

Summary Reports of the Working Groups

New America Foundation Conference on
Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose: Towards a More
Comprehensive Strategy, September 6-7, 2005

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Summary Report of the Underlying Causes Working Group

New America Foundation Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose: Towards a More Comprehensive Strategy, September 6-7, 2005

**Prepared by Louise Richardson, Working Group Chair
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Given the range of academic disciplines, professions, national backgrounds and political perspectives of the members of this working group it should come as no surprise that a broad consensus did not emerge on all issues. Individual members of the working group, therefore, may not subscribe to all the points made below.

There was a general recognition of the difficulties of discussing an issue in terms of root causes because of the implication that if one could only identify the cause and address it, then one might solve the problem. The members of this group were unanimous in the view that there is no single discrete "cause" of terrorism. That said, they reject the view that an examination of causes implies any degree of sympathy with terrorism. They also reject the view that to address grievances exploited by terrorist leaders is to reward terrorism, quite the contrary, we agree that addressing these grievances is essential to diminishing support for terrorism. While understanding the desire to respond immediately to the symptoms of terrorism, most members of the group would counsel a sustained effort to investigate further the underlying causes that have precipitated outbreaks of terrorism in various parts of the world.

Areas of Agreement

Working group members are unanimous in the view that terrorism is a complicated phenomenon that occurs in many parts of the world and that is adopted by many different types of groups in pursuit of a variety of different objectives. The group agrees that terrorism is a technique or strategy and not an ideology. We further agree that the absence of an agreed international definition of the term has undermined effective responses.

There are causes of terrorism to be found on many different levels of analysis, at the level of the individual, the organization and the state, as well as at the level of religion, culture and the political and socio-economic conditions in society.

Terrorist groups differ from one another in important ways. They differ in the nature of their ideology, in the specificity of their political objectives, in their relationship to religion and in the trajectory of their violence. Most groups, for example, have started locally and gone global, whereas recently perceived global conflicts appear to have inspired local groups to terrorism.

A successful response to terrorism will take time, in some cases it will take decades rather than months or years, and will need to be multi-faceted and well coordinated.

Successful policies are likely to be those that are based on an honest effort to understand the perspective of those who are using violence and their supporters. Efforts to address grievances are likely to diminish the use of terrorism over time.

A focus on the innocent victims of violence may help to forge a common perspective between countries in conflict in which each side perceives themselves as the victims of violence.

The goal of eradicating the resort to terrorism is not realistic, instead, we should focus our ambitions on attempting to reduce the adoption of terrorist tactics.

Areas of Disagreement

There were disagreements among the group on five central issues pertaining to the causes and responses to terrorism: 1) On the reasons for widespread resentment of the US. 2) On the role of the military in defeating terrorism. 3) On the relationship between poverty, inequality and terrorism 4) On democracy as the antidote to terrorism and, most vigorously 5) On the role of religion vs. politics as a fundamental cause of terrorism.

Most members of the working group argued that the widespread resentment of the US in many parts of the world is due to the policies of the US government, specifically the deployment of troops in Saudi Arabia, support for Israel against the Palestinians, support for authoritarian regimes like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the invasion of Iraq, and so on. Others argued that the resentment of the US is not because of "what we do" but because of "what we are", namely powerful, successful, and with a culture that advocates issues like the equality of women that are anathema to many others.

While some argued the benefits of a military response, many working group members argued that a military response was not the most efficacious response to terrorism. Most argued that a military response serves to radicalize moderates and mobilize opponents. Some went so far as to point to the war in Iraq as a cause of terrorism, given that the war has clearly served to win recruits to terrorist movements.

The debate on the relationship between poverty and terrorism has swung from a widespread assumption that there must be a strong link between poverty and terrorism to the view expressed in the supporting paper by Peter Bergen that there is no link, as evidenced by the wealth of many members of Al-Qaeda and the absence of terrorism in places of abject poverty like sub-Saharan Africa. Many members of the group point to the need for a more sophisticated

understanding of the relationship between economic inequality, relative deprivation and underemployment to the adoption of terrorism.

Several members of the group believe that the introduction of democracy into countries currently hobbled with terrorism will undermine terrorism by:

- a) providing a political outlet for the expression of dissent
- b) giving opponents a stake in the system and
- c) undermining support for terrorism by advancing the interests of those who passively support terrorism.

Others argued that:

- a) authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have been more successful in repressing terrorism than democratic states, like Turkey.
- b) there is nothing to indicate that if an Islamist group were to acquire power in a democratic system that they would retain the democracy or be friendly to the West, as Iran and Sudan can attest.

The question of whether the factors driving terrorists were fundamentally political or religious was debated vigorously. The issue has real impact on policy recommendations as the assumption is that if the motivations are political then the group may be willing to negotiate and hence compromise is possible. Whereas if a group is fundamentally religious than neither negotiation nor compromise is possible. A good deal of evidence derived from the statements and actions of Islamist groups was adduced on both sides of this argument.

The background paper submitted by Mark Juergensmeyer provides a very constructive way out of this impasse. Rather than assume a position on either side of this debate he instead elaborates on what religion brings to violent conflict:

- a) Religion personalizes the conflict. It provides personal rewards like religious merit, redemption and the promise of heavenly luxuries to those whose struggle would otherwise have only social benefits.
- b) Religion provides vehicles of social mobilization, that embrace supporters who would not otherwise be mobilized around social and political issues
- c) Religion provides an organizational network of local churches, mosques, temples and religious associations
- d) Religion provides justification for violence that challenges the state's monopoly on morally sanctioned killing.

- e) Religion provides the image of cosmic war that provides an all-encompassing world view to the group and a role to the individual of a religious soldier. It serves to "absolutize" the conflict and thereby demonize the opponent, and hold out the promise of total victory through divine intervention.

Whether or not religion can be seen as a "cause" of terrorism, therefore, there is no doubt that religion makes a terrorist conflict more intractable and more dangerous.

Recommendations

Four Guiding Principals for US counter-terrorist policy:

- 1) Counter-terrorism policies should not be adopted at the expense of liberal democratic values.
- 2) Recognizing that counter-terrorism policies can actually exacerbate tensions, short term policies must be fully integrated with long term objectives.
- 3) Soft power must be used in conjunction with, and integrated with, hard power
- 4) The key audience for our counter-terrorism policies is not the terrorists themselves but rather the communities from which they derive their support, variously termed the "complicit society" or the "condoners."

Four general points:

- A key to the resolution of the problem of the threat of Islamist terrorism lies within the Muslim community. This does not absolve non Muslims from responsibility to act and in particular to facilitate the emergence of moderate Muslims leaders.
- Policies and strategies should be geared to the nature of the group being countered. Hierarchically organized groups, for example, will require a different response from decentralized groups.
- Multilateral policies are more likely to be effective than unilateral policies
- The goals of these recommendations are a) to contain the spread of Islamic militancy b) to protect those most susceptible to it c) to remedy the key factors that foster it.

Specific Recommendations: Call for undermining radicals and strengthening moderates by re-evaluating our policies, addressing their grievances, and engaging in public diplomacy.

- Understand the roots of resentment towards the US among the broader population of Muslims and engage constructively with their criticisms.
- Address political and economic grievances, and encourage political and economic choice.
- Address the policy issues that serve to mobilize resentment. (A resolution of the Israeli/ Palestinian issue, for example, would not satisfy the absolutists but it would undermine their support by reducing the reservoir of bitterness among their potential recruits.)
- Recognize and reduce the gap between our rhetoric at home and the implementation of our policies on the ground.
- Examine our foreign policy with a view not just to how it serves our immediate interests but also how it looks to those on the ground.
- Examine our conduct on the ground, in the streets and in the prisons, to ensure that our behavior is designed to win us supporters, not opponents.
- Reassess our policies toward authoritarian governments with regard to such issues as power-sharing and civil society.
- Engage moderates and strengthen moderate leadership by providing funding for civic education and debate.
- Support education in places like Pakistan as a counterweight to madrassas.
- Establish processes to counter extremist leaders. Marginalize and de-legitimize terrorist leaders and isolate terrorists from their communities.
- Invest heavily in public diplomacy. Wage a war of ideas, an ideological counter-offensive with the goal of winning the support of local communities.
- Engage in a “strategic communications program” (Post) that
 - a) inhibits potential recruits from joining terrorist organizations
 - b) produces dissent within terrorist groups
 - c) facilitates exit from terrorist groups
 - d) reduces support for terrorist groups and de-legitimizes their leaders

- Examine the role of new media, videos and the internet, in promoting a radical collective identity and use these media to counter the radical message
- Help the US public to understand the psychological nature of the war against terrorism to protect against over-reaction.

**Summary Report
Working Group on Confronting Terrorism**

**Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose
Washington, D.C.
September 6-7, 2005**

**The Honorable Robert Hutchings
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Introduction

"Global War on Terrorism" is more than just an unfortunate turn of phrase. The term, and the concepts behind it, has skewed America's strategic priorities, deterred us from addressing the root causes of the challenge we face, contributed to human rights abuses in the name of an unassailable "just cause," and led us to see this challenge in almost exclusively military terms. Meanwhile, the instruments of national power most relevant to meeting the terrorist challenge – law enforcement, homeland security, intelligence, diplomacy, development assistance, police and other local responders, and others – have been dramatically undervalued and under-funded.

The war metaphor may have been apt in the early months after the attacks of 9/11 and during the major combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (however one judges the wisdom of the latter venture). And it certainly helped galvanize public support for fighting the terrorists "over there" rather than having to fight them here at home. Indeed, this rallying cry tapped into some basic elements of the American psyche. America has traditionally felt uneasy about a standing military unless some external threat was at our doorstep. We also do not like having powerful domestic security institutions because they can become a threat to our individual liberties. "GWOT" seemed to answer both concerns by "outsourcing" the conflict.

Areas of Agreement

Participants agreed that whatever its utility may have been in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the so-called Global War on Terrorism has put us on a dangerous and self-defeating course. Calling it a war implies that using military force is the best way to wage it. This emphatically is not the case. A better if imperfect analogue was the federal "war" on organized crime in the 1960s and 1970s, whose principle tools were intelligence, financial tracking, and law enforcement, rather than main force.

Reordering Military Priorities America's military priority, according to the latest U.S. National Military Strategy, is to "focus the Armed Forces on winning the

[G]WOT." Virtually every increase in the nearly half-trillion-dollar defense budget is justified, directly or indirectly, by its supposed contribution to this effort. It is therefore imperative to ask, though the National Military Strategy document does not, what sorts of military action (as opposed to other kinds of action) against terrorists make operational and economic sense, and expose "GWOT" to that test.

When the rhetorical layers are stripped away, the essential military contribution to the terrorist challenge is reduced mainly to Special Operating Forces. Yet less than 1% of the increase in Department of Defense spending since 9/11 has gone to SOF, and SOF now constitute a smaller share of the defense budget than they did before 9/11. This is not to say that other defense spending is unwarranted. Far from it: there are other major contingencies, only indirectly related to international terrorism, that must be addressed. But the conflation of everything under the banner of "GWOT" has made it hard to distinguish what is really relevant to the terrorist challenge.

Penetrating Islamic Financial Networks Initial post-9/11 efforts to freeze terrorist assets worldwide met with some success, but these mechanisms quickly faded as the number of easily identifiable targets dwindled and terrorist organizations adapted. Many terrorist organizations, al-Qa'ida among them, had moved outside the formal financial sector even before 9/11, so that normal regulatory and legal mechanisms were no longer sufficient.

The relatively modest costs of conducting acts of terrorism makes it unlikely that tracking financial flows will ever succeed in predicting and preventing an actual attack. The volume of money that terrorists need is but a drop in the bucket of the economies through which that money flows. Tracking these networks is problematic for the additional reason that money destined for al-Qa'ida is often indistinguishable from money meant to spread a radical religious message – one that we may find objectionable but which we would be loath, as a legal or ethical matter, to proscribe. Attempting to do so would touch off an Islamic backlash – including among Muslims not now inclined to violence – that would only exacerbate the terrorist challenge we face.

Adapting Intelligence to the Evolving Threat Four years after 9/11, the terrorist threat has become less dangerous in the sense that there are now more obstacles to conducting large-scale international terrorist operations, but it has become more dangerous in that the movement is now more amorphous and dispersed, yet still capable of mounting large-scale attacks. The threat has now evolved beyond the possibility of a frontal assault or "decapitation," posing even greater difficulties for U.S. intelligence.

We have gone from an era in which we were looking for large things in more or less fixed locations – armored divisions, missile silos, etc. – to one in which we are looking for small things on the move. In the struggle against terrorism, these small things are often individual human beings, constantly on the move. Distinguishing human beings one from another is different in kind from seeing and identifying

things. Advances in biotechnology and information technology help in that task, but the best way to find a human being is still through another human being.

The penetration of terrorist networks in this new environment will require orders of magnitude greater capacity to fuse new technologies with the requisite language and cultural skills. Decades of Cold War habits still need to be overcome. As the most multicultural country on earth, we should be able to staff our embassies with people who can disappear into local cultures, but we have not done well in mobilizing these natural advantages. The dearth of qualified Arabic speakers four years after 9/11 and 15 years after the first Gulf War is but one example of the cultural challenge that has yet to be met.

Strengthening International Cooperation Since 9/11, the United States has succeeded in building an effective counter-terrorist coalition that includes partnerships in diplomacy, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and armed forces. These partnerships need to be sustained and expanded for what will surely be a protracted struggle against a terrorist challenge that shows no signs of abating. They also need to be made more genuinely multilateral rather than the pattern of "multiple bilateralism" that has prevailed so far.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq has greatly complicated this effort. The occupation has catalyzed a global jihad, providing the training ground for the next generation of terrorists and alienating many potential partners, including among our closest traditional allies. Additionally, human rights abuses and allegations have led to a growing "*counter-counter-terrorism*" coalition that, improbably, has turned terrorists into "victims" and turned global attention toward U.S. actions rather than those of the perpetrators of terrorist acts. And the intractability of the Iraqi situation may present us with the terrible choice of fighting on without international support or withdrawing, and leaving behind a terrorist sanctuary where before there was none.

Areas of Disagreement

Participants disagreed on the best organizational structure to meet the challenge. Some believed that the creation of the National Counter Terrorism Center and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence added essential coherence to a formerly scattered and uncoordinated counter terrorism effort. Others felt it did not go far enough and called for making NCTC an operational body that would bring in the operational components of CIA, FBI, and DoD and provide unity of action from information to analysis to response. Still others worried that our approach is becoming more centralized at the very time that the terrorist threat is becoming more eclectic, networked, and dispersed.

Recommendations

- A new statement of strategic purpose in the struggle against terrorism is needed, one that moves beyond the war metaphor and reflects the enormous changes that have taken place in the last four years.
- This statement should then inform development of a detailed strategic plan, including timelines and benchmarks for implementation. It should also provide for continuous review to insure that our strategies keep up with the rapidly changing nature of the challenge we face.
- A unified counterterrorism budget should be developed – analogous to the British Global Fund – that presents an integrated plan for allocating resources across departments.
- Terrorism-related funding within DoD should focus primarily on Special Operating Forces, as the component with uniquely relevant assets.
 - Beyond that, it is essential to set priorities and allocate resources where they are most needed: DHS, FBI, human detection capabilities, and layers of police and other responders down to the local level.
 - Substantially increased resources for diplomacy, development aid, and public diplomacy should also be viewed as integral to a longer-term counter-terrorism strategy.
- Tracking terrorist flows within the rivers of money circulating in the Muslim world calls for a paradigm shift – away from a legal and regulatory approach toward one that relies on targeted human intelligence to understand radical Islamic financial networks from the inside.
- As the new intelligence reforms are implemented, it is essential to ensure that new centralized nodes do not impede cooperation at the periphery – between operators in the field, for example, or between terrorism analysts in NCTC and regional analysts elsewhere. Unity of purpose should be tempered by distributed authority.
- Long-standing procedures in the intelligence community urgently need revision:
 - Security clearance procedures need to be radically overhauled so that urgently needed Arabic speakers can be brought in more rapidly, perhaps by creating multiple tiers of clearance processing.
 - “Need to know” must give way so that “smart users” can freely access information across compartments and collaborate more easily across agencies.
- Our intelligence culture needs to transcend the Cold War notion of intelligence as something done by a few highly secretive agencies to a much more expansive conception of a “global intelligence community”

of flexible and often “virtual” (i.e. online) partnerships among the widest variety of partners around the world.

- International cooperation, which has eroded dangerously in the past two years, needs to be strengthened and made more genuinely multilateral – particularly if, as this working group believes, the war metaphor needs to be replaced with a broader conception of the challenge ahead.
 - Just as we have created new governmental bodies to unify our efforts, there is a need for new mechanisms of international cooperation that go beyond the largely bilateral efforts to date.
 - International cooperation would further be strengthened by the joint articulation of a global strategy that addresses the conditions that give rise to terrorism and not just its perverse manifestations.

Summary Report of the Homeland Security and Freedom Working Group

New America Foundation Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose: Towards a More Comprehensive Strategy, September 6-7, 2005

Prepared by Suzanne Spaulding, Working Group Chair
Managing Director, The Harbour Group

These principles and recommendations are informed by the papers and the online discussion of task force members. However, they do not represent the views of any other member of the Task Force or even a consensus among the members.

Guiding Principles

The homeland security imperative is to protect the homeland and preserve freedom.

The absence of a terrorist attack inside the United States since September 11, 2001, should not become an excuse for complacency or a false sense of security. The terrorists have not been defeated, nor have they abandoned their goal of destroying American lives and our way of life. The homeland security imperative is to defeat both of these objectives by protecting the homeland and preserving the freedoms that define our way of life.

It is time to reframe the debate and move away from the notion of "balancing" civil liberties and security to recognize that civil liberties are a key source of America's strength and security.

The debate about finding the right "balance" between security and civil liberties is fundamentally misleading. This traditional vision of security and liberty on opposite sides of a scale implies that they are competing values and are mutually exclusive. It assumes that liberties make us vulnerable and if we will give up some of these liberties, at least temporarily, we will be more secure. We seem to have forgotten what those who declared, fought for, and secured our independence knew so well, that we are strong not *despite* but *because* of our freedoms. Our democratic system, designed specifically to protect civil liberties, is not vulnerability, it is our greatest strength.

-- A key source of democracies' strength stems from the essential relationship between the government and the people, a relationship we cannot allow the terrorists to undermine.

One of the clearest ways that democracy and civil liberties make us strong is in the relationship between the government and the governed. The framers

understood that the strongest nation would be one in which the people viewed their government as “us” and not “them.” Yet, in the aftermath of 9/11, we implemented security restrictions that tend to drive a wedge between government and the people. For example, a government that shuts off the halls of power inside jersey barriers and cloisters its public servants behind armed guards runs the risk of detaching itself from the governed. This is particularly true if the government also erects barriers to information that preclude the transparency that is essential to a functioning democracy. Transparency in the development and implementation of policy is essential to maintaining the kind of relationship between the government and the governed that makes this nation strong.

-- The government must rebuild vital relationships, particularly with Muslim and Arab communities in the US and around the world, that have been so severely strained by actions and policies undertaken in the name of homeland security.

The impact on homeland security of strains between the government and the people can be seen most clearly in the damaged relationship with the Muslim and Arab communities, where support for government efforts could yield significant security benefits. Post 9/11 policies and actions also impacted our effectiveness in enlisting the international cooperation and maintaining the global engagement and exchange that is equally vital to homeland security. Added to measures such as changes in visa policy and passport reform, they have made America less attractive to students and visitors and more difficult for businessmen and even diplomats to enter the US. These policies are unwittingly but clearly driving a wedge between America and its friends abroad and now pose potential harm to our long term security interests (economic, diplomatic, and even national defense).

-- We can and must protect privacy and due process while strengthening government's information awareness

Cutting edge technologies such as data-mining, link analysis and data integration, and biometrics can contribute significantly to the goal of protecting the homeland. Yet they raise significant concerns about their potential to infringe upon privacy and result in disproportionate law enforcement efforts against Muslim Americans. These new technologies should be developed, assuming the technology proves usable, *if and only if* accompanying limitations designed to protect equal rights, privacy and due process rights are also developed and deployed. As noted, we should not accept a false dichotomy between security and privacy. Both goals can and must be achieved and the Working Group makes several specific recommendations for principles that should guide the development and deployment of these technologies.

In addition, the use of potentially intrusive technology—or other intrusive techniques-- must be justified by a compelling need. Perhaps one way to think of this is to apply the kind of cost/benefit analysis that informs risk management in

the critical infrastructure protection context. Risk management analysis recognizes that there are costs associated with security measures. In this case, those costs include the potential infringement of civil liberties, with a concomitant potential for undermining the very security you seek to ensure. Before these costs are incurred, there should be a careful analysis of the need and ways to reduce the costs.

Strategy, Planning, and Implementation

To protect homeland security and preserve freedom, we need a comprehensive national strategy.

We need a comprehensive national strategy that takes into account the broad range of issues that play a role in homeland security; a strategy that is national as opposed to largely federal, gives adequate attention to the role of the private sector and economic factors, sets forth clear goals and objectives, and provides a solid basis for establishing priorities and allocating resources.

Once a national strategy is in place, a risk management plan must be developed and its implementation must be given priority equal to the importance of the threat.

-- No strategy or plan, even if fully implemented, can guarantee protection against another terrorist attack. The American public must understand that government is engaged in risk management, not risk elimination.

The development of a risk management plan starts with a national threat assessment, which is mapped against a national vulnerability assessment to create a risk assessment. This risk assessment must then be analyzed in light of the goals and objective outlined in the national strategy. Metrics must be established for evaluating progress towards those objectives so that we can identify the gaps in our capabilities/preparedness and determine what is needed. Having done this, we must ensure that the necessary resources and sustained attention are directed at closing those gaps in a timely way.

-- The vast gap between expenditures on traditional "defense" activities and homeland security activities reflects a failure to understand the nature of the threat and what is required to address it.

The risk of a catastrophic flood in New Orleans has been known for sometime, as were the steps needed to protect the public. The resources were not committed. As a task force member put it, "We should not make the same gamble with catastrophic terrorism. We must make the investments in protection today... consistent with the urgency of the problem, the immediacy of the need, our security priorities and the resources required to get the job done before it's too late."

The Legal Framework

The "Global War on Terrorism" does not provide an appropriate legal framework for the long-term threat of terrorism.

It is clear that the policymakers, and the lawyers, in the Executive Branch do not regard the Global War on Terrorism as a rhetorical war, like the War on Drugs or the War on Poverty, but as a war in the full legal sense. Nor does it only include adversaries in the military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq but all terrorists anywhere in the world. Thus, all actions taken to protect Americans from terrorist attack, whether overseas or inside the US, occur in the context of this war; a war in which the enemy cannot be distinguished by uniforms, nationality, or location, with no defined battlefield, and with no discernable end point.

The debate over whether this is a Global War on Terrorism or a Struggle Against Violent Extremists or a Battle for Heart and Minds has implications beyond the rhetoric. But it is not clear that the American public, nor the Congress, understand the implications of that distinction. Perhaps the most significant consequence is in the assertion of the President's authorities as Commander in Chief, which have been interpreted as astonishingly broad by some Administration lawyers.

We have witnessed what Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist warned about in his book, All the Laws but One, when he observed that "[q]uite apart from the added authority that the law itself may give the President in time of war, presidents may act in ways that push their legal authority to its outer limits, if not beyond." Rehnquist also noted that courts are reluctant to decide a case against the government on an issue of national security during a war. Congress, too, tends to defer to the President in times of armed conflict.

--The normal checks and balances that are so fundamental to our democracy are skewed when the nation goes to war. This is not a sustainable legal framework.

Nearly all experts agree that the Global War on Terrorism will last at least through our lifetimes. Do we really want this to be the legal framework within which the country operates for such an extended period of time? The answer must be no. Nor do we want the laws of war to supplant the system of due process and criminal justice we apply to US citizens and to individuals inside the United States. However, terrorism is a national security challenge, not just a law enforcement challenge. For foreign terrorists captured overseas outside a zone of active combat, for example, we may not be able to rely simply on criminal laws or on the traditional laws of war. Instead, we must roll up our sleeves and undertake the difficult task of developing a sustainable legal framework to address issues such as detention and interrogation. It cannot be accomplished through secret memos or presidential directives. The development of this regime must be transparent. Congress, which has been too silent for too long, must accept its responsibility to develop the laws of this land and to vigorously oversee their implementation.

There is a need for informed public discussion and debate about the role of the military inside the United States.

In a time of crisis, a frightened public, and frightened leaders, may be willing to hand over control to anyone that they think can save them. Hurricane Katrina may indeed be the kind of catastrophic event in which it is appropriate to give DOD a leading role. But it is essential that these decisions are carefully and thoroughly considered well before a crisis develops, when circumstances allow for the kind of informed discussion and debate that is necessary to inform effective and appropriate policies.

The Department of Defense has now released its *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, which marks a significant step forward in enhancing the public's understanding of these missions. As always, however, the devil is in the details—and the details with respect to Homeland Defense in particular are still hard to come by.

One area about which there has been far too little public discussion and debate is the legal authorities for DOD activities, including intelligence collection, inside the United States. For example, the Department of Defense (DOD) traditionally undertakes a wide range of activities related to "preparation of the battlefield" in anticipation of military actions. In the Global War on Terrorism, the potential battlefields are legion and, with DOD's Homeland Defense mission, include the United States. *Posse Comitatus* is often cited as a restriction on military activities inside the US but it only applies to "law enforcement activities" and presumably would not apply to "traditional" military operations. Preparation of the battlefield also includes intelligence collection efforts. The military has updated and, at least in part, made publicly available its policies with respect to the collection of intelligence inside the United States. Yet, there has been almost no public discussion and debate about these policies, how they are being implemented, and what oversight mechanisms are in place in the Executive Branch and Congress.

Lessons Learned

We need to develop more realistic exercises and be more rigorous in capturing, sharing, and incorporating lessons learned from exercises and experiences like Hurricane Katrina.

Since September 11, 2001, there have been numerous exercises simulating a catastrophic terrorist attack. There have been three national exercises, mandated by Congress, called TOP OFF (for the top officials who are supposed to participate). And there were even exercises of a hurricane hitting New Orleans.

Yet, none of these exercised the chaos and surprise that is inevitable in a real catastrophe. They did not adequately train for managing a crisis through improvisation when reality defeats the best of plans. Moreover, we still do not seem to have an adequate process for capturing lessons learned, for sharing

those lessons with key stakeholders, including the American public and, most importantly for translating those lessons into meaningful changes in preparedness.

-- As this conference convenes, the horrific tragedy we have watched unfold in New Orleans and in the Diaspora of that city's refugees serves as a stark wake up call about how much we still have to learn.

At this point, it is too early to draw firm conclusions about what may have led to the tragic outcome in New Orleans. It seems likely that an independent commission will be called for to review the federal, state, and local preparedness and response efforts and draw lessons from Hurricane Katrina. These lessons should also be applied to terrorism preparedness and response—creating a truly “all-hazards” approach.

Issues that should be considered include:

Communications: This disaster provided proof once again that communication is the single most important element of an effective response. Yet, once again, communications broke down. The inter-dependence with electrical power proved a fatal vulnerability. Satellite phones were too slow in coming and too few. How do we fix this absolutely essential element?

Evacuation: Although most reports are that New Orleans’ mandatory evacuation proceeded more smoothly than in the past, no one contests that too few people left the city. What more can be done to ensure the safe evacuation of those without the wherewithal to leave on their own: the poor, the sick, and the infirm? What level of force should be used to enforce a mandatory evacuation and who should provide it?

Who’s in charge? A participant in TOP OFF 1, in 2000, reported that as “victims” of a mock chemical terrorist attack writhed on the ground, state, local, and federal officials stood around in a circle arguing about who was in charge. The argument has not been resolved, it has only moved to the very highest levels of government. Federalism poses unique challenges (are the Iraqi’s watching?), but can become a valuable mechanism for an appropriate distribution of labor if managed properly.

Individual responsibility: There are fewer Americans this week who assume that the government will come to their rescue in a timely way following a catastrophic event. This may be a good thing. Until the government improves its preparedness posture, people must do what they can to help themselves as much as possible—and the government must be more realistic in what it promises to the public. What efforts can be implemented to strengthen individual preparedness? On a related point, are we adequately including private sector resources and capabilities in our planning, both to assist government and individual efforts and to reduce economic damage through their own preparedness efforts?

Did organizational structure contribute to the problems with our response? The Working Group believes it is too soon to conclude that another organizational fix is the answer. However, critics complain that when FEMA was folded into DHS, it lost its clout, resources, expertise, and strong sense of mission. Did the reorganization result in an overemphasis on terrorism—or was there a failure to view terrorism/homeland security in an “all-hazards” context? Will proposals to pull FEMA back out of DHS restore its competence or undermine the coherency of our response to a terrorist attack?

Are we appropriately funding preparedness needs? As discussed earlier, resources should match priorities, as defined by a comprehensive risk assessment. In the retrospective examination of why necessary improvement to levees and coastal wetlands were not adequately funded, lessons should be learned about how preparedness funds are allocated generally.

The human tragedy in the Gulf region reminds us why we must work so hard to get this right. We cannot prevent category 5 hurricanes. We can work to prevent terrorist attacks on our homeland. And we can and must prepare to deal with the consequences of both.

Summary Report of the Grand Strategy Working Group

New America Foundation Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose: Towards a More Comprehensive Strategy, September 6-7, 2005

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This report is based on the exchange of views that took place among working group members. It is a selective summary of the main issues that were debated and is not meant to serve as a consensus document representing the collective views of the working group members.

Main Areas of Agreement

September 11 and Its Impact on Grand Strategy

The group spent a considerable amount of time debating whether September 11 necessitated a complete reconfiguration of U.S. grand strategy. The dominant view was that although international terrorism poses a new and pressing threat that requires adjustment to grand strategy, the struggle against terrorism should not be *the* defining mission for U.S. grand strategy. In this respect, a majority of the working group members believed that the Bush administration, at the level of grand strategy, has overreacted, overhauling America's approach to the world rather than adjusting it as necessary to adapt to new threats. In the words of one working group member, "American policy makers have thus come to believe that the international system has changed much more than it has, holding a view of a global landscape that bears little resemblance to that envisaged by the rest of the world." The challenge ahead is to maintain the struggle against terrorism while adjusting priorities and bringing into focus other geopolitical objectives, both traditional and new.

New Strategic Challenges

Although the group resisted the notion that the struggle against terrorism requires a radical realignment of grand strategy, it did recognize the urgent need for practitioners and scholars alike to focus on a new set of strategic issues, including:

- Strategies for Responding to Weak States, Failed States, and Regional Pivot States: State-Building, Nation-Building, and Democratization
- Religion and Its Impact on International Politics
- The Sources of Terrorism and Its Impact on Great Power Behavior
- Adapting International Institutions and Law to Globalization and Its Exploitation by Extremists
- Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and the Exercise of US Power
- Alliances and Strategic Cooperation After September 11

Most Pressing Threat

There was virtual unanimity in the working group that the United States must work to prevent any terrorist attack that could inflict catastrophic damage and that "the greatest danger in the near-to-medium term is the possibility that an anti-American terrorist group will acquire weapons of mass destruction, and especially nuclear weapons."

Main Areas of Disagreement

America's Strategic Predicament

The working group sought to assess the defining characteristics of the global environment in which the United States must formulate grand strategy. Opinions diverged widely on this question. Some working group members offered quite benign assessments, contending that the United States enjoys unprecedented primacy and influence. According to one member, "For the first time in modern history the leading state in the international system can operate without facing counter-balancing states -- we call this 'unipolarity.' Preeminent and secure, the United States is in an unprecedented world-historical position: it alone is situated to shape decisively the rules and organization of world politics for the next generation." With the appropriate grand strategy, the United States is poised to be "at the center of a 'one world' system defined in terms of open markets, democratic community, and cooperative security." Moreover, "the underlying order is sufficiently robust to withstand" the challenges it currently faces.

Other working group members argued in favor of a much less benign assessment of America's strategic predicament. They believed that American primacy would be much more short-lived, undermined by the diffusion of power to other quarters, the efforts of other nations to thwart American hegemony, and the loss of American credibility and legitimacy abroad. According to two working group members, public opinion surveys reveal that, "in the years following 9/11, support for the United States has plummeted, resentment toward U.S. unilateral foreign policy has intensified, approval of the U.S.-led war on terrorism has been undermined and, for the first time since widespread polling began, foreigners' affection for the American people has declined."

Is the World Beginning to Balance Against American Power?

The working group grappled with the issue of whether consequential balancing against the United States is taking place. Some members dismissed the claim that countries are “moving away” from U.S. leadership, arguing that we are witnessing “not balancing or the creation of separate spheres -- this is politics as usual within an existing world order.” Others argued that “active non-cooperation with the US has emerged,” as demonstrated by the transatlantic rift over Iraq, growing strategic cooperation between Russia and China, America’s isolation on issues such as the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court, and public opinion surveys revealing an alarming loss of confidence abroad in American leadership.

U.S. Grand Strategy: Recommendations

The working group searched for the center ground -- a set of guiding principles that would enable the United States to address effectively the new threats made apparent by September 11 while preserving its international legitimacy and its ability to manage the more traditional geopolitical agenda. This more traditional agenda includes preserving cooperative relations among the great powers, peacefully integrating rising powers such as China and India into the global system, and promoting political liberalization and economic growth in the developing world. Recommendations arising from this discussion include the following:

Wielding America Power

Some members of the working group agreed with the Bush administration’s security strategy, arguing that the United States “should seek to retain its current position of primacy for as long as possible, and discourage the rise of new ‘peer competitors.’” Others saw this objective as both unsustainable and unwise, arguing that the world is inevitably headed toward multipolarity.

Members on different sides of this debate nonetheless converged around similar policy prescriptions: the United States needs to do a better job of wielding its power so that it “convenes” like-minded states and prompts joint action instead of inducing them to engage in “soft balancing.” It can do so by repairing key alliances and adjusting policy to the concerns of like-minded states, rebuilding the multilateral infrastructure needed to meet global challenges, and doing a better job of explaining its policies to the world. The United States should also rely more heavily on the non-military instruments at its disposal.

Off-Shore Balancing versus Global Engagement

The working group did not reach a consensus on the appropriate scope and ambition of U.S. grand strategy. Some members cautioned against overreach, fearing that the war in Iraq, a far-flung system of military deployments and bases,

and efforts to spread democracy on a global basis would mire the United States in excessive ambition. One member cautioned that we needed to retrench from “a strategy of global hegemony,” while another cautioned that Americans should “accept the things we cannot change, have the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Those arguing for a reduction in the scope of American engagement endorsed a grand strategy of “off-shore balancing.” If it pursued this strategy, the United States would step back from its current range of global commitments, instead focusing on “only a few areas of the globe [that] are of strategic importance,” ensuring that “they do not fall under the control of a hostile power.” Others in this camp argued that the United States, although it should not give up on spreading democracy in the Islamic world, should scale back its efforts, diminishing the resentment that comes with intervening in the domestic affairs of countries in the Middle East and recognizing the limits of American power.

Other members of the working group took a quite different position, arguing that the United States had to return to a strategy of robust multilateral leadership on a global basis, drawing states together into an open, integrated, consensual order.” Others in this camp recognized “the difficulties of steering social change in other cultures,” but argued that “we have little choice” if we are to tackle extremists and the anti-secular and anti-modernizing ideologies they propagate.

The Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

The working group agreed that “U.S. grand strategy should concentrate on the danger of WMD terrorism.” It recommended stepped up efforts to secure fissile materials in the former Soviet Union, new measures and institutions to monitor and enforce non-proliferation regimes, and vigilant efforts to contain and shut down nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran.

Law, Institutions, and Grand Strategy

The working group generally agreed that the United States has paid insufficient attention to international law and that existing laws and institutions need to be updated. As one member put it, “doctrines of active counterproliferation, the preemption of terrorist attacks, and an agreed upon basis for humanitarian intervention all await international legal recognition. Without both legal reform to bring international and domestic law into accord with strategic context, and a thorough re-thinking of doctrines of warfare to integrate regard for law into our strategic missions, the war against terror cannot be won.” The United States should take a leading role in reforming existing institutions and law, when possible working through the United Nations and other forums that can facilitate consensus and legitimate the process of reform.

The Domestic Politics of Grand Strategy

The working group underscored the need to gain greater understanding of the domestic sources of grand strategy in the United States. Among the factors requiring greater examination are:

- The impact of intensified political polarization on the formulation of policy.
- How competing ideological visions shape grand strategy.
- Whether regional political cultures are playing an important role in shaping foreign policy and, if so, in what ways.
- The impact of religion and religious belief on strategy.
- How demographic change is affecting policy and is likely to do so in the future.

The working group also expressed concern about the narrowing of political debate in the United States and the need to regenerate rich discussion of grand strategy. One member noted that, “the spectrum of opinion on US grand strategy across the two political parties and their experts on foreign and security policy is now very narrow.” The working group agreed that some of America’s key institutions – the intelligence community, Congress, the media – have failed to perform adequately in contributing to informed and reasoned deliberation on matters of grand strategy. The group strongly endorsed the importance of improving the quality and scope of strategic debate in the United States.

Summary Report of the Democracy Working Group

New America Foundation Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose: Towards a More Comprehensive Strategy, September 6-7, 2005

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No country has benefited more from the spread of democracy than the United States. The consolidation of democratic regimes in states formerly ruled by autocratic regimes and hostile to American interests has made the United States safer. Because democracies do not attack each other, democracies do not threaten the United States. Not all dictatorships in the world are foes of the United States but nearly all foes of the United States have been and are dictatorships. As in the past, all non-state actors that threaten American national security today embrace anti-democratic ideologies. And with few exceptions, the countries that provide safe haven to non-state enemies of the United States are autocratic regimes. With rare exceptions, the median voter in consolidated democracies pushes extreme elements to the sidelines of the political arena. Democracies also are more transparent, which makes them more predictable. Logically, then, the expansion of liberty and democracy around the world is a U.S. national security interest.

In the long run, the consolidation of democratic regimes in the greater Middle East will make the American people more secure. Such a transformation would greatly diminish government practices such as torture and repression which foster terrorism, eliminate safe havens for terrorists, and provide frustrated publics with institutions to express their grievances without resorting to violence. In the long run, democratic development in the wider Middle East also will contribute to regional stability and security, which in turn will reduce the American military footprint in this region.

The logic for how democratization reduces the incentives for performing terrorist acts also is compelling. Repression and the lack of political freedom in much of the Middle East have helped breed a new group of violent malcontents willing to abuse religion to help advance their version of a new political order. Radical political Islam is seen as an avenue of political participation open to the disenchanting and disaffected. Greater opportunities to participate in a more democratic system would offer these disenchanting and disaffected a new outlet for political expression. More open political systems also would give more moderate political forces a chance to compete for the hearts and minds of the "swing voters" in these societies in a way that they cannot do in closed political

systems, which keep the moderates out of politics and fuel support for the radicals.

If the long run relationship between democratic development and American national security interests is clear and the logic for how democratization might reduce motivations for terrorist activities is compelling, the direct link between democratic development in the greater Middle East and American security in the short run is more difficult to identify. Some immediate benefits are obvious. The removal of Taliban regime and the beginning of the emergence of a new democratic polity in Afghanistan have made the United States and its allies safer. Neither the Taliban nor Al Qaeda has been destroyed, but both no longer control a nation-state, a valuable asset (even one as dysfunctional as the Afghan state) for plotting, preparing, and launching terrorist attacks.

Tracing direct and immediate casual connections between democratic development in the wider Middle East and American national security, however, is difficult. For instance, the emergence of a democratic state of Palestine should make the United States and its allies more secure, and the Israeli pullout from Gaza *may* be a positive step towards democratization in Palestine. But it is still too early to tell. Likewise, the consolidation of democracy in Iraq will make the United States and its allies safer, but such an outcome is also difficult to predict at this moment. Other recent democratic advances in the region, such as in Lebanon, have a direct impact on the security of American allies in the region, but only an indirect impact on American national security.

We must be honest about what democracy can and cannot do to make the American people more secure. Even consolidated democracies are the birthplace and residence of extremists, who resort to terrorism as a tool of their politics or an expression of their rage. Just as democratic institutions did not stop the Unibomber, Timothy McVeigh, or the recent terrorist attacks in London, the emergence of democratic regimes throughout the wider Middle East -- a development decades in the future -- will not eliminate all security threats to the United States from this region. Moreover, we also must admit that we do not know precisely if the process of democratization in the wider Middle East will have the same positive benefits for American national security interests that the process of democratization did in other regions of the world. The destruction of fascist and communist regimes and the emergence of more democratic regimes first in Europe and Asia after World War II and then in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and Latin America more recently has enhanced American national security. It is reasonable to expect a similar outcome in the wider Middle East. It is a hypothesis, though, not a certainty.

Yet, there are many other reasons to make more effective democracy promotion a central focus of American foreign policy. Democracy is a good in itself. Democracies can grow just as fast as autocracies, and outside of East Asia, democracies have outperformed autocracies. Institutions of accountability, be they institutional checks and balances on executive power, the rule of law, or a free press, are strong explanatory factors for growth.

Democracies also do not commit genocide, do not generate refugees, and do not permit wide-scale famines. These are the kinds of outcomes that the United States should want to see throughout the world even if the direct impact on American national security is not obvious.

Finally, there is one more compelling reason to support democratic change around the world: the universal demand for democracy. Public opinion surveys of people throughout the world, including the wider Middle East, show that solid majorities in most countries support democracy. In no country in the world where real public opinion polls have been conducted does a majority support autocratic forms of government.

The Relationship between U.S. Democracy Promotion Efforts and Democratization in the Greater Middle East

If the short-term link between democratic development and American national security in the greater Middle East is hard to trace, the link between democratic development in the region and recent American democratic promotion efforts (before September 11th, the American efforts to promote political change in the region were minimal) is just as difficult to identify. American non-military tools and policies for fostering democratic development are many. However, the effectiveness of these tools and methods in promoting democracy in the wider Middle East, especially in countries occupied by American and allied forces, is difficult to demonstrate.

There was disagreement in the group about the use of military force and whether it has helped or hurt American interests in building democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Bush Administration, in cooperation with allies, seems to have played a positive role in compelling Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, a development that should help to strengthen Lebanese democracy. American diplomatic pressure on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak also helped provide more political space for those in Egypt pushing for greater democratic reforms. More generally, there is more discussion about democracy in the region today than anytime before, and proponents of democratic change in the region credit President Bush with helping to provoke this new dialogue.

And yet, the record of achievement in promoting democracy in the region is still short, while it remains premature to judge the long-term consequences of these recent efforts. Democratic consolidation is far from certain in Afghanistan and seems especially precarious today in Iraq. After four years of a more concerted American effort to promote democracy in the wider Middle East, the first results of the campaign have been tangible, but limited. The slow start suggests first, that any American strategy for promoting democracy in the wider Middle East must be planned and sustained for decades not four-year terms. Free and fair elections are the beginning, not the end, of the long process of building democratic institutions, yet most countries in the region have not even passed this critical milestone. Moreover, the task is complicated by the fact that state

building must accompany democracy promotion in countries emerging from conflict such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Improving American Democracy Promotion Efforts

President Bush deserves credit for devoting so much rhetorical attention to the idea of promoting freedom, liberty, and democracy around the world. To be more effective in achieving this goal, however, the Bush administration and the entire democracy promoting community must reaffirm first principles, some of which have been neglected in recent years, as well as explore new, more daring policies abroad and reforms at home for promoting democracy in the wider Middle East.

Reaffirming First Principles for Effective Democracy Promotion

Support the Local Democrats. The United States has never promoted democracy successfully in a country that did not have local actors who were committed to the project. Rather than taking the lead, American actors seeking to promote democracy must stand behind and support these local actors through both direct aid and technical assistance. In the Middle East, upholding this principle will mean engaging with moderate Islamic groups, which embrace and practice the norms of democracy. Supporting local democrats also means letting them, not us, set timetables for elections.

Lead by Example. The United States government and the American people will only be effective advocates for democracy promotion if they act like democrats and defenders of human rights at home and abroad. For example, the human rights abuses committed by U.S. forces at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba have seriously undermined the efforts of the U.S. government and American NGOs to act as credible and vocal champions of democracy and human rights around the world.

Democracy Promotion as an International Mission, not an American Monopoly Because American resources are scarce and the America's reputation is (in some countries) tarnished, the United States must do more to coordinate and cooperate with other governments, multilateral institutions, and private foundations in the democratic promotion business. The participation of other states is especially critical when the use of force is involved to advance democratic change or stabilize a post-conflict situation.

A Generational, Bipartisan Project. In other regions, successful democratic development has taken generations to succeed. The greater Middle East will be no different. To be engaged in facilitating democracy in this region will require the U.S. to make long-term commitments, which can only be accomplished through bipartisan support.

Exploring New Policies for Effective Democracy Promotion

Provide Incentives for Autocrats and Democrats to Negotiate "Pacted" Transitions. American policymakers must compel autocratic rulers in the Middle East to initiate pacts, negotiations, and roundtable discussions with democratic forces in society. The leaders of autocratic regimes must start these processes of pacted transition now while they can still help to manage the process of change rather than waiting for when more revolutionary actors in society gain strength.

More Support for Independent Media. Independent media plays a critical role in starting democratic processes and then keeping democratic regimes accountable. Providing venture capital and subsidies to support new private media enterprises should be given particular attention and greater resources.

Encourage Greater Decentralization, Federalism, and Strong Local Government. In many countries, greater local autonomy has facilitated greater democratization. Policies and institutions, which encourage decentralization of political power, including first and foremost local elections, should be encouraged. In transitional situations, there can be an especially strong logic for holding local elections before national ones, and as soon as practicable, since local elections offer an opportunity for new leaders to emerge and gain experience on the local level before assuming national responsibilities.

Tie Economic Incentives to Democratic Progress. Governments that make progress in developing democracy and controlling corruption should be rewarded. Governments that rule repressively and unaccountably should see their flows of official aid decline sharply. (Assistance to civil society actors seeking to promote democracy should never be cut as a result of actions taken by government actors.) The United States has many tools of economic assistance that could be deployed in the service of democracy promotion, including direct economic assistance, loan forgiveness, and American leverage within multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Reward Successful Democrats. Leaders who come to office through competitive elections and respect the rule of law, civil liberties and human rights have earned a distinctive place on the world stage. Making democracy a criterion for membership on a reformed UN Human Rights Commission, the Community of Democracies, and the UN Democracy Caucus can reinforce these values while contributing to improved collective action towards global problems.

Disseminate More Knowledge about Democracy and Comparative Experiences with Democracy. The United States has many mechanisms to disseminate knowledge about democracy, including embassies, non-governmental organizations, radios and satellite television stations, and university scholarships and international exchanges. The entire effort, however, is still woefully inadequate.

Know your Enemy, Know your Friend. As a country, we still know very little about the greater Middle East. To fight the decades-long battle against communism, the United States invested billions in education and intelligence. We need a similar effort today to help us better understand our friends and foes in the wider Middle East. Universities, with government support, should encourage the study of Islam and make a priority of the teaching of Arabic, Persian and other languages of the region.

Institutionalize Greater Capacity for Effective Democracy Promotion. While our working group could not agree on the exact form of government reorganization, there was broad agreement that the current configuration of U.S. government sponsored democracy promotion needed improvement. A most bold step would be the creation of a Department of International Development which would incorporate into one bureaucracy programs designed to promote democracy, development, and state building currently scattered throughout the executive branch. A more modest proposal would be to elevate the profile of the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. At the same time, proposals to have the U.S. government play a more centralized and more direct role in providing democracy assistance must be rejected. Instead, the president and Congress must let non-governmental actors take the lead. Even the Middle East Partnership Initiative, currently located within the State Department, should be privatized and run by a non-partisan or bi-partisan board of directors.

Assess Past Democratic Assistance Efforts and Learn. There has been remarkably little systematic analysis or comprehensive assessment of how U.S. foreign policy, including democracy assistance programs, has helped advance the development of democracy worldwide. A major study of democracy promotion policies and programs conducted by an independent group of policymakers and academics must be commissioned to evaluate previous efforts, gather lessons learned, and then suggest how current programs could be improved.