power leaves these enemies with few conventional options for doing us harm. One such option is to take advantage of our freedom and openness by secretly inserting terrorists into our country to attack our homeland. Homeland security seeks to deny this avenue of attack to our enemies and thus to provide a

secure foundation for America's ongoing global engagement.[40]

Thus, even the administration admits that our aggressive forward presence abroad spurs terrorism. Yet maintaining a global presence appears to have become an end in itself for U.S. national security strategy. The national security strategy is less about national security and more about exercising American power (military, economic, and political) to make a better and safer world. However grand and noble the cause of spreading freedom and democracy throughout the world may be, the reality is that it has little to do with protecting America against more terrorist attacks from al Qaeda—the one real threat we face.

"What We Do" vs. "Who We Are"

Conventional wisdom holds that other countries and people hate the United States for "who we are." In his address to a joint session of Congress and the American people after the September 11 terrorist attacks, President Bush said: "Why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government. They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."[41]

To be sure, suicide terrorists who fly airplanes into buildings probably do hate the United States. But it would be misleading to assume that such hatred is the primary reason and motivation for terrorism against the United States. Throughout the world there is a deep and widespread admiration for America and what it has accomplished domestically, including its energy, productivity, much of its culture, and its values. But there is also a "love/hate" relationship with America: many people love what we are, but they often hate what we do. That is, anti-Americanism is fueled more by our actions than by our existence.[42]

Evidence for that can be found in various polls taken around the world. For example, the Pew Global Attitudes Project, which has surveyed more than 66,000 people around the world, states:

- "Despite soaring anti-Americanism and substantial support for Osama bin Laden, there is considerable appetite in the Muslim world for democratic freedoms. The broader, 44-nation survey shows that people in Muslim countries place a high value on freedom of expression, freedom of the press, multi-party systems, and equal treatment under the law."
- "The broad desire for democracy in Muslim countries and elsewhere is but one indication of the global acceptance of ideas and principles espoused by the United States. The major survey also shows that the free market model has been embraced by people almost everywhere."
- "This is not to say that they accept democracy and capitalism without qualification, or that they are not concerned about many of the problems of modern life. By and large, however, the people of the world accept the concepts and values that underlie the American approach to governance and business."[43]

But according to the Pew project, in the aftermath of the Iraq war:

> [T]he bottom has fallen out of support for America in most of the Muslim world. Negative views of the U.S. among Muslims, which had been largely limited to countries in the Middle East, have spread to Muslim populations in Indonesia and Nigeria. Since last summer, favorable ratings for the U.S. have fallen from 61% to 15% in Indonesia and from 71% to 38% among Muslims in Nigeria.
>
> In the wake of the war, a growing percentage of Muslims see serious threats to Islam. Specifically, majorities in seven of eight Muslim populations surveyed express worries that the U.S. might become a military threat to their

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> countries. Even in Kuwait, where people have a generally favorable view of the United States, 53% voice at least some concern that the U.S. could someday pose a threat.[44]

The Zogby International "Impressions of America" poll of ten nations (five Arab, Muslim nations; three non-Arab, Muslim nations; and two non-Arab, non-Muslim countries) reveals that while "majorities do favor American movies, television and products, all ten nations were in great opposition to a potential U.S. attack on Iraq" and gave the United States "extremely negative ratings for its policy toward Iraq."[45] Another Zogby poll found that Arabs look favorably on American freedoms and political values but have a strongly negative overall view of the United States based largely on their disapproval of U.S. policy toward the Middle East. [46]

Those views are not confined to countries that might somehow be inherently predisposed to dislike the United States. A poll conducted for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States showed that "a majority of people surveyed in six European countries believe American foreign policy is partly to blame for the Sept. 11 attacks."[47] And the results of a Gallup International poll of 36 countries showed that in 23 countries (9 of which were Western European countries and included Great Britain) "more people think U.S. foreign policy is negative rather than positive in its effects on their country."[48]

The obvious conclusion to be drawn by American policymakers is that the United States needs to stop meddling in the internal affairs of other countries and regions, except when they directly threaten U.S. national security interests, that is, when the territorial integrity, national sovereignty, or liberty of the United States is at risk.

September 11 further highlights the need for the United States to distance itself from problems that are not truly vital to U.S. national security. Much of the anti-American resentment around the world—particularly in the Islamic world—is the result of interventionist U.S. foreign policy. Such resentment breeds hatred, which becomes a steppingstone to violence, including terrorism.

Indeed, the linkage between an interventionist foreign policy and terrorism against the United States was recognized by upper levels of the U.S. government long before September 11. According to a 1997 study by the Defense Science Board, a panel of experts that advises the secretary of defense:

> As part of its global power position, the United States is called upon frequently to respond to international causes and deploy forces around the world. America's position in the world invites attacks simply because of its presence. Historical data shows a strong correlation between U.S. involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States.[49]

The Bush administration even admits the relationship between American global interventionism and retaliatory acts of terrorism against the United States. According to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, U.S. forces stationed in Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War were "part of the containment policy [of Iraq] that has been Osama bin Laden's principal recruiting device, even more than the other grievances he cites."[50]

Even in the war on terrorism, the United States is flirting with other people's problems that are not vital to U.S. national security. The U.S. involvement in the Philippines is just one example. The U.S. military has been participating since December 2001 in joint training exercises with the Philippine military to prepare for the eradication of Abu Sayef, a militant separatist Islamic group. The United States claims that Abu Sayef is linked to al Qaeda, but they are more financially motivated kidnappers than radical Islamic terrorists. Even Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo acknowledges that connections between al Qaeda and Abu Sayef are tenuous

and that there is no evidence of an al Qaeda presence in the Philippines after 1995.[51]

Less Intervention Equals More Security: Reducing the "Lightning Rod" Problem

A better approach to national security policy would be for the United States to adopt a less interventionist policy abroad and to pull back from the Cold War–era extended security perimeter (with its attendant military commitments overseas). Such an approach recognizes that conflict and instability per se do not automatically jeopardize U.S. national security. It also recognizes that many of the problems plaguing the world, such as civil wars and ethnic strife, are largely impervious to external solutions (even from a country as powerful as the United States).

Instead of being the balancer of power around the world, the United States should allow countries to establish their own balance of power arrangements in their own regions (as the dominant military power in the world, the United States could always step in as a balancer of last resort if a serious imbalance that jeopardized vital U.S. national security interests were to develop). And instead of viewing all crises and conflicts as vitally important, the United States would be able to distinguish between those that demand its attention and those that can be left to run their natural course.

Recognizing the link between an interventionist American foreign policy, however noble or well intentioned, and terrorism against U.S. targets is even more important now.[52] The United States must do everything in its power to dismantle the al Qaeda terrorist network worldwide, but the United States must avoid needlessly making new terrorist enemies or fueling the flames of virulent anti-American hatred.

According to statistics compiled by the State Department:[53]

- In 1998, there were 274 total terrorist incidents worldwide, 111 (41 percent) of which were anti-U.S.,
- In 1999, there were 395 total terrorist incidents worldwide, 169 (43 percent) of which were anti-U.S.,
- In 2000, there were 426 total terrorist incidents worldwide, 200 (47 percent) of which were anti-U.S., and
- In 2001, there were 355 total terrorist incidents worldwide, 219 (62 percent) of which were anti-U.S.

Clearly, the United States was a lightning rod for terrorism even before September 11. Given that fact and given that even bin Laden's hatred of the United States is largely driven by U.S. policies, a vital component of U.S. national security policy must be to stem the tide of vehement anti-American sentiment. That is especially true in the Middle East, which is an incubator and recruiting pool for radical Islamist terrorists.

Withdraw U.S. Military Forces from Iraq

The administration's original argument for invading Iraq was based on Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of WMD. Such weapons, or even a weapons program, have yet to be discovered,[54] which has generated considerable debate over whether the administration exaggerated the threat posed by Iraq (in particular, how close Iraq might have been to developing a nuclear weapon). Time and history will tell if the allegations of WMD were true.

But a more important criterion than WMD in determining whether Iraq posed a real threat to U.S. national security was the allegation that Iraq was supporting al Qaeda. Indeed, proof that the Iraqi regime was complicit in 9/11 or actively supporting or harboring al Qaeda would have warranted U.S. military action, just as it had been justified against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Colin Powell presented evidence at the United Nations connecting al Qaeda operative Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi to the Ansar al-Islam terrorist group operating in northeastern Iraq.[55] But a direct connection between the Saddam Hussein regime and al Qaeda has yet to be

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established. Indeed, although President Bush continues to claim that "there's no question that Saddam Hussein had al Qaeda ties," despite no strong evidence to back up that assertion, he also admits that there is "no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with September the 11th."[56]

Even if one is willing to give the administration the benefit of the doubt on both WMD and the connection to al Qaeda, this much should be clear now: if there was previously a threat, that threat has been removed. That being the case, the United States must devise an exit strategy.

From the very beginning of the current U.S. occupation of Iraq there were warning signs that the United States can ill afford to overstay its welcome. Thousands of Muslims, both Shiite and Sunni, protested against the American military presence.[57] U.S. troops, saddled with peacekeeping duties that they are not trained to perform, have fired on crowds and killed civilians in Mosul and Fallujah.[58]

Despite Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's previous refusal to call the postwar situation in Iraq a guerrilla war, the resistance to the American occupation has since been characterized as "a classic guerrilla-type campaign"[59] by Gen. John P. Abizaid, the commander of U.S. Central Command. And there are signs that resistance to the occupation of Iraq will continue and possibly increase. The following incidents occurred within a span of two weeks:

- The Jordanian embassy in Baghdad was the target of a terrorist car bomb attack that killed 11 and wounded 50 people.[60]
- Unrest in Basra—in the Shia-dominated southern part of the country that has been relatively peaceful—has grown as a result of electricity, fuel, and water shortages.[61]
- The main oil pipeline to Turkey in northern Iraq was bombed, costing the fledgling Iraqi economy an estimated $7 million a week in much-needed oil revenues.[62]
- A major water main in Baghdad was bombed, cutting off water to much of the city.[63]
- A terrorist car bombing of the United Nations headquarters building in Baghdad resulted in at least 20 people killed and more than 100 injured.[64]

As of August 25, 2003, the U.S. death toll after the end of major combat operations equaled that during major combat: 138 deaths, if both hostile and nonhostile casualties are tallied.[65] The number of U.S. troops killed by hostile fire during the war was 115 and the number of those killed since May 1, when President Bush declared an end to major combat operations, stands at 62. Given the current level of violence in Iraq, hostile fire casualties after the end of major combat operations will likely exceed the combat count in a few months' time.

In addition to the human cost, the occupation is costing $3.9 billion a month.[66] And although the administration scoffed at the notion before the war, Paul Bremer (the U.S. civilian administrator in Iraq) has admitted that the cost of reconstructing Iraq could be as much as $100 billion.[67] And President Bush has requested an $87 billion supplemental appropriation for Iraqi military and reconstruction efforts, bringing the total the United States is spending on the war and its aftermath to about $150 billion.[68] The lesson should be clear: the United States must leave Iraq at the earliest possible opportunity.

The United States must avoid a Balkans-style nation-building enterprise in Iraq. In November 1995, President Clinton assured the American public that U.S. troops would be in Bosnia for only one year. Nearly eight years later, those troops are still there. Unfortunately, that seems to be the course the administration is taking in Iraq. One senior administration official has spoken of a "generational commitment" to Iraq, much like the one made to transform Germany after World War II.[69] And both neoconservatives and liberal interventionists are supporting a lengthy stay in Iraq.[70]

Unlike Clinton in Bosnia, Bush has not even set a timetable for how long the United

The lesson should be clear: the United States must leave Iraq at the earliest possible opportunity.

States will stay in Iraq; he has said only that "we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more."[71] According to Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of coalition forces in Iraq, U.S. forces will be in Iraq for two years at an "absolute minimum" and "probably longer."[72] But if the United States can devise a plan and execute a decisive military victory in less than four weeks, certainly the administration can do a better job of devising and executing a plan for exiting Iraq. Here is a proposed timetable:

- The belatedly appointed Iraqi interim authority (originally slated to be in place at the end of May 2003 but not put in place until mid-July) must create the framework for a newly elected Iraqi government in three months or less. And in doing so, the council must be seen to be representing and acting in the interests of the Iraqi people and not as a puppet of the American authority under Amb. Paul Bremer. Admittedly, the Iraqis will be starting from scratch since they have known nothing except dictatorship and authoritarian rule for more than 40 years. But Turkey—and, to a lesser degree, Afghanistan—provide working models for creating structures for representative government in predominantly Muslim countries.
- Hold elections within the subsequent two or three months. This may seem ambitious, but it took only six months from the Bonn, Germany, meeting, which created a plan for a new Afghan government after the Taliban was deposed, to have Hamid Karzai elected as the new president in Afghanistan. And when the United States ousted the Marxist military council that seized power in Grenada in 1983, free elections were held the following year. A potentially sticky issue is determining who will oversee and verify that the elections in Iraq are free and fair. That would ordinarily be a role for the United Nations, but the United States may be reluctant to involve the UN, given its lack of support for the U.S.-led war. One possible alternative might be the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which provided monitors for Turkey's parliamentary elections last fall.
- Once a new Iraqi government is in place, which according to the prescribed schedule would be within six months, begin withdrawing U.S. military forces. U.S. troops are the finest in the world, but they are neither policemen nor palace guards. And a relatively quick exit is not out of the question; after helping depose dictator Manuel Noriega, the United States handed over the Panama Canal and control of Panama to the new government in a year.

Most important, the United States must be willing to live with the result, which is not likely to be a perfect democracy. The temptation—as with all nation-building efforts—will be for the United States to stay on to help the Iraqis get it "right." It is only human nature that the United States will want to bestow upon the Iraqi people the same liberties cherished by Americans. But the U.S. government's first responsibility is to the American public, not the people of Iraq. Liberating Iraq and creating democracy may be a noble purpose, but U.S. national security demands only that whatever government replaces the former regime does not harbor or support terrorists who would do harm to the United States.

Indeed, there is some hope that even an Islamic government would not necessarily be hostile to the United States. In the words of one Iraqi, "We thank the Americans for getting rid of Saddam's regime, but now Iraq must be run by Iraqis."[73] To prevent that gratitude from turning to resentment and hostility, the United States must have the wisdom to leave as quickly as possible. Otherwise, the United States runs the risk of reliving its experience in Lebanon in the 1980s or, worse yet, an American version of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan: Arabs and Muslims from the

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region could flock to Iraq to expel the American infidel,[74] and the United States could be bogged down in Iraq for years.

Disengage from the Special Relationship with Saudi Arabia

One of the primary motivating factors for Osama bin Laden is the presence of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. In belated recognition of the link between the U.S. military presence and terrorism (but on the rationale that the threat posed by Iraq to Saudi Arabia is gone),[75] most of those forces are now slated to be withdrawn. But the United States must do more than simply remove forces from Saudi Arabia. According to Secretary Rumsfeld, "We do intend to maintain a continuing and healthy relationship with the Saudis."[76] It is the close U.S.-Saudi relationship, however, that must be reassessed in light of Islamic extremists and possible future terrorist attacks.

The United States runs the risk of reliving its experience in Lebanon in the 1980s or, worse yet, an American version of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan.

There is only one reason that Saudi Arabia is treated as a close U.S. ally: oil. The popular myth is that the United States is dependent on Saudi oil, hence the need for a close relationship. To be sure, Saudi Arabia sits atop the world's largest known oil reserves (264 billion barrels, or more than one-fourth of the world's total) and is the world's leading oil producer and exporter and one of the lowest-cost producers of oil.[77] And the United States depends on imported oil for more than half of the oil it uses. But even though Saudi Arabia is the second largest source of crude oil and petroleum products imported into the United States (1.55 million barrels per day), Saudi oil makes up less than 15 percent of the total (11.53 million barrels per day). The other three major suppliers of U.S.-imported oil are from the Americas: Canada (1.97 million barrels per day), Mexico (1.54 million barrels per day), and Venezuela (1.39 million barrels per day). In fact, nearly half of the oil imported into the United States comes from North and South America. And further underscoring the misconception of U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil is the fact that less than 20 percent of the oil imported into the United States comes from the Persian Gulf.[78]

Even more important than the percentage of oil imported by the United States is the fact that oil is a fungible world commodity, which means that Saudi Arabia is not in a position to wield oil as a weapon against the United States. With no other source of revenue, the Saudis must sell their oil. Once the oil is sold on the world market, the Saudis cannot control where it ends up. As Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Morris Adelman points out: "The world oil market, like the world ocean, is one great pool. The price is the same at every border. Who exports the oil Americans consume is irrelevant."[79]

To be sure, the Saudis might be able to affect the short-term price of oil by cutting back production. The likely market reaction would be that other countries would increase production. But the myth of oil as a weapon is based on the false assumption of a "fair and reasonable price" for oil. The reality is that the price of oil is determined by supply and demand, not by some perception of what it should cost. Thus, according to Adelman: "Those who want the United States to produce its way out of the 'problem,' and those who want Americans to conserve their way out, are both the victims of an illusion. There is no shortage or gap, only a high price."[80] And even a higher price of oil is not an absolute certainty as other nations might increase their outputs in an effort to increase their revenues.

The possibility of completely cutting off oil supplies is even more far-fetched according to Adelman:

> If the Arabs ever attempted to cut off the United States for political reasons, the non-Arab members of OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] would simply divert shipments from non-American customers to American. Not for love and not for fun (though they would enjoy spiting the Arabs) but for money. Whereupon the Arabs would ship more to Europe

> and Asia and the net result would be simply a big confusing costly annoying switch of customers and no harm otherwise. If this is common sense, it is also the lesson of experience. In 1967 a boycott of the United States and also of Great Britain and Germany, whose dependence on imported oil was greater than the United States' will ever be, failed miserably.[81]

Thus, the realities of the economics of oil do not justify the U.S. obsession with Saudi oil and the need for a special relationship with the regime in Riyadh to secure access to the oil.

There are other good reasons for the United States to distance itself from Saudi Arabia. Although spreading democracy is not a good basis for a national security strategy, liberal democracies are certainly good. Conversely, U.S. support of authoritarian regimes purportedly friendly to American interests—especially while Washington extols the virtues of democracy—is not only hypocritical but can undermine U.S. national security. Saudi Arabia is a case in point. According to Cato senior fellow Doug Bandow, a former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan:

> Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, an almost medieval theocracy, with power concentrated in the hands of senior royalty and wealth concentrated among some 7,000 al-Saud princes (or more, by some estimates). Political opposition and even criticism are forbidden. In practice there are few procedural protections for anyone arrested or charged by the government; the semiautonomous religious police, or *Mutawaa'in*, also intimidate and detain citizens and foreigners alike. The government may invade homes and violate privacy whenever it chooses; travel is limited. Women are covered, cloistered, and confined, much as they were in Afghanistan under the Taliban.[82]

Highlighting the hypocrisy of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, the *National Security Strategy* clearly states:

> The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. Fathers and mothers in all societies want their children to be educated and to live free from poverty and violence. No people on earth yearn to be oppressed, aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police.
>
> America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property.[83]

Thus, as Bandow observes: "The American commitment to the Saudi royal family is a moral blemish and a practical danger. It has already drawn the United States into one conventional war and has helped make Americans targets of terrorism, which generated far more casualties in one day than did the Gulf War, Kosovo conflict, and Afghanistan campaign (so far) combined."[84]

Another compelling reason to create more distance in the U.S.-Saudi relationship is provided by the *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities before and after the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001* (also known as the 9/11 report), which hints at possible Saudi involvement in 9/11. One of the people named in the unclassified section of the report, titled "Persons Known to the FBI with Whom September 11 Hijackers May Have Associated in the United States," is Omar al-Bayoumi, a Saudi national. The 9/11 report states that al-Bayoumi had a "somewhat suspicious meeting with the hijackers [al-Hazmi and al-Midhar]" and that he "gave them considerable assistance,"[85] including allowing the hijackers to stay at his apartment, help-

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ing them find an apartment, cosigning their lease, and paying their first month's rent and security deposit. The report also states that "since September 11, the FBI has learned that al-Bayoumi has connections to terrorist elements. He has been tied to an imam abroad who has connections to al-Qaeda."[86] The possible Saudi connection is that "al-Bayoumi's salary from his employer, the Saudi Civil Aviation authority, was approved by Hamid al-Rashid. Hamid is the father of Saud al-Rashid, whose photo was found in a raid of an al-Qa'ida safehouse in Karachi and who has admitted to being in Afghanistan between May 2000 and May 2001."[87] A direct connection to the Saudi government is also raised in the 9/11 report:

> Despite the fact that he was a student, al-Bayoumi had access to seemingly unlimited funding from Saudi Arabia. For example, an FBI source identified al-Bayoumi as the person who delivered $400,000 from Saudi Arabia for the Kurdish mosque in San Diego. One of the FBI's best sources in San Diego informed the FBI that he thought that al-Bayoumi must be an intelligence officer for Saudi Arabia or another foreign power.[88]

The *New York Times* reported that "the classified part of a Congressional report on the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, says that two Saudi citizens who had at least indirect links with two hijackers were probably Saudi intelligence agents and may have reported to Saudi government officials." According to the *Times*, "[T]wo Saudi citizens, Omar al-Bayoumi and Osama Bassnan, operated in a complex web of financial relationships with officials of the Saudi government. The sections that focus on them draw connections between the two men, two hijackers, and Saudi officials."[89]

The president claims that declassifying the 9/11 report "would help the enemy" and "would reveal sources and methods that will make it harder for us to win the war on terror."[90] But two former chairmen of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Bob Graham (D-FL) and Richard Shelby (R-AL), believe more of the report should be made public. Graham claims that declassifying the report "will permit the Saudi government to deal with any questions which may be raised in the currently censored pages, and allow the American people to make their own judgment about who are our true friends and allies in the war on terrorism."[91] In Shelby's judgment, "[T]hey could have declassified a lot more of this report and let the American people see it."[92] Continuing to keep the section about possible Saudi involvement in 9/11 secret only makes it seem that there is indeed something to hide and that the administration is protecting the Saudi monarchy. Although the public will probably never know the truth, Senator Shelby perhaps said it best: "You're getting more than bits and pieces, and the American people will put most of it together."[93]

What American policymakers need to put together is that U.S. security interests are not at stake in Saudi Arabia. At best, the relationship is an alliance of convenience, but even then it's for the wrong reason: oil. At worst, it's American hypocrisy: supporting an oppressive, theocratic monarchy in Riyahd does not comport with American values. And given that the Saudi monarchy is a target of al Qaeda's objective of creating a new Islamic caliphate, the cozy U.S.-Saudi relationship is more of a liability than an asset.

Develop a Hands-Off Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Each administration since Lyndon Johnson's has tried to be the architect of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each has failed. The Bush administration's roadmap for Middle East peace[94] is the latest U.S. attempt. Certainly, the desire for peace is understandable, as is the desire to support Israel, a liberal democracy friendly to the United States.

But it is impossible for the United States to be an honest broker in the mediation process, given the amount of financial aid the United States provides to Israel. According to a

Congressional Research Service Issue Brief for Congress:

> Since 1976, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of U.S. aid and is the largest recipient of cumulative U.S. assistance since World War II. From 1949 through 1965, U.S. aid to Israel averaged about $63 million per year, over 95% of which was economic development assistance and food aid. A modest military loan program began in 1959. From 1966 through 1970, average aid per year increased to about $102 million, but military loans increased to about 47% of the total. From 1971 to the present, U.S. aid to Israel has averaged over $2 billion per year, two-thirds of which has been military assistance.[95]

For fiscal year 2003, the United States provided $2.1 billion in military grants, $600 million in economic grants, and $60 million in refugee assistance to Israel. And as part of the Iraq war budget supplement, another $1 billion in military grants and $9 billion in loan guarantees to Israel were approved.[96]

By comparison, in the same fiscal year the United States provided only $200 million in indirect assistance, channeled either through the United Nations or nongovernmental organizations, to the Palestinians. In a historic move, the United States for the first time also gave $20 million directly to the Palestinian Authority for social service projects.[97] Nonetheless, U.S. aid to the Palestinians pales in comparison to support for Israel. This is not an argument for increasing aid to the Palestinians to the level of that given to Israel. Rather, U.S. security would be better served if America was truly neutral and did not fund either party.

The net result of U.S. aid to Israel is that many Palestinians believe that the United States is underwriting the military equipment the Israelis use to attack the Palestinians,[98] as well as financing the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories (a stipulation of U.S. aid to Israel is that the money cannot be used in the occupied territories. but since money is fungible and there is no accounting for how U.S. aid funds are used, there is no way to really know). In other words, from the Palestinian perspective U.S. support to Israel comes at the Palestinians' expense. The common Palestinian perception is that the United States will always favor Israel in any peace negotiations.

The issue is not whether the United States should be pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. Rather, U.S. policymakers need to understand that unbalanced U.S. involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict creates strong anti-American sentiment in the Arab and Muslim world. The risks are twofold. First, bin Laden skillfully uses U.S. support for Israel and the suffering of the Palestinians to drum up support for al Qaeda. For example, on October 7, 2001, as the United States began military operations against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, al-Jazeera television aired a videotape from bin Laden in which he used the plight of the Palestinians to stir up support in the Arab world:

> Israeli tanks and tracked vehicles also enter to wreak havoc in Palestine, in Jenin, Ramallah, Rafah, Beit Jala, and other Islamic areas and we hear no voices raised or moves made. . . .
>
> I swear by Almighty God who raised the heavens without pillars that neither the United States nor he who lives in the United States will enjoy security before we can see it as a reality in Palestine.[99]

Second, the United States runs the risk of making Israel's war against the terrorists who attack that country part of America's war against al Qaeda. As terrible and unjustifiable as the attacks by anti-Israeli terrorists are, groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad do not currently attack the United States or U.S. targets in the Middle East. But if such groups feel they are being lumped in with al Qaeda as part of the war on terrorism, they might not have any reason to refrain from

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attacking the United States. Or if the roadmap for Middle East peace fails,[100] the Palestinian terrorists could use U.S. bias toward Israel in the peace process as an excuse for the failure and a reason to make America a target.

It is certainly understandable that the United States would want to support Israel. But the reality is that Israeli security is not a U.S. national security problem. And making Israel a component of U.S. national security strategy provides motivation for recruiting terrorists and increases the risk of terrorist attack against the United States. Until both the Israelis and the Palestinians are serious about negotiating a peace settlement, U.S. security interests would be better served by not becoming involved in a process that has little chance of succeeding. If and when both parties are seriously willing to reach a peace, the U.S. role should be strictly limited and neutral. A much more modest and detached U.S. involvement would reduce the likelihood that radical Islamists would be motivated to attack the United States, which should be the primary concern of U.S. national security policy.

Stop Supporting Authoritarian Regimes in the Muslim World

During the Cold War, the United States backed all manner of unsavory regimes simply because they claimed to be "anti-communist," which was often mistaken for being "pro-American." Such a strategy may sometimes have been necessary during the Cold War to contain the spread of Soviet influence, but continuing to support corrupt and undemocratic regimes in the Muslim world is counterproductive to U.S. national security. Saudi Arabia is just one example of a supposedly friendly Arab or Muslim regime, support for which is actually detrimental to U.S. national security. There are others.

Egypt. Since 1975, Egypt has received $25.6 billion in assistance from the United States.[101] Although Egypt is ostensibly a constitutional democracy, according to the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*:

> The National Democratic Party (NDP), which has governed since its establishment in 1978, has used its entrenched position to dominate national politics and has maintained an overriding majority in the popularly elected People's Assembly and the partially elected Shura (Consultative) Council. In 1999 President Hosni Mubarak was reelected unopposed to a fourth 6-year term in a national referendum. The President appoints the Cabinet and the country's 26 governors and may dismiss them at his discretion. The judiciary is generally independent; however, this independence has been compromised by the State of Emergency legislation in force, under which the range of cases subject to its jurisdiction has been compromised due to the improper use of State Emergency Security Courts and military courts for inappropriate cases.[102]

Thus, Egypt is a democracy largely in name only. Indeed, the State Department asserts that Egyptian "citizens did not have a meaningful ability to change their government."[103]

U.S. support for an autocratic Egyptian regime masquerading as a democracy is the same hypocrisy, and carries the same great risks, as U.S. support for the monarchy in Saudi Arabia. From the Arab and Muslim perspective, the United States is "supporting a regime that crushes dissenting voices and limits individual liberties because to do so suits Washington's interests."[104] According to Mohammed Zarei, founder of the Human Rights Center for the Assistance of Prisoners: "[I]f there was democracy in Egypt, and people would be free to choose, probably [Mubarak's NDP party] would not be in power. The Islamists would control parliament and government, and that is against what America wants."[105]

As is the case with Saudi Arabia, America's support for Egypt cannot even be reconciled with the Bush administration's own vision of championing "aspirations for human dignity" and "building the infrastructure of

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democracy."[106] According to Ruth M. Beitler and Cindy R. Jebb, both at the U.S. Military Academy: "It is clear that stability supercedes our commitment to democracy in Egypt. The United States' pursuit of stability in the absence of democracy ignores the long-term implications of its actions."[107] For example, although President Bush has demanded an immediate reform of the Palestinian regime, he has encouraged a more gradual approach to reform in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan—countries deemed friendly to the United States. According to *Washington Post* editorial page editor Jackson Diehl, "The irony will not be lost on the people in the region, of course—Egyptians and Jordanians will once again conclude that the United States cares about democratic values only when it is strategically convenient."[108] In other words, Egyptians, Arabs, and Muslims can clearly see the hypocrisy in American policy, which is volatile fuel for radical Islamists and foments anti-American attitudes that are the basis for terrorist motivation.

The problems associated with U.S. support for the Mubarak regime are further exacerbated by the unsubtle connection between U.S.-Egyptian policy and U.S.-Israeli policy. According to Beitler and Jebb: "A crucial United States concern is the question of what happens to Egypt if Islamists gain power. Since the Islamists do not hide their disdain for the Jewish State, many in the U.S. government assert that if the Islamic groups achieve power, they would almost certainly terminate the peace with Israel."[109] But Israeli security should not be equated with U.S. national security and certainly should not be the basis for continued U.S. support of an undemocratic regime in Egypt.

Pakistan. Like Egypt, Pakistan claims to be a democracy despite the fact that Gen. Pervez Musharraf came to power by overthrowing a democratically elected government and has used very undemocratic methods to control Pakistan. To be sure, Pakistan has ostensibly returned to civilian rule with the election of a national assembly and senate in October 2002 and February 2003, respectively.[110] And the government is represented by a prime minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali. But Pakistan only has the veneer of a democratic government. Musharraf continues to wield extraordinary power as president, chief of army staff, and defense minister. Indeed, the Legal Framework Order implemented via executive decree by Musharraf after the referendum naming him president in October 2002 gives him a five-year term as president without a popular election and the power to dissolve the parliament and ensures a role for the military in Pakistani politics by creating a national security council with authority to "monitor the process of democracy and governance in the country."[111]

Thus, by supporting the Musharraf regime, the United States subjects itself to the same potential risks inherent in supporting Saudi Arabia and Egypt. If America is seen as supporting an illegitimate, oppressive, or corrupt regime, then the United States becomes a potential target for militant Islamists who would otherwise direct their rage only at the regime. And there is no shortage of such groups in Pakistan, including Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Tehrik-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP), and Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i Mohammadi (TNSM). HUM, LT, and JEM are designated by the State Department as foreign terrorist organizations. According to the State Department, the current leader of HUM, Farooz Kashmiri Khalil, "has been linked to bin Laden and signed his fatwa in February 1998 calling for attacks on U.S. and Western interests."[112]

Even though Pakistan has pledged its support as a U.S. ally in the war on terrorism,[113] the United States should not be too quick to rely on Pakistan. True, Pakistan has been responsible for the capture of some of al Qaeda's senior members, including Abu Zubaydah, believed to be a member of bin Laden's inner circle,[114] and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, believed to have masterminded the 9/11 suicide hijackings.[115] Yet, although al Qaeda is known to have fled Afghanistan

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into Pakistan[116] and bin Laden is believed to be in Pakistan,[117] the Pakistani government has only belatedly taken more aggressive action to hunt down al Qaeda in the western border region that abuts Afghanistan.[118] And while claiming to support U.S. military operations against al Qaeda, Pakistan nonetheless officially does not allow U.S. troops to pursue Taliban and al Qaeda fleeing Afghanistan into Pakistan.[119]

Therefore, the United States cannot turn a blind eye (as it seemingly does in Saudi Arabia) to the fact that Pakistan may be enabling and facilitating al Qaeda terrorists. Indeed, although it is important to consider the source, India has accused the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence Agency of aiding al Qaeda.[120] Whether or not those allegations are true, they raise the larger issue of the wisdom of the United States pursuing a policy goal in Pakistan similar to the one pursued in Egypt: stability. According to foreign affairs analyst Subodh Atal:

> U.S. policy toward Pakistan has failed to consider the cumulative dangers that nation presents. America continues to pump billions of dollars of aid into Pakistan, without accounting for its fate. Few questions about possible ISI links to September 11 attacks, the organization's role in sheltering al Qaeda, or Pakistan's nuclear proliferation activities have been asked, let alone answered.
>
> U.S. policy appears to be frozen, concerned only with the preservation of Pakistani dictator Musharraf and overlooking the larger goal of fortifying U.S. national security.[121]

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As is the case with Saudi Arabia and Egypt, U.S. national security would be better served by a more arm's-length relationship with Pakistan.

Uzbekistan. The Karimov government in Uzbekistan is analogous to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Whereas the Taliban regime was a repressive extremist Islamic government that did not tolerate any views other than its own, the Karimov regime is a repressive secular government with a similar lack of tolerance for dissent and religious freedom. According to the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*:

- "Uzbekistan is an authoritarian state with limited rights.
- "The Government's human rights record remained very poor. . . . Citizens could not exercise the right to change their government peacefully. The Government permitted the existence of opposition political parties but harassed their members and refused either to register the parties or to allow them to participate in elections. . . . Police and NSS [National Security Service] arbitrarily arrested persons, particularly Muslims suspected of extremist sympathies.
- "The Government severely restricted freedom of speech and the press. . . . The Government restricted freedom of religion and harassed and arrested hundreds of Muslims it suspected of extremism."[122]

Yet despite those acknowledgements, the ties between the United States and Uzbekistan have grown closer and include five bilateral agreements.[123]

The basis for the closer relationship between the United States and Uzbekistan is cooperation in the war on terrorism. But the United States needs to understand the potential for severe unintended consequences and paying too high a price for marginal gains. Continued U.S. support[124] of the repressive Karimov regime could ignite an unforeseen firestorm. Uzbekistan's population is 90 percent Muslim. Moderate Muslims in Uzbekistan, who are repressed by a government supported by the United States, could become radicalized and drawn toward groups such as the extremist IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda) and thus become anti-American terrorists. If anything, the United States should be trying to create an

arm's-length relationship with Uzbekistan, not becoming more entangled in longer-term commitments.

Anti-American Blowback. Egypt, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan are just three examples, but they highlight the problems associated with U.S. support for countries without regard to whether they share common core values (beyond, for example, claiming to be anti-Islamist or anti-terrorist). Such support may be a necessary evil in the short term, but it should be narrowly focused, given only out of necessity, and of limited duration. The United States must avoid lapsing into a Cold War mindset: even though America funneled millions of dollars to authoritarian regimes around the world because they were considered "anti-communist," America should be wary about providing ongoing support to Muslim countries simply because they profess to be "anti-Islamist" or "anti-terrorist." If history is any guide, such support does not guarantee a more democratic government or a reformed economy. Even worse, when the United States supported undemocratic and unpopular regimes during the Cold War simply because they were friendly to us, and when those regimes were overthrown, the results were often virulently anti-American successor governments (e.g., Iran and Nicaragua). Ultimately, and paradoxically, U.S. support for countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan could end up doing more to breed terrorism than to prevent it.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of any U.S. national security strategy should be to protect the American homeland against future terrorist attacks; thus, homeland security is national security. Doing less in terms of American foreign policy may be the best way to reduce the risk of terrorism, but doing nothing to defend the homeland would be unacceptable in the post-9/11 world. Therefore, the rest of U.S. national security strategy should focus on reasonable and prudent means to provide protection for the homeland itself. In taking on that task, it is important to recognize the hard truth: providing absolute and perfect defense against any and all potential terrorist attacks is impossible. The nature of terrorism is to morph and adapt, to flow around obstacles, and to find the path of least resistance. A determined terrorist enemy will eventually find a way to exploit gaps in defenses and security—precisely what al Qaeda did on 9/11.

Instead of trying to do everything or getting better at doing the impossible, a more realistic approach to homeland security is to focus on a handful of key areas that will make another terrorist attack less easy and raise the opportunity costs for terrorists:

- **Prevent terrorists from entering the country.** It is important to remember that all 19 of the 9/11 hijackers did not sneak into the country the way hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants do every year—across the U.S.-Mexican border. They entered the United States via known points of legal entry, as millions of visitors to the United States do every year. That does not necessarily mean adding more border guards. Rather, it means making sure systems and procedures are put in place so that known or suspected terrorists can be stopped at the border by the appropriate authorities. The most crucial aspect is ensuring that information from the appropriate agencies (e.g., CIA, FBI) about known or suspected terrorists is made directly available in real time to the people responsible for checking passports, visas, and other immigration information.
- **Prevent entry into the United States of WMD or illegal shipment of materials to construct WMD.** The prospect of terrorists using weapons of mass destruction is something that must be taken seriously. Therefore, it is reasonable and prudent to implement cost-effective approaches to increase the opportunity costs of smuggling WMD into the coun-

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If the United States does not change its policies to stem the growing tide of anti-American sentiment overseas, all the time, effort, and money spent on other aspects of homeland security will be wasted.

try. The Container Security Initiative,[125] which seeks to screen predefined at-risk cargo containers at ports of embarkation and transit rather than waiting until they arrive in the United States, is one such program. While the United States must rightly be concerned about WMD, it is also important that homeland security not be dominated completely by WMD. That is, while these weapons would certainly be desirable to terrorists, they are not likely to focus all their efforts on obtaining and using WMD to the exclusion of other more easily obtainable and proven low-tech means of attack. So more "conventional" weapons (e.g., simple explosives) must not be ignored when screening shipments destined for the United States.[126]

- **Protect critical facilities.** There are thousands of potential targets for terrorist attacks in the United States. Even with an unlimited budget, it would be impossible to protect all of them. But the government would be remiss to ignore protecting a subset of critical targets—such as nuclear facilities and chemical facilities—the destruction of which could potentially have catastrophic consequences. The key to providing such protection is understanding the nature of the catastrophic event that we are trying to prevent (e.g., a nuclear burn, like the one at Chernobyl, that contaminates a large population area), how that event could be precipitated by terrorists, and what barriers can be erected to reduce the threat or minimize the damage.

The purpose here is not to provide a detailed critique or prescription for homeland security but simply to emphasize that much of U.S. national security is wrapped up in homeland security—not in a global strategy to export democracy via military power as has been advanced by the Bush administration's national security strategy.

Regardless of what actual steps are taken to protect against future terrorist attacks, one must be willing to accept that they can be effective only at the margins. This only accentuates the shortcomings of the Bush administration's U.S. national security strategy and the imperative to change U.S. foreign policy. If the United States does not change its policies to stem the growing tide of anti-American sentiment overseas—particularly within the Islamic world—all the time, effort, and money spent on other aspects of homeland security will be wasted because the pool of terrorist recruits will grow and the United States will continue to be a target.

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