that Gorbachev made in England on his way to the United States to sign the INF Treaty in December 1987. The stop, made on Gorbachev’s initiative, had both a practical and symbolic purpose. He had no aspiration to detach Thatcher from Reagan. Gorbachev knew that was impossible, and it would not have suited his purpose anyway. It was her closeness to Reagan that made her so helpful as an interlocutor. But Gorbachev would have looked to her for any hint as to how he should conduct himself in Washington.

The occasion was also something of a celebration, as Gorbachev made clear in his public remarks before flying on to sign the treaty in Washington. “The agreement on the elimination of two kinds of nuclear weapons was not an easy one. But we have covered this road together, for the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and your allies and partners.” It was virtually an open acknowledgement of a triangular relationship.

But am I, as a British commentator, attributing too much significance to Thatcher’s role in ending the Cold War? That was a question I put to Alexander Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev’s closest advisors, in a conversation some years ago. “No”, he told me, “you are not exaggerating. She was the link weapon”, a happy description of the Iron Lady. Then he went on, “Reagan, Gorbachev, Thatcher, they all made mistakes, big mistakes. But together they changed the world.” A fitting epitaph and a fair verdict.

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How to Fight Terror

Daniel Byman


AFTER OVERTHROWING the Taliban and embarking on an impressive worldwide police and intelligence campaign against Al-Qaeda, there are no more obvious steps to take in the War on Terror. Unfortunately, though Al-Qaeda itself may be on the defensive, many observers believe the ideology it champions has become stronger since September 11. We continue to pour money into intelligence, homeland defense and the military, but this spending is primarily to defeat today’s terrorist cells. More spies and better defenses do little to defeat a hostile ideology.

The United States needs to go beyond these traditional tools and develop a long-term strategy for defeating the ideological movement we face. Admittedly, we talk the talk. We can all agree with the 2003 White House National Strategy for Combating Terrorism...
that the United States must “win the ‘war of ideas’”, “support democratic values” and “promote economic freedom”, and we can all endorse the 9/11 Commission’s call for improving America’s global appeal by correcting ignorant or distorted portrayals of the United States. But what do these proposals mean in practice? Is it truly possible to win the “hearts and minds” (or, more realistically, the minds) of citizens of countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, where those holding favorable opinions of the United States are as out of the mainstream as Nader voters in America? Even more difficult, how should the Bush Administration and its successors balance these efforts with other U.S. priorities? Is the jihadist threat uniquely existential, requiring the United States to bend its policy toward Iraq and Israel to meet this larger concern, or is it simply one danger among many?

Unfortunately, many books related to the War on Terror offer answers that are a soporific combination of soft analysis and weak policy recommendations. George Friedman’s work typifies the rather pedestrian studies that have emerged in recent years. In contrast to the 9/11 Commission’s definitive account of Al-Qaeda’s emergence, the U.S. response, and the various intelligence failures, America’s Secret War offers an anecdotal and often shallow review of several key events before and after September 11. For example, Friedman contends that the fundamental pre-September 11 weakness of U.S. intelligence was a lack of language skills and analysts. Although a real deficiency, the reader is left to imagine how more Arabic-speaking analysts would have uncovered the plot beyond Friedman’s generic words about using logic and intuition. Similarly, he notes that “a civil war broke out in Saudi Arabia”, engendered by the U.S. invasion of Iraq—an interesting contention, but one that dramatically overstates the scale of violence in the kingdom. Friedman also makes many statements that are simply wrong. For example, he contends that the Saudis only really discovered the Palestinian issue in 2002 and that Crown Prince Abdullah’s peace plan was risk free for him, both of which reflect a remarkable ignorance of the kingdom and its politics. (The comparison with F. Gregory Gause III’s informed and subtle chapter on Saudi Arabia in A Practical Guide to Winning the War on Terrorism is worthwhile.) Making mistakes about Saudi Arabia is forgivable, as the ruling family is both secretive and enigmatic. Friedman, however, also embraces some bizarre theories about U.S. policy. Among other things, he contends that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was designed primarily to put pressure on Saudi Arabia—a revelation that both Washington and Riyadh would find surprising. Aside from such mistakes and simplifications, Friedman’s work is frustrating because he provides neither references nor context for his controversial points, making them much less convincing than the 9/11 Commission’s exhaustive study of a similar period.

Most painfully, Friedman dodges the hardest questions. He does not ask, for example, why there have been no follow-on terrorist attacks on the United States so far, or what measures the Bush Administration should take with regard to Iraq, despite focusing considerable attention on the day-to-day events related to the Iraq War and its aftermath. He offers no approach for soothing or overwhelming the rage felt in the Muslim world. Ironically, Friedman—the founder of Stratfor, which bills itself as “the world’s leading private intelligence firm”—offers few predictions on the future of the great events he claims to chronicle.

Yet those looking for answers have some hope. Amid the flotsam and jetsam, sound works have floated to the surface, several of which take on unusual aspects of the struggle against Al-Qaeda and help advance our thinking. Two extremely dif-
ferent works that have appeared recently move us toward specifics with regard to the broader battle of ideas and the struggle for the Muslim world. The first, a volume edited by Adam Garfinkle, offers many insights into the public diplomacy challenges, as well as reviewing sources of terrorism, assessing key countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and describing emerging challenges for European and American Muslim communities. The second, a joint effort by Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev entitled (a bit laboriously) *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet: The Rise and Fall of Radical Political Islam*, addresses how various Islamist movements have fared worldwide. The authors look not only at well-known Islamist hotbeds such as Egypt and Algeria, but also at the fate of Islamism in the Balkans and the former Soviet Union.

Neither work is perfect. Garfinkle’s volume in particular suffers from a common weakness of edited volumes. Few of the chapters speak directly to the issues raised in the others, and there are some obvious gaps in subject matter. (Garfinkle himself notes that the book unfortunately lacks essays on Egypt or Afghanistan.) The chapters are also uneven in quality. Nevertheless, both works offer valuable insights on how to think about the struggle against terrorists, many of which go against what currently passes for wisdom on these subjects.

From these two books, a complex picture emerges. First, efforts to “win hearts and minds”, or more prosaically, sell ourselves better in the Muslim world, face an exceptionally hard slog. Many of the problems are intractable, and in any event, massive changes in how public diplomacy is conducted are necessary if we are to have any success. Second, the long-term challenge (but not the immediate danger) of radical Islam may be overstated. Although terrorists linked to Bin Laden are likely to continue killing in large numbers, their cause is marred by the brutishness of their actions, the limited appeal of the overall ideology, and the Islamists’ abysmal record in power.

**Winning Hearts, Swaying Minds**

**O** ne of the most difficult tasks in the coming years will be decreasing popular support for Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in the Muslim world. Although the United States will not sway the hardest core of the militant ranks, militants might receive less money and fewer people would join their ranks, if America were less hated among the populace at large. Governments in the region would have less incentive to distance themselves from Washington in order to curry favor with public opinion. Over time, local populations might cooperate more willingly with the United States and allied regimes in rooting the militants out.

Popular support for jihadist causes, particularly their anti-U.S. stance, is often wrongly cast as a problem of perception rather than substance. Americans are extremely discomfited by the idea that terrorists and their supporters may hate our policies. Instead, they prefer to believe that much of the problem is a giant misunderstanding: If the United States could only communicate its message more effectively, support for the jihadists would plummet. In particular, the Muslim world should recognize that the United States opposes tyranny, favors equality and in general is on the side of Muslims.

Islamists treat the Iraq War in particular as a direct assault on Muslims—a stance that ironically shows the depth of U.S. problems. Among Islamists, resistance in Iraq is widely viewed as legitimate, a position endorsed even by many pro-regime clerics who have criticized Al-Qaeda in the past. U.S. actions in Iraq are almost universally seen in the Arab world as a brutal attempt to gain lasting dominance of the country’s oil reserves (often at the behest of Israel). The reality—that
the United States has pushed hard, however imperfectly, for democracy, and that the Bush Administration would gladly quit Iraq if it became a stable, democratic government—is widely ridiculed.

The answer, apparently, is better public relations. With perhaps the exception of the constant calls for more human intelligence, calls to reinvigorate "public diplomacy" are probably the most common recommendation for improving counter-terrorism. Both liberals and conservatives can champion the idea, as it promises to offer significant rewards with few sacrifices. Unfortunately, our enthusiasm for public diplomacy is not matched by our capacity. A task force led by Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian found that U.S. public diplomacy "has become outmoded, lacking both strategic direction and resources."

*A Practical Guide to Winning the War on Terrorism* offers a range of useful thoughts on public diplomacy that, if heeded, can help provide such direction. The various authors who address how to change public diplomacy, fortunately, do not agree. As a result, we receive a rich variety of descriptions as to the proper tasks of public diplomacy, the appropriate means of pursuing it, and its probable limits. Taken together, the essays portray the complexity of the problems and the daunting barriers that need to be overcome.

The public diplomacy problem is not new. As Martin Kramer argues in his chapter, "Every non-Muslim authority that has projected power into the Middle East has faced the problem of winning Muslim hearts and minds." Kramer recommends a steady campaign of professing respect for Islam backed up with visible displays of that respect, and lining up Muslims "with the best Islamic pedigree" to endorse your cause.

Such a seemingly simple campaign is exceptionally difficult. Most Muslim scholars with the most credible pedigrees are indeed lined up, but against Washington. As Kramer notes, friendly Muslim governments are not likely to help the United States become more popular, so the stable of loyal regime clerics is not available. Most outsider clerics, while enjoying far more credibility, tend to be even more hostile to the United States.

An even bigger problem of public diplomacy is the difficulty of harmonizing messages at home and abroad in order to properly display respect. As William Rugh contends, "Washington officials speaking publicly are thinking about an American audience rather than a foreign one." Unfortunately, as Daoud Kuttab and Ellen Laipson contend, the global media market and the consistency of leaks make it impossible to speak out of both sides of our mouths. The result is that statements meant for domestic audiences are played up everywhere overseas: Vice President Cheney, for example, condoned Israel's assassination of Palestinian officials in a television interview—a justified position, but one that plays poorly in the Muslim world. Twenty years ago, few Muslims in pro-U.S. countries would have seen Cheney make such a statement, for their state-run media would not have shown it. With satellite television, they can watch the vice president in real time. The statements of U.S. evangelical leaders such as Franklin Graham, who offered the invocation at Bush's first inauguration and later decried Islam as a "wicked" religion, received considerable attention as well. This makes it difficult for U.S. officials stationed abroad to simultaneously push the idea that the United States respects Islam.

The problem plays both ways. Some authors call for the United States to befriend moderate Muslim clerics, a seemingly obvious suggestion. Many clerics who have "street cred" with jihadist sympathizers openly endorse anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and the unequal status of women. Any U.S. leader who befriends such figures would be fair game for domestic criticism.
But the U.S. problem is deeper than public diplomacy. It is inextricably linked to U.S. policy as well. Most jihadists oppose what most Americans see as legitimate policies. The United States is a staunch supporter of Israel (Howard Dean was criticized by fellow Democrats for calling for the United States to be more evenhanded) and backs autocratic governments in the Middle East and elsewhere. All these stances are in the U.S. national interest; but pity the poor flak who tries to sell them in the Muslim world.

As a result of these problems, public diplomacy as traditionally conceived may be doomed. Laipson declares it an anachronism that “is probably doing more harm than good.” At the margins, however, there remains room. As Garfinkle notes, the United States neither installed Arab autocrats nor is responsible for their continued rule. Similarly, the United States seeks a Palestinian state, albeit under conditions that are improbable. Simply engaging in the debate and trying to correct the most egregious misperceptions would increase goodwill, though not to a level that would make the United States widely admired.

**But Are We Winning After All?**

THE PUBLIC diplomacy picture painted above is gloomy and seems in keeping with the general pessimism people have with regard to the struggle against terrorism. It is common wisdom that Bin Laden and his followers are on the crest of a massive wave that is sweeping through the Middle East, smashing against the shores of Europe, and even reaching the United States.

Yet a distinction must be made between the violence of radical Islam and its intrinsic appeal and coherence. Writing in 1960, Daniel Bell published *The End of Ideology* and declared that Western liberal democracy had triumphed over communism. To be sure, this was a contention that seemed bizarre during the subsequent Cuban missile standoff, the Vietnam debacle and other crises. When the Berlin Wall came crashing down, however, Bell was vindicated. Communism had indeed lost its energy and, in hindsight, it seems clear that this process had begun decades before.

Two leading scholars of political Islam, Olivier Roy (*The Failure of Political Islam*, 1994) and Gilles Kepel (*Jihad: The Train of Political Islam*, 2000) made similar arguments in the last decade. They contend that political Islam has lost its intellectual fervor and has demonstrated itself to be a failure wherever it has held power. September 11 made such an argument seem naïve, but the closer look that Takeyh and Gvosdev provide suggests otherwise.

Perhaps the best way to understand this point of view is by looking at the world through the eyes of jihadists sympathetic to Al-Qaeda. Takeyh and Gvosdev track the rise and fall of Islamist movements in Iran, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Afghanistan, and former Yugoslavia, and conclude that, while Islamists in these countries had a substantial following and at times even gained power, in general they have done quite poorly as political movements. As the authors note, “it is increasingly clear that radical political Islam cannot seize control of modern or modernizing states within the Islamic heartland and construct an effective alternative model of governance.”

Algeria represents one of the most dramatic Islamist failures. In 1992, Algerian military leaders seized power to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front from gaining power through legitimate elections. Mass demonstrations at home and condemnation abroad followed, suggesting that the military regime was tottering. However, militants in the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), many of whom had spent time in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet Union, condemned the Front for...
both its naive hopes with regard to taking power and because it saw democracy as illegitimate. The GIA quickly turned to violence, targeting regime members, intellectuals and other perceived enemies. Fighters linked to the GIA were involved in truly unspeakable atrocities including, among others, the murders of children and pregnant women, actions that made even many hardcore jihadist ideologues blanch. Over 100,000 Algerian deaths later, the Islamist cause became widely discredited. The corrupt and noxious regime in Algiers has gained legitimacy by default because most Algerians, including many moderate Islamists, came to see the GIA and affiliated groups as hopeless barbarians.

Ironically, the Islamists in power may be America's best hope for discrediting the movement. As Graham Fuller observed in *The Future of Political Islam* (2003), “nothing can make Islamism seem unappealing faster than an unsuccessful stint in power.” The Islamist regime in Sudan, which was sidelined by military leaders, and the Taliban’s Afghanistan both are instances in which Islamists grabbed power in the name of Islam, only to find themselves and their cause discredited by their actions once in power.

Iran represents a case in which a once triumphant Islamist regime's ideology is now in retreat. Ayatollah Khomeini swept to power in 1979 on a wave of popular fervor. Although he was no democrat, his regime had widespread popular support because of his charisma, his ability to tap into nationalism and his religious credentials. Khomeini’s death in 1989 and the subsequent elevation of the intellectually third-rate Ayatollah Khamenei as his replacement marked the triumph of politics over legitimacy for the clerical regime. When combined with economic mismanagement and the dark legacy of fruitless Iranian sacrifices in the eight-year war with Iraq, the regime’s ideology steadily became tarnished. In 1997, Mohamed Khatami won popular elections in part by calling for more pluralism, more privacy and more respect for the rule of law, all of which challenged the existing order. In 2004, conservatives appeared ascendant again, but this was a political, not an ideological, victory. Increasingly, the legacy of the revolution is hollow, with serious Iranian religious scholars recognizing that clerical rule has hurt the state and, more importantly from their point of view, has hurt Islam even more. Even true believers among Iran’s conservatives recognize that they must revamp their ideology. Today, political Islam has a lower repute in Iran than it has had for forty years, while the United States is far more popular than it is in any of the Arab countries whose regimes are allied with Washington.

In many ways, the profound failure of radical Islam as a political movement is what makes it so deadly as a source of terrorism. Radical Islamists have difficulty aspiring to use the political system for peaceful change because many know the limits of their popularity. Indeed, the political process is likely to reveal divisions within the movement and may separate the firebrands from the wide variety of Islamists who do not endorse violence. Embracing violence enables radicals to remain pure and avoid the failure that might come with peaceful political participation.

**THE IMPLICATIONS** of radical Islam’s weak appeal are profound for the question of whether the United States should promote democracy. One oft-heard criticism of pushing for democracy is that it will empower followers of Bin Laden, not followers of Thomas Jefferson. However, if Takeyh and Gvosdev are right, by pushing the rule of law and legitimate elections, the most extreme voices are likely to lose out. Those who take power would not necessarily be Washington’s friends, but the
worst nightmare—a peaceful jihadist takeover of a country via U.S.-supported elections—is highly unlikely. Even if anti-American but peaceful Islamists win, their probable poor performance in power is likely to discredit their cause.

Takeyh and Gvosdev's findings also suggest that U.S. foreign policy may be too focused on Al-Qaeda and the broader problem of Islamic radicals. Because radical Islamism's ideology may be in retreat and its appeal limited, the United States is facing a foe that often defeats itself. The lack of appeal of the jihadists' own program offers perhaps the greatest opportunity for the United States. Although opinion of the United States in the Muslim world is often dismal, this does not mean that those advocating violence are popular.

Through effective public diplomacy, the United States can make these movements even less popular. The key is not for the United States to be loved, but rather for our enemy to be scorned. This would not involve simply selling America as the Muslim world's secret friend, but rather the far easier task of pointing out the brutality and poor record of radical Islamists in and out of power.

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French Without Tears

Martin Walker


LAST OCTOBER, the former head of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus, published a report, originally commissioned by then-Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, on the grim economic prospects of his native France. Despite the country's impressive achievements in aerospace, nuclear power and high-speed trains, Camdessus warned that without almost
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