Cutting the Lifeline of Terror: What’s Next After Iraq

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Organization

Part I: Relations with Other Nations
  - With the Muslim world
  - With Europe

Part II: Here at Home

Part III: From Polarization to Common Ground
Relations with the Muslim World
Extremely low levels of trust

- Believe Arabs carried out 9/11 attacks: 18%
- Believe U.S. respects Islamic values: 12%
- Approve of President Bush: 11%
- "West understands Muslim customs, culture": 7%

Gallup - Muslim Country Poll
Iraq invasion deepened animosity in Arab countries

% holding favorable opinion of U.S.

- Egypt: 13%
- U.A.E.: 9%
- Morocco: 6%
- Jordan: 6%
- Saudi Arabia: 3%

Zogby
Majorities in 7 out of 8 Muslim countries worry about a military threat from the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% very/somewhat worried</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>46%</td>
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Pew Global Attitudes Project
Muslim majorities believe Iraqis will be worse off post-Hussein

Pew Global Attitudes Project
SUMMARY:
Muslim anti-Americanism threatens our nation’s safety

- Mistrust of U.S. not confined to extremists
- Creates a climate that makes recruitment of terrorists fatally easy
- Makes it easy to channel frustration onto the U.S.
- Supports extremist religious clerics in their *jihad* against us
- Use of military force exacerbates Muslim resentment
- Makes the U.S. seem anti-Muslim – in a world with 57 Muslim nations and 1.3 billion Muslims
Attitudes of Traditional Allies Towards U.S. Policy
Post 9/11 perception:
The U.S. is acting solely in its own interest, without regard for its allies

Pew (for the Council on Foreign Relations)
Majorities in most Western European countries consider the U.S. a threat to world peace

- Greece: 88%
- Netherlands: 63%
- Austria: 62%
- Finland: 62%
- Spain: 61%
- Ireland: 59%
- Belgium: 57%
- Britain: 55%
- Sweden: 54%
- France: 52%

Germany and Italy fell slightly below the 50% mark.

EOS Gallup Europe
European anti-Americanism linked to the war in Iraq

% Unfavorable Opinion of the U.S.

- Turkey: 55% (2002), 84% (2003)
- Italy: 23% (2002), 59% (2003)
- Britain: 16% (2002), 50% (2003)
- Poland: 11% (2002), 44% (2003)

Pew Global Attitudes Project
SUMMARY:

The massive loss of goodwill among our European allies has negative consequences:

- Rightly or wrongly, much of the world sees U.S. military initiatives as lacking legitimacy
  - Muslim allies advised against our actions in Iraq
  - Failure to find WMD has greatly weakened our credibility
- Other nations are less willing to share the costs of multi-national initiatives – in people or money
- We can no longer count on our traditional allies to help dispel the poisonous anti-Americanism in the Muslim world
Research Conclusions:

“The war [in Iraq] has widened the rift between Americans and Western Europeans, further inflamed the Muslim world, softened support for the war on terror, and significantly weakened global public support for the pillars of the post-World War II era – the UN and the North Atlantic Alliance.”

Part II - Here at Home
Before Saddam’s capture, a majority approved direction of war on terror

- Approve US military action in Afghanistan: 71%
- Things are going well in War on Terror now: 65%
- Things will be going well in War on Terror a year from now: 70%
- Approve decision to go to war in Iraq: 59%

CNN/USA Today/Gallup: December 7, 2003
Saddam’s capture raised public hopes, because the public linked him directly to 9/11

- **Pre:** 48%
- **Post:** 56%

War with Iraq has made US safer:

- **Pre:** 48%
- **Post:** 56%*

Additional support for link between Saddam and 9/11:

- "Saddam was supporting Al Qaeda": 67%**
- "Saddam was personally involved in 9/11 attacks": 53%*

* Gallup
** PIPA/Knowledge Networks
Saddam’s capture raised public hopes (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;War is going well for U.S.&quot;</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>+ 17 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration has a clear plan</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>+ 11 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country on Wrong Track</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>- 13 points</td>
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*Gallup: December 19, 2003
Saddam’s capture greatly elevated voter expectations

% somewhat/very confident:

- Saddam’s capture will restore peace & security to Iraq*: 81%
- Saddam’s capture will restore peace & stability to the Middle East*: 70%
- Bin Laden will be captured or killed**: 68%
- A democratic gov't will be established in Iraq**: 67%
- Attacks on troops will decrease**: 60%
- WMDs will be found**: 54%

* ABC/Washington Post: December 14, 2003
**Gallup: December 14, 2003
These expectations have now been dashed, damaging public support for the war in Iraq
A majority no longer endorses the decision to go to war with Iraq

Going to war with Iraq was “worth it”:

59% | 55% | 50% | 46%

% agree

Gallup
There is a sharp rise in belief that the war is going badly

Gallup
A majority feels the country is on the wrong track

% who feel the country is “on the wrong track”

- Apr. 2003: 36%
- Jun. 2004: 57%

CBS News/NY Times
The public’s fears have been aroused

“The war in Iraq has made the world less safe from terror”

Are we bogged down in Iraq?

% agree

33%

51%

55%

Apr. 2004

May 2004

Jun. 2004

LA Times: June 2004

Gallup

"The U.S. is making good progress" 35%

"The U.S. is bogged down" 61%
And there is a sharp drop in approval of how the war is being handled.

**Approve Bush handling of situation in Iraq**

- Apr. 2003: 77%
- Jan. 2004: 59%
- Jun. 2004: 42%

**President has a clear plan for Iraq**

- Does: 37%
- Does Not: 55%
SUMMARY: The majority mind-set

- After 9/11 we had to strike back against the terrorists
- Removing Saddam was the right thing to do
- Exaggerating the threat of WMDs was acceptable
- But we have now gotten bogged down in Iraq
- We have no plan that can win the war in Iraq
- We will have trouble imposing democracy on Iraq
- We don’t know much about Islam and Islamic countries

Americans know that anti-Americanism exists, but they do not think anything can be done about it
Part III – From Polarization to Common Ground
The current Iraq-centered strategy has polarized the electorate
Shifting rationales have divided and confused the public

- e.g. Destroy Iraq’s WMDs
- e.g. Prevent Iraq from supporting terrorists
  (Iraq is the “central battleground” in the WOT)
- e.g. Remove a vicious dictator
- e.g. Bring democracy to Iraq
- e.g. Bring democracy to the greater Middle East
The Wolfowitz rationale has added to the confusion

*This rationale for regime change was largely devised before 9/11*

- Clinton deterrence weakened our credibility
- Deposing Saddam is key to stability in the region
- A democratic Iraq can be the linchpin of a new regional security strategy
- Occupying Iraq gives us leverage with:
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Iran
  - Syria
  - Israeli/Palestinian conflict
- The decisive use of force in Iraq (“shock and awe”) will dissuade others from attacking the U.S.

*Even after 9/11, this rationale was not presented to the public but was important behind the scenes*
20/20 hindsight critique

- Shifting rationales created both *mission creep* and *unrealistic public expectations*
- The surprise Iraqi insurgency undermined key parts of the Wolfowitz rationale
- Troop shortages undermined local security
- Public support is lacking for a long-term commitment to Iraqi democracy
- **Occupation of Iraq stimulated terrorist recruitment**
- **Policy undermined international good will**
Some pragmatic conclusions

- Our military occupation of Iraq has become counter-productive
  - It is radicalizing Muslim moderates
  - It is reinforcing our role as scapegoat
- We need to put Iraq behind us
- We need to stop Al Qaeda
- To do so, we need a smart political strategy as well as military force
Common ground for resolving the Iraqi conflict

- We cannot abandon Iraq to chaos and instability
- Sovereignty and internationalization can prevent Iraq from becoming a “black hole” for U.S. money and troops
- The costs to us are:
  a) Yielding some power and influence in Iraq, and
  b) Taking our chances on fostering democracy
- If we are serious about our national security, these costs are acceptable
- Both political parties are moving in this direction
Post-Iraq, one overriding goal will gain momentum:

*Nothing will contribute more to our nation’s safety*
Why this goal is key to our safety

- Al Qaeda and its affiliates have the skills, experience and commitment to harm us.
- Osama bin Laden is a hero in many parts of the Muslim world.
- The terrorists are building momentum through new recruits.
- Stopping the flow of new recruits is our best hope for preventing more 9/11s.
NEEDED:
A new level of public understanding

- Like our long struggle with Communism, the war on terror is a *political struggle* even more than a military war
- We know more about how to fight the *military* battle than the *political* one
- Our main opponent is not a government or nation; it is a *religious/political movement* spread through many Muslim nations
Three factions are competing against one another in the Muslim world

- The **secularists** who endorse the values of the West are the smallest and least influential (est. 5%)

- The **hate-America Islamist fundamentalists** are the most militant and totalitarian (est. 10%)

- The **moderates** who prefer Islamist culture to that of the West are the largest (est. 85%)

The success of the hate-America jihadists (such as Al Qaeda) depends on their ability to win the support of the moderates to their cause
The public believes that America is hated for what we are, not for what we do.

Hate-America jihadists say they hate us because we prop up autocratic governments and prevent the Muslim people from building just societies.

Both Al Qaeda and Muslim governments find it advantageous to distort U.S. policies:

- Al Qaeda gains recruits
- Muslim governments distract attention from domestic problems

**Result:** the U.S. has become a big, fat scapegoat for every problem plaguing Muslim society.
Rationale for strategies to counter political movements

Research demonstrates that successful political movements have three pillars of support:

- A small group of committed militants
- A large group of moderates who may disagree with the militants’ tactics but feel their grievance is legitimate
- A convenient scapegoat
These are the three supports of the hate-America Islamist movement:
We need to integrate a military strategy with a political one

- We need a military/intelligence strategy to chop off the “militant” leg

  AND

- An enlightened long-term political strategy to split the moderates from the jihadists and remove ourselves as scapegoat
The right military/political strategy will weaken the hate-America Islamist movement
The military/intelligence strategy

- Al Qaeda – the military arm of the hate-America movement – has cells in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia and other Muslim nations.
- All these nations have powerful Islamic Fundamentalist movements they do not control.
- Destruction of Al Qaeda-linked cells, in cooperation with host nations, should be our top military/intelligence priority.
Key elements of a new political strategy include:

- More support for Pakistan
- Help Saudis weaken Wahhabi influence
- Build new bridges to Muslim moderates
- Develop customized policies for Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Indonesia and other Muslim nations
More support for Pakistan

- Pakistan is a key to success
- General Musharraf has allied Pakistan with the West
- He is in grave danger of assassination
- Pakistan harbors large numbers of Al Qaeda
- Musharraf needs massive U.S. support to crack down on Al Qaeda
Help Saudis weaken Wahhabi influence

- Until recently, we have turned a blind eye to Saudi appeasement of Wahhabi extremism
- Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabis support hate-America schools and mosques throughout the Muslim world
- The main source of terrorist money and rabid anti-Americanism is the Wahhabi influence
- Keeping the Saudi government in power while loosening its bonds to Wahhabi extremists is a delicate balancing act
Building new ties to Muslim moderates

- Pay more attention to legitimate Palestinian grievances
- Involve Arab nations in the Iraqi peace process
- Strengthen American political support for moderate Islamist democracies, as in Turkey
- Acknowledge that moderates have a legitimate vision: to build just, peaceful, free and prosperous Islamist societies
- Develop a new mutual understanding: if moderates help to stop the terrorists, we can help them achieve their vision
Building new ties to Muslim moderates (cont.)

- Cooperate with Muslim moderates to find constructive outlets for their frustrated youth (training, education, etc.)
- Initiate dialogues with religious Muslim moderates to demonstrate that our values are compatible with the teachings of Islam
- Build bridges to moderate Muslims to support their efforts to build prosperous societies reflecting their own values
- Present a new vision of America to the Muslim world by positioning U.S. foreign policy on the side of justice for the Muslim world
SUMMARY:
An immediate goal and a long-term goal

- The long term goal:
  » Demonstrate to moderate Muslims that the U.S. is on the side of justice, not injustice

- The immediate goal:
  » Slow or stop the recruitment of new terrorists