Slaying the Dragon: Combating Al-Qaeda and the Threat of Militant Islam

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Abstract

How is the current United States (US) counterterrorism (CT) strategy suited to combat the evolving threat posed by the Al Qaeda terrorist network? Although in some respects the US CT strategy has delivered the intended results of its sponsors, a number of events in the past several years demand that the US government reorients particular aspects of its approach to transnational terror in order to stay ahead of its adversary in the global war on terror (GWOT). Multilateral and multifaceted traits of the US CT strategy underscores the need to maintain and develop new and effective partnerships with institutions, organizations, and overseas states; but until the US government begins to look at the GWOT – not in terms of big-war paradigm, but instead as new type of war characterized by global insurgency – Al Qaeda and the *Global Silafi Jihad* will continue to punch above the capacity of Western democracies to manage their position in the GWOT and stay ahead of the game.

Keywords: Agencies, Cooperation, Drones, Global war on terror, *Global Silafi Jihad*, Intelligence sharing, Middle East, 9/11.

1. Introduction

In response to Al Qaeda's violent attacks (Note 1) against the American homeland on September 11, 2001, the United States (US),under the administration of President George W. Bush, embarked upon a national effort against the global Sunni Islamist militant group.As one of the paramount threats facing the US in the contemporary global era – Al Qaeda, its affiliates, sympathizers, and adherents – continue to evolve and morph as a direct reaction to the policies implemented by the US and its allies. The National Strategy for Counterterrorism (CT)evolved synchronously over the previous decade to enrobe a wide range of procedures and strategies seeking to mitigate (and eventually eliminate)the current and future threat posed by Al Qaeda as well as the *Global Silafi Jihad* (Note 2)as a new type of war.

As its primary focus, the Strategy seeks to pressurethe core of Al Qaeda andthe loose network of affiliate groups and organizations give Al Qaeda its global reach, while simultaneously building, maintaining, and strengthening foreign partnerships and coordinated efforts to challenge Al Qaeda-linked threats that continue to emerge in many theaters around the world. Many scholars, analysts, and policy specialistsalike cling to the understanding that Al Qaeda's transformationsince 9/11, and particularly over the course of 2011, has fundamentally altered the nature of the threat of transnational terrorism by greatly diminishing the relevance of Al Qaeda's ideology and operational capabilities. In spite of the strident change that has taken place over the previous decade, however – the defeat of the Taliban stronghold in Afghanistan, many of the nonviolent movements for change in the Middle East and North Africa, the killing of Osama bin Laden, the prevention of potentially catastrophic terrorist attacks – threats toward America and its supporters has proven palpable and far from the periphery. Over a short period of time, the conflict environment has become more potent than ever before. Therefore, a new exigency looms amid the fight in which the US and its allies are engaged against unconventional and asymmetric enemies to develop and implement a proper strategy in an attempt to establish an environment of safety and security.

In what follows, Ipose an assessment of the recent counterterrorism strategy established by the US, covering plans already in place or in the process of being established, details about the role of the police and other agencies involved in countering terrorism, and question the overall effectiveness of the US' strategy in its struggle against violent extremism, or what has been dubbed "the long war."In doing so, I establish a rationale and logic for the need to synthesize a host of complimentary measures that seek, not only to respond to the threat of terrorism, but also its

mitigation and prevention.Although there are a number of collaborative efforts set in motion to allay the current threat matrix, that matrix has proven its capacity topunch above the US' weight in a number of areas and test the capacity of the US' adaptability in responding a global insurgency. As such, America needs to recast its mode of thought in terms of the threat of transnational terrorism in a manner that enables it to forecast the *milieu* of Al Qaeda aggression, and operate in a way that is more akin to the present-day trends and tactics of the network.

2. The US' Counterterrorism (CT) Strategy

The US Government, in cooperation with domestic and national actors, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), pursues the following as prominent elements of its overall counterterrorism strategy: (1) intelligence sharing, (2) international financial cooperation, (3) the increased use of drones, (4) the application of extraordinary rendition, (5) the conducting of raids on terrorist bases, safe havens, and training camps, and (6) the use of development aid.

The position has been taken in whichunilateralism is favored in approaching transnational terrorism even though Al Qaeda has established itself as a organization, the success of which, depends greatly on the concerted efforts of cells dappled across the global map. Thus, if we are to agree with supporters of a more autarchic approach, then such an orientation would afford a considerable advantage to the very threat the US and it's allies are facing. It is for this reason, that multilateralism and a mosaic of agencies, channels, and tactics should be increasingly tied together in a cohesive strategy to apply the greatest amount of pressure against the militant Islamic threat.

2.1 Intelligence Sharing

Intelligence is the very first line of defense against any threat facing an actor; it has certainly come to represent the tip of the bayonet in the GWOT for a number of reasons; these include: (1) intelligence guides law-enforcement operations, (2) helps to focus the instrumentality of covert action, (3) define the scope of military operations undertaken by national agents, (4) strengthens globalization of the war against terrorism "by uniting a multinational network of intelligence agencies," and it allows for various political, economic, and military elements to be (further) amassed and amalgamated to perpetuate the "global coalition to confront terrorism" (Reveron, no date:2).

The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), established by Presidential Executive Order 13354 in August 2004, implements one of the primary recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, that of "[b]reaking the older mold of national government organizations, this NCTC should be a center for joint operational planning *and* joint intelligence, staffed by personnel from the various agencies." In short, the NCTC epitomizes its *own* watchword: "United to Protect."

Notwithstanding the profound steps taken forward as part of this institutionalism, an overarching culture predicated on the sharing and dissemination of acquired knowledge with partner branches of the US government and within the American intelligence community (even more so with US allies and organizations overseas) has been relatively absent, or at least less conspicuous. The primary objective of such an arm in countering terrorism, on a national footing should be, according to Kolodkin (2010), the capacity to appropriately "fuse intelligence data, diplomatic reports, and open-source information and distribute it to relevant parties in real-time fashion."

A well-known shortcoming of US intelligence efforts was made apparent, even at a relatively late date in US counterterrorism, when Umar Farouk AbdulMutallab allegedly tried to detonate a homemade bomb onboard a Northwest Airlines flight, even though the detonation resulted in failure (BBC News, 2010). National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter remarked to Senate lawmakers regarding the incident, stating:

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab should not have stepped onto a plane on Christmas Day [...] The counterterrorism system collectively failed and I along with Director [of National Intelligence Dennis] Blair and Secretary [of Homeland Security Janet] Napolitano and others want to tell you and the American people the same thing we told the president, that we have to do better [...] (Saine, 2010).

The move on the part of lawmakers erred, not merely by sharing the information necessary to mitigate a potential terrorist attack, but the lack of action also represented, according to Leiter, a departure from the mistakes that were made prior to 9/11. He stated that, "[i]t was not a failure to share intelligence. Instead, it was a failure to connect, integrate and fully understand the intelligence we had collected" (Saine, 2010). There were critical rudiments of reference that went ignored in this case, according to Kolodkin (2010), who argues:

[...] there was a diplomatic cable from the State Department warning about Umar Farouk Muttalub, the Nigerian bomber, but it was not sufficient evidence to place him on a no-fly list. Yet, no one at the National Counterterrorism Center used that information to cross-check to see if other sources warned about Muttalub.

Sharing intelligence, whether in domestic or international contexts, is a mission that enables the US government – as

with any national agency or governing body – to gain a competitive advantage over the enemy with which it is at war. This is not to say that it confers upon the government or actor a perfect knowledge of its enemy or enemies, but it *does*provide agencies with the necessary stepping-stones to stridently fulfill its primary purpose: to win.

America has pursued the gathering and sharing of intelligence throughout history. One such example, dating as far back as the American Civil War, illustrates the positive effects that the acquisition and apportionment of vital information can have in terms of leveraging an actor's position against its opponent's even if it does not directly yield a decisive outcome. (Note 3) In a move that revealed itself as a radical departure from his traditional style of conducting battle, General George B. McClellan pursued the forces of his opponent prior to the Battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862 – near Sharpsburg, Maryland) (McPherson, 2002), if only, because one of the soldiers under McClellan's command obtained a copy of General Robert E. Lee's Special Order 1919 that was allegedly used to wrap cigars (Sims and Gallucci, 2010). The discarded papers revealed the true intentions of McClellan's adversary, explaining the orders given to divide Confederate forces and direct them at specific Union targets. This was a vital piece of information for Union forces; but more importantly, it was the manner in which the information was shared, dissected, and utilized that had a lasting difference.

McClellan's pursuit of his enemy ultimately fell through – not to the extent that history recorded the chase as a defeat for the North. The Union's victory rested solely with the reception of a single credible source of information brought forward by a reliable operative. The information prefigured heavily in McClellan's actions in a manner that, "[…]was not perfect but was more right than wrong" (Sims and Gallucci, 2010). Although the information collected was not enough to paint a complete portrait of Lee's ultimate intentions, it was enough to place McClellan several steps ahead of his enemy, and allow him to achieve, as is the US Government's present aim (nearly 150 years later), a competitive advantage.

2.2 International Financial Cooperation

Properly structured and implemented legislation to criminalize terrorist financing represents a second layer to a complex wrapping of coherent and effective counterterrorism strategy. Many states are now parties of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing to Terrorism, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in resolution 54/109 of December 9, 1999 (United Nations [UN] website). The 28 articles that comprise the Convention encompass a thematic overview of the laws and actions taken in the areas of enforcement, border control, countering the financing of terrorism, and international cooperation as well as a region-by-region evaluation.Comras (2009) praises the initiative thusly:

Kudos should be given to the UN's Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) for producing what is perhaps the most comprehensive and frank assessments to date of the international community's implementation of Security Council Resolution 1373 and the measures adopted to combat international terrorism.

While overwhelming support for the Convention exists, many of the countries that have signed on lack sufficient legislation to criminalize terrorist financing or to completely cover the offense as established within the Convention.Many of the states that are a part of this initiative also lack the institutional framework and capabilities to enforce the regulations that they are expected to uphold as signatories of the Convention. This renders the Convention markedly ineffective from an organization and an operational perspective; moderates its ultimate effectiveness even prior to its implementation. A further point that makes bridging the gap between realism and idealism difficult is the cost involved in committing terrorism attacks. Consider that Al Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001 racked-up a bill of some $400,000-$500,000 (Roth, Greenburg, and Willie, no date:3 and 4), while the cost of the Istanbul bombings in 2003 fell below $40,000, the Africa Embassy attacks costs an estimated $50,000, the operational costs of the 2004 Madrid bombing were estimated at only $10,000 (Dalyan, 2008).

The estimate provided for an average suicide bombing is approximately $1,500, and the London attacks that took place on July 7, 2005 (colloquially known as 7/7) were estimated to set the assailants back by several-hundred Great British Pounds (GBP) – these fundswere used to meet the costs associated with four simple explosive devises, four backpacks, a few subway tickets, a bit of gasoline, and a comparably insignificant measure of cellular data plan/airtime) (Dalyan, 2008:137 and 138; Biersteker and Eckert, 2007).

In order to fund terrorism with an appropriate financial sum, terrorists have relied heavilyupon formal banking systems. The international banking system represents just one of many ways in which terrorism has maintained its momentum over previous years and decades, and continues to fund operations.Other avenues for the procurement of funds include legitimate businesses and charitiesas well as indirect fund transfers to terrorists from local authorities (Dalyan, 2008:140). Door-to-door requests, personal donations, cultural events indirectly organized by terrorists, stock investments, real estate, the sale of publications, appeals to wealthy community members, the collection of membership dues, simple fraud and theft (such as car theft), drug trafficking, kidnapping (Note 4) and

hostage-holding, robbery, extortion, petty crime, identification (ID) theft, money laundering, and the smuggling of money all form the foundations of terrorism financing today (Dalyan, 2008:140).

While these sources of terrorism finance fluctuated and burgeoned in previous years, efforts on behalf of the US and its partners overseas have also assuaged the flow of such funds, especially since 2001. Rice-Oxley asserts that the importance of such measures cannot go unnoticed:

The 9/11 attacks startled the world into action to combat terror finance. More than 130 countries have signed on to a UN convention requiring legislative action and financial supervision to spot the dirty money. Scores of charities and individuals have been blacklisted both by the UN and by individual jurisdictions. Hundreds of millions of dollars of assets have been frozen. Many countries set up dedicated terrorist finance units to coordinate action, like the US Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. Some passed laws to make financing terrorism a specific crime.

Although history over the past 10 years has proven the combined efforts of the US and its allies as a necessitation to the moderation of terrorist activity, the future will bring with it increased tension as the evolution of terrorist pursuits continue to run their course. If the attacks of 9/11 proved the resourcefulness and resolve of terrorists to commit the impossible, in the eyes of many Westerners, those of 7/7 underscored the idea that "bargain-priced terrorism"was capable of producing comparable lethality and equaled levels of hysteria among civilian populations in Western societies, particularly within the United Kingdom (UK) – a state well-acquainted with the challenges of terrorism and political violence from anarchists to Islamists.In short, although Al Qaeda seeks to inflict as many casualties as possible in its attacks, the psychological impact cannot be measured in terms of the number of people killed alone, and the devastation beyond physical realms is a different story entirely.

2.3 Increased Use of Drones

What have become known as Predator unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) equipped with advanced weapons capabilities now symbolize a distinct part of the US' CT strategy for their ability to displace terrorists, uproot terrorist training installations, and deny Al Qaeda the benefit of terrorist educational camps. They emerged on the US government's agenda to curtail terrorism more sosince President Bush left office, and more drone attacks have been authorized under the Obama administration than under *both* terms of the Bush administration. Pakistan and Afghanistan currently act as the two theaters of operations for these pilotless aircraft.

Over the course of 14 months, the CIA "used unmanned and heavily armed small aircraft known as drones to stage fifteen strikes against the presumed locations of the leader of the Pakistani Taliban" (*Spiegel Online*). In one instance demonstrating the remarkable application of drone-technology, a Predator positioned itself roughly three kilometers (two miles) above the suspected hideout of BaitullahMehsud in Pakistan province of South Waziristan."The drone's infrared camera," explained in an edition of *Spiegel Online*(2010), "sent remarkabl[y] sharp images in real time to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia [some 11,000 kilometers or 7,000 miles away]. The images showed the Taliban leader sitting on the roof of his house, in the company of his wife, his uncle, and a doctor." The pressing of a single button away from where the drone was hovering resulted in the launch of two Hellfire missiles and the immediate death of Mehsud and 11 of his companions (*Spiegel Online*, 2010).

This single incident is emblematic of the future course of the US' approach to terrorism at home and abroad. The US military now expects to train more drone pilots in 2011 than regular fighter pilots; according to Singer, an expert on modern warfare at the Washington, DC-based Brookings Institute, "as many as a third of all aircraft the military acquires in the future will be unmanned" (*Spiegel Online*, 2010). Several of these drones patrol the skies above Pakistan on any given day. However, their area of operability extends far beyond Pakistan, encompassing the aerial territory above Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia – some of the hottest spots of terrorist activity today. The success enjoyed by the CIA *via* the use of dronesincludes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) *NajmiddinJalolov, leader of the Islamic Jihad Union which is active in Afghanistan and whose German members planned to set off a series of bombings in Germany, was killed by a drone.*

(b) *HakimullahMehsud, Baitullah's successor as the head of the Pakistani militant group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, was presumably also killed by a drone, even though the Taliban deny it.*

(c) *Abu Laith al-Libi, a senior al-Qaida leader with connections to terrorist groups throughout Asia, was killed by a drone.*

The following table depicts, in more specific detail, the impact that the use of drone technology has had in the GWOT.

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The intelligence community within the US currently believes that only50 highly-important Al Qaeda leaders are still alive (*Spiegel Online*, 2010), and as theGWOT and the use of drones are seen as two areas that will only expand in the coming years, drones will likely represent one of the most efficient meansof surgically eliminatingcurrent and rising threats while becoming increasingly central to the US' CT strategy.

2.4 Extraordinary Rendition

The practice of "transporting suspected foreign terrorists or other individuals suspected [of committing] crimes, to third countries for interrogation and imprisonment," as explained by Zalman (2011), is referred to as extraordinary rendition.There is no hidden purpose to the practice, the function of which is to gather intelligence information from suspected terrorists, either in facilities that are maintained by the US Government of by foreign governments (Zalman, 2011).The use of this tactic can be traced back to the administration of former President Bill Clinton, though it is a practice over which the US was sharply criticized in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.Up to 150 foreign nationals are estimated to have become subject to this tactic over the past few years. Thus, the program, since Al Qaeda's assault on the US homeland, has expanded dramatically and is now though to include detention centers and interrogation facilities in Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Diego Garcia, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo. Whether further detention and interrogation centers exist and are in operation by the US government is unclear. Notwithstanding the fact that these may be the only centers comprising this particular facet of the US' CT strategy, former-CIA agent Robert Baer, who summarizes the process plainly and succinctly, underscores the overall impact of the program:

If you want a serious interrogation, you send a prisoner to Jordan. If you want them to be tortured, you send them to Syria. If you want someone to disappear – never to see them again – you send them to Egypt (quoted in Zalman, 2011).

The Obama administration has perpetuated the use of renditions, propagating it indirectly as a valuable mechanism, not only for combating current terrorist threats, but also as a means of preempting future terrorism by extracting critical information from detainees, and gaining a deeper understanding of the operations of particular cells and larger groups belonging to *any* given network. It further serves the purpose of enabling the US to learning about up-and-coming terrorist cells, offering inroads into those that are otherwise difficult to infiltrate due to the increase of what I refer to as the "horizontalization" of terrorism, particularly in the case of Al Qaeda and the *Global Silafi Jihad*.

There are assurances, however, that renditions do not cross a certain threshold and violate human rights in a most egregious manner. Standards have also been established with respect to holding locations as well as prescribed procedural guidelines ensuring that the conduct of interrogations adhere to certain standards. The US government has also established restrictions on the use of evidence against a suspect as well as detailed provisos dictating the length of time that a suspect may be held without being released or granted the right of trial. "The prospects of abuse," in the words of Kolodkin (2010), "are reduced by an approval through a classified court or external review proceeding prior to executing the rendition."

The Bush administration allowed the CIA to capture Al Qaeda fighters who were understood as indisputable and unambiguous threats to the US "without on all occasions," according to Scheuer (2007), "being dependent on the availability of another country's outstanding legal process." In a statement recorded in a report in government, the Bush administration "made the already successful Rendition Program even more effective" (Congressional Hearing Report).

2.5 Raids on Terrorist Bases, Safe Havens, and Training Camps

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission) issued a report on July 19, 2004 that put forward a major recommendation that the government of the US must emphasize the need to identify and prioritize terrorist threats or potential threats by terrorist networks as well as their sanctuaries. The report further stated that for each and every threat that is recorded, a subsequent strategy tailor-made to that threat should be designed and implemented on that basis of *all* the elements of national (US) power – military or otherwise (Congressional Report Service [CRS] Report for Congress, 2005).

The basic tenet behind the recommendation is to outright deny the necessary and basic safe havens currently and potentially used by promulgators of terrorism by "[…] isolating and applying pressure on states that sponsor or acquiesce in terrorist operations on their territory […]" (CRS Report for Congress, 2005). While this component of the US' CT strategy represents a critical piece in the overall fight against the worldwide threat, it remains, in and of itself, an embodiment of the concept that an integrative, cooperative, flexible, and comprehensive approach to stopping terrorist threats is key. The White House's *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (2003b) document

further supports this point of view byhighlighting the need to "[…] place strong emphasis on closing down terrorist sanctuaries, using *all available instruments* (military force, law enforcement, diplomacy, economic assistance, etc.) [emphasisadded].

Perhaps no other mission on such scale upholds the idea(s) as outlined in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, as the US-led war in Afghanistan that began on October 7, 2001, under the codename "Operation Enduring Freedom" (OEF), and which took place in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 (CRS Report for Congress, 2005). Although a much larger and sweeping campaign as opposed to a simple raid, OEF encompasses the pillars of America's counterterrorism policy, which include:

(1) OEF combat operations; (2) patrols bya UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); (3) the formation of "provincial reconstruction teams;" (4) the establishment and training of an Afghan National Army and a police force; and (5) the demobilization of local militias (CRS Report for Congress, 2005).

In order to combat the threat of terrorist operations, including suicide attacks within Afghanistan, following the collapse of the Taliban autocracy, OEF forces (in partnership with US-trained military forces of a then newly-fashioned "Afghan National Army" [ANA]), remained on the offensive almost continuously (CRS Report for Congress, 2005). One such operation illustrates the US initiative under the codename "Operation Avalanche" through which approximately 2,000 US soldiers participated in an enormous and one of the largest anti-Taliban sweepsthat was undertaken since the collapse of the Taliban stronghold in Afghanistan (CRS Report for Congress, 2005). "Operation Mountain Storm" against remnant Taliban forces with approximately 2,400 US Marines (along with ANA soldiers) in and around Uruzgan province (CRS Report for Congress, 2005).

As part of its targeted killing (Note 5) operations, the US enacted its policy against Abu Ali Al Harithi on November 3, 2002 with a Predator unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) (Pincus, 2002). The Predator was armed with Hellfire guided missiles, which were used to eliminate the vehicle in which Al Harithi was traveling. The terrorist target, including others traveling with him in the vehicle were killed instantly. Al Harithi was one of Al Qaeda's leaders and one of the network's senior figures in Yemen (Pincus, 2002).

The culmination of nearly a decade of work trying to locate Osama bin Laden since 9/11 was revealed when the most senior leader of the Al Qaeda terrorist network died a as result of ballistic trauma inflicted by US Special Forces after President Obama authorized the CIA to conduct an assault, under the codename "Operation Neptune Spear."The assault took place at the leader's hideout in Pakistan, roughly 100 kilometers from Islamabad.

2.6 Development Aid

Continuing to expand and improve economic development assistance has been seen as an effective measure against the proliferation of transnational terrorism while simultaneously reducing the costs involved in countering terrorism for recipient governments. Many argue that a link exists between failed states and transnational terrorist networks operating within them; the link has been invoked heavily and repeatedly since 9/11. The Report of the Commission on Weak States and UN National Security (2004), propagated the awareness that, "[i]llicit transnational networks, particularly terrorist and criminal groups, target weak and failed states for their activities."

Aid is *theorized* to reduce terrorism in countries that have active government involvement and active social movements within its political borders. Savun and Hays (2011) contend that, "[…] foreign aid can be an effective tool of counterterrorism, particularly against transnational terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida, that use foreign (host) countries as a base to train recruits and operate" (1). What they suggest as an effective method inmanaging terrorism can subsequently have a positive ripple effect, whereby the size of the recipient country's non-governmental organization (NGO) sector expands, cost-sharing among NGOs expands too, and organizations' capacity to provide the services necessary to deter terrorist activity ultimately improves (Sayun and Hays, 2011).The concept is in line with former President Bush's assertion on the process, of which he stated, "we fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror" (cited in Krueger and Maleckova, 2003).

According to the Office of Management and Budget's 2004 overview of international assistance programs, the US included as part of its counterterrorism initiative, extensive assistance in the form of aid to governments on the front lines of the struggle against global terrorism. The US affirmed that such support will be made available in the form of financial assistance and various training and support initiatives for states allied with the US in its fight against the radical Islamic threat in addition to other forms of transnational terrorism (Cassidy, 2010). To be sure, the US has put its money where its mouth is, and boosted its foreign aid expenditures significantly in the last 10 years.

The concept behind curtailing the threat of terrorism *vis-à-vis*aid, however, is still very much a thorny patch that is difficult to navigate. Moss, Roodman, and Standley (2005), following their examination of US AID funds allocation between 1998 and 2001 against apportionment between 2002 and 2005, found that although American foreign aid

has expanded considerably to Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories, no *significant* correlation between US AID and the US' GWOT proxies exists (see also, Cassidy, 2010:69).

One of the key problems in ascertaining whether or not aid has a direct impact on reducing terrorism, perhaps, rests in the sort of proxies used in the aforesaid analysis – one being "relative share of Muslim population," which assumed a religious approach in determining whether or not a country facilitates the development of terrorists or terrorist cells.As noted byJuergesmeyer (2008), India – a country whose Muslim population represents a mere fraction of its overall populace – surpasses all other countries in modern history with respect to the frequency of internal terrorism recorded, whereas Indonesia, with a majority Muslim population harvests terrorists and terrorist activity at a mere fraction of that which is seen in India (see also, Cassidy, 2005).

In spite of detraction against the use of aid as a concrete method of moderatingthe threat of terrorism, development aid is still considered by Western governments as a precision tool in the GWOT because a direct link between poverty and terrorist activity in any particular region of the world is not necessary for development assistance to be effective in other (even less-measurable forms). Research in this field might tell a different story, however, demonstrating that even individuals who are financially secure may be motivated to either become terrorists or become implicated in terrorist activities in one form or another. Acccording to Robertson (2011), "[i]ndividuals need not to come from the poorest sections of society to be motivated by the financial opportunities that terrorist organizations can present, or to be susceptible to economic sanctions."

Since a RAND Corporation report showed that a mere 7% of all terrorist groups that expired were taken down by military force since 1968 (Jones and Libicki, 2008:110), which stands in contrast to evidence in the same report that 40% of those groups were taken down as a result of police and intelligence cooperation, and 43% were deterred from terrorist acts as they became integrated into the political process of their host countries (Jones and Libicki, 2008:110), the use of foreign aid to governments remains a highly-viable option that should be considered part-and-parcel to the overall GWOT (see also, Peace Education Fund, 2011).

3. Cooperative Efforts in Countering Terrorism: Intelligence Management and the Role of Agencies

Since 9/11, terrorism has increasingly been seen as a phenomenon with ostensible political, economic, social, and legal dimensions embedded within its overall framework. In the last 10 years alone, a great emphasis has been placed on tackling terrorism and its effects in all of these fields in a holistic manner with prominence afforded significantly to cooperation and concerted effort. Western exertion has since been heightened to ensure the following: positive governance, stronger identification, sharper focus on grievances, closer communal and religious relations, more efficient and focused policing, and increased policy-community relations (Raman, 2004). Accordingly, in countering Islamic terrorism, especially the Al Qaeda network, intelligence management is critical.

Any intelligence relationship will undoubtedly be challenged in a number of ways; the intelligence community in general has undergone a strong shift form a "need-to-know" position to one characterized as a "need-to-share" stance. The US and its allies, particularly the European Union (EU) because of its expanding role in global affairs as a strategic actor, have no choice but to work together to deal with imminent terrorist threats in all reaches of society. Christian Ganczarski, a German convert to Islam and Ahmed Medhi – two individuals suspected of being linked with Al Qaeda and contributing to the attacks of 9/11 – have both been apprehended and imprisoned as a result of the intelligence management and sharing that takes place between the US and its allies (Aldrich, 2009).These and further steps to thwart transnational terrorism are the result of training facilities being made available to more than a single state fighting in the GWOT, the sharing of intelligence collected independently, and collaborative measures implemented for the collection of intelligence through penetration, and "for neutralizing terrorist organizations identified as common enemies" (Raman, 2004).

The importance of managing intelligence in a cooperative manner is made evident through the establishment of roughly 60 overseas offices operated by the FBI, leading to what Aldrich (2009) has referred to as the "globalization of domestic security intelligence service" (135). The push factors of creating a shared-intelligence environment is underscored by Mueller (2008), who opines:

We never know when a fragment of information uncovered in one country could unearth an entire network of terror in another. And this is true not just for terrorism – the same can be said for all criminal threats, from transnational organized crime rings, to child pornography, to cyber attacks. The intelligence we seek often resides where our adversaries are based, not where we are based. Our enemies live in the seams of our jurisdictions. No single agency or nation can find them and fight them alone. If we are to protect our citizens, working together is not just the best option, it is the only option.

The management of intelligence in the US is handled under the Office of the Director of National Intelligence

(ODNI). Within the US, a number of departments have been established to overlay the intelligence system enacted and utilized by agencies dedicated to security service and law enforcement. America's intelligence community has undoubtedly strengthened since 9/11, and is now coordinated through the ODNI – a product of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) that created the ODNI to "improve information sharing, promote a strategic, unified direction, and ensure integration across the nation's Intelligence Community (IC)" (ODNI Fact Sheet, 2010). The mission or primary objective of the ODNI can be summarized in five points:

(a) *Collect, analyze and disseminate accurate, timely and objective intelligence, independent of political considerations, to the President and all who make and implement US national security policy, fight war, protect the nation, and enforce US laws.*

(b) *Conduct the US government's national intelligence program and special activities as directed by the President.*

(c) *Transform US capabilities in order to stay ahead of evolving threats to the US, exploiting risk while recognizing the impossibility of eliminating it.*

(d) *Deploy effective counterintelligence measures that enhance and protect US activities to ensure the integrity of the intelligence system, US technology, US armed forces and the US government's decision process.*

(e) *Perform duties under law in a manner that respects the civil liberties and privacy of all Americans.*

The structure of the IC is such that the effectiveness of US intelligence collection and dissemination efforts through its 17 member agencies is maximized. Each of these agencies acts under their own specific directive, yet each share responsibility to ensure the positive outcome of the IC's mission.The mix of agencies comprising this initiative is divided into three categories; they include: (1) program managers, (2) departmental, and (3) services.Police and law enforcement agencies operating within Western democratic states have only recently begun to reorient their perceptions in order to see that responding to terrorism is, or at least *should* be, a primary part of their work (Bayley and Weisbund, 2009). A new wave of terrorist attacks, in different modes of deliverance, was the catalyst for change. Viewing local law enforcement apparatuses and personnel as a first line of response was never really unfashionable within the intelligence arena; many opted for placing their confidence in the military, and only the military, as the primary instrument with which to reduce or even prevent terrorism entirely.

Police forces are perhaps better positioned than any other agency (even the military) to prevent terrorism within the US, and therefore, one should see the importance of their role in counterterrorism as something likely to increase over time. Although the argument can be made that the diversion of police capabilities from previous duties could result in an increase in other forms of local crime, this is only likely to occur if the governing body of the state fails to deliver additional funding in order to support the increased demand placed upon itsassets.

As the need to enhance the duties of local law enforcement amid the potential decline in resources and funding shifts over time, efficiency in their operational use becomes exponentially greater. This brings into light the concept of what the Kent Constabulary in the UK referred to as "Intelligence-Led Policing" during the 1990s. The term is understood here as an interactive policing model "built around risk assessment and risk management" (De Lint, 2006). More specifically, Intelligence-Led Policing is a "strategic, future-oriented and targeted approach to crime control, focusing upon the identification, analysis and 'management' of persisting and developing 'problems' or 'risks'" (De Lint, 2006).

The creation of "intelligence units" in order to target specific offenders resulted in the reduction of crime by more than 25% in just three years in the region of the UK. This approach "emphasizes information gathering through the extensive use of confidential informants, offender interviews, analysis of recorded crime and calls for service, surveillance of suspects, and community sources of information" (Ratcliffe, 2008). The Intelligence-Led Policing paradigm was subsequently put to greater use throughout the UK and the US following 9/11; today, it is becoming increasingly common in many American communities. The model presents itself as an ideal means of meeting two critical but conflicting constituencies, those of: (1) the reduction of terrorist threats against the US homeland, and (2) operating law enforcement with reduced budgets as a result of monetary strain felt in many corridors of government due to the ongoing recession.

Looking at the diverse range of agencies working in unison within the US intelligence management and sharing environmentas well as changing attitudes about the traditional roles of police forces and local law enforcement, the fact that strident changes have been made to alleviate the pressure placed on a single organization or agency to protect against an number of threats to national security should become clear.The relative size disparity between local law enforcement officers and federal agents only a few years following the attacks of 9/11 made evident the picture that no single national security agency can work in exclusivity to combat the threat of terrorism against the US. Instead, counterterrorism, according to Kelling and Bratton (2006), must be:

[…] woven into the everyday workings of every department. It should be included on the agenda of every meeting, and this new role must be imparted to officers on the street so that terrorism prevention becomes part of their everyday thinking.

Ensure that local law enforcement groups have the necessary tools and training to be prepare them for the increased level of responsibility that has been a long time in comingshould be incumbent upon governments across the Western world. If pressure can be relieved from military elements, then the necessary funds might become readily available to meet the demand of terrorism in the 21st century on the expanding and (if regrettably) less-recognized frontlines.

4. Assessing the Effectiveness of the US' CT Strategy: Issues to be Addressed and Included

The US is now facing a growing threat of terrorism within its own borders. Domestic terrorism is quickly becoming a permanent feature of the terrorism landscape, however, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism should receive only limited praise for addressing this reality. Even though this is a relatively new battlefield for the US government, Washington needs to direct more of its attention to the new landscape by accepting that a casual relationship between the "American counterterrorism policy conducted by its military, diplomatic and intelligence forces overseas and the related counterterrorist threat its citizens face at home" exists more so than ever before (Smith, 2011).That domestic radicalization *was* acknowledged as a budding factor in the current fight against terrorism by the White House *vis-à-vis* a strategy publication from August 3, 2011 entitled, "Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States"should be plainly recognized (The White House, 2011a).

While a number of positive aspects of the current US CT strategy are indeed evident, there are also those who are blithely aware of the extensive shortcomings of the current policy. One of the current global realities that has dictated both success and failure of the Strategy is the state of the US economy – suffering considerably as a result of the global economic descent witnessed in 2008/2009.Its immediate impact is the ability of the US to sustain its military presence overseas, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, to the extent that it has since October 2001, the reality of which, essentially represents a double-edged sword for *both* the US and Al Qaeda.

Seeing American forces pulling out of both countries commencing in 2014, the US loses one of its frontline actors in the GWOT but is able to feel less of a strain on what has become a considerably taxed military force. For Al Qaeda, this poses the possibility of propagandistic exploitation, hailing American withdrawal as a victory for militant Islam. America's withdrawal in-turn, however, reduces Al Qaeda's leverage in promoting Islamic extremism, calling Muslims to arms in the fight against the infidels seen as imperialistically marching across Muslim lands in the Middle East. America's presence overseas is precisely the mechanism that has enabled Al Qaeda to tap into the wealth of negative emotion – intense feelings of animosity among many Muslims who refuse to accept the presence of US military forces in their territory – and channel their transnational discontent toward the US and its allies.

Withdrawing from areas in which the democratic project is taking place subsequently raises questions about the ability of coalition forces to continue the democratic experiment and nation-building process in further regions abroad. This affords the Al Qaeda network another hill of opportunity for regaining its footing in former safe havens. Paradoxically, the US might find it easier to combat the threat of transnational terrorism posed by Al Qaeda given that US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which ultimately shattered the core of Al Qaeda, actually hastened the evolution of Al Qaeda by bringing it out of its restrictive hierarchical skin and into a more sophisticated network of cells.

As greater emphasis continues to be placed on Special Forces and agencies such as the CIA as a means of tempering the terrorist threat, the removal of more conventional military forces from distant theaters will provide the US withfunds with which it might focus appropriately on these applications. This is a step in the right direction given that the CIA and law enforcement units are increasingly seen as the primary prevention element in the GWOT paradigm.At present, US communities appear to be comparably vulnerable to terrorism as the need persists to augment local law enforcement to tend to the front at home. The events of 9/11 and 7/7 underscore the fact that the modern battlefield in the GWOT exists not where American and allied forces are presently deployed in the Middle East. The main theaters of combat and risk are right here at home, where the expectation persists that violence is not likely simply because US communities remain inaccessible to armies of scale and other more obvious threats.As we have seen, delivering violence in massive scale is not necessary to achieve the desired results of a determined terrorist group or organization.

The emergence of new forms of governance in the Middle East, and the degree of tolerance they depict toward terrorist groups and dissidents in their own country stands as yet another element that will greatly impact the US' evolving CT strategy. Terrorist warfare against Western democracies need not be waged in person, nor with a massive assemblage of *Jihadists* – the events of 9/11 required only 19 frontline terrorists, and the attacks of 7/7

required only four. The ability to plan and successfully execute terrorist operations such as these require safe havens within the countries in which they are implemented and in vulnerable regions deemed the perfect breeding ground for terrorist cells and radicalization largely as a result of the "Arab Spring."The establishment of new and risky governments that fail to put the lid on homegrown terrorism in their countries will have significant consequences for Western democracies. Since its revolution in the early part of 2011, Egypt and much of the Arab world has been a hotbed of civil unrest, lawlessness crime, economic instability, social tension, and political uncertainty. Libya has followed in Egypt's footsteps, and Syria will eventually (if it has not already) mirror the impact of *régime* change revolution.

The Internet has been used to a great extent by Al Qaeda to recruit future *Jihadists*, and has recently launched a new campaign under the name "Inspire," an online magazine published by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The most worrying aspect of the magazine is that it features the work of Western, English-speaking members of the Al Qaeda network operating in the Middle East, suggesting that the US counterterrorism strategy has failed to foresee the impact of the Internet in recruiting, not only members from Arab countries, but from the US itself. This form of recruitment will likely increase pressure on law enforcement authoritieswithin the US, which might need to pay greater attention to the fact that Al Qaeda members cannot be easily profiled racially, and can easily have access to US passports.

Extensive use of the Internet poses a number of dangers to both the US and Al Qaeda – the very organization that has come to depend on the medium for recruitment. In essence, Internet-dependency creates an atmosphere of isolation for Al Qaeda, restricting it from public view but allowing the network to create new followers for its violent cause. The solution boils down to individual governments acting within their own borders, but also governments working together.

The campaign by Al Qaeda should serve as a critical calling for the US government given that, as Shephard (2010) explains, "[t]hisis bad news for western security services that are often playing catch-up with the spread of Internet recruitment, which appeals to disenfranchised Muslims angered by the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan or the presence of Guantanamo Bay." Nonetheless, challenges posed as a result of this threat, if responded to now, can serve to assist in the US evolving its strategy to counter terrorism early and quicker than might otherwise be the case. Smith (2011) aptly touches on the area of opportunity in the following way:

The Counterterrorism Strategy's section on 'Information and Ideas: al-Qaeda's Ideology, Messaging, and Resonance' rightly recognizes that further work is necessary to prepare a Western "narrative" in response to the Jihadi message. But this is missing in the second strategy, which talks of US ideals and values without offering specifics on how local US partners should effectively engage on the Web.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle and current shortcoming of the US' present National Strategy for Counterterrorism is its tendency to simply follow events rather than forecast them. In some form, the US and its allies have merely been dragged in the wake of events, rather than staying ahead of them. The Strategy fails to consider an entire host of recorded terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda that have taken place in the US, and therefore, should consider the possibility of future attacks of either a similar nature or in further corridors of American society. Smith (2011)reasons that, "[t]here is no mention of the terrorist attacks that have caused 14 fatalities within the US (Little Rock and Fort Hood) or of the significant plots which could have inflicted even greater mass casualties." The Strategy fails to take into account that since 9/11 approximately 50% of the 175 cases of radicalization that have taken place in the US have occurred in the last two years (Smith, 2011).

The currentStrategy need not make mention of the events of 9/11 so much as it should focus on the evolution of transnational terrorism and the *current* trends in this form of warfare being waged against the US. The US needs to stop viewing the war on terror in terms of a big-war paradigm in which the enemy attempts to bring about the decisive battle, and begin to realize and act in accordance with three basic realities: (1) the GWOT does not conform to tenets of big-war or grand strategy and is more akin to insurgency on a global scale, (2) the realization of euphemistic VE Day (Victory in Europe) or VJDay (Victory over Japan) will never come, and (3) the battlefield of the war on terror is always changing and will always be somewhere new; but it will always be concentrated at home in the US and in the UK and elsewhere in Western democracies – not on the low-lying plateaus of Afghanistan or on the plains of Iraq.

5. Conclusion

The Global War on Terror, and the development of a concrete strategy to combat the growing threat of Al Qaeda and the threat of Militant Islamic is not so much a practice of unveiling and putting into motion a grandiose and sweeping plan overnight as it is an exercise of flexibility and prevention. The true nature of this war is about assembling various components that seek to directly or indirectly address the threat of terrorists and terrorist

networks around the word (notably at home), testing those pieces and subsequently maintaining and strengthening them, or replacing them if and when needed.

The analysis presented in the preceding pages has discussed the significance of the changing nature of the Al Qaeda threat and the threat of transnational terrorism, underscored the present components that work (or should work) synchronically to combat global terrorism, and that the threat matrix of the Al Qaeda network could retain an advantage over the US' CT strategyor that it has the potential to remain several steps ahead of the US and other Western democracies' efforts.

However, it is important to note that the US has been instrumental in defining the world's political and economic landscape, not only through its CT measures and efforts, but also by way of its practices and initiatives beyond the Strategy. As such, the US and Western democracies possess the strength and ability to activate the frameworks that they choose to and have greater agency in dictating the nature of the GWOT than they might currently realize.

When the National Strategy for Counterterrorism was presented on June 29, 2011, the US was actively involved in military operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya, and with Special Forces operations taking place in other theaters of the Middle East. The diverse spread of commitments demonstrates that the US is not short of hurdles when it comes to combating transnational terror. It simultaneously shows that the (albeit leisurely) move toward a multilayered effort in tackling the various threats is a step in the right direction. The prospect of future trends in terrorist activities points to the need to reorient the Strategy in a manner that emphasizes *prevention* as opposed to *response*, and looks to the future instead of keeping the future in mind while focusing on events of the past.

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism as a machine in the GWOT is not a one-time construct that will assume a secure position for an unequivocal length of time. It is a framework, presenting opportunity for change, growth, adjustment, and integration between the various parts over time, responding to the needs placed on it as they are influence by the environments from which they emerge.

Victory against Al Qaeda and its affiliates is not possible in the sense that any governing body, agency, or actor involved will ultimately sue for peace, capitulate, or realize its demise in the modus of waging war on a massive scale. Nor should the US continue to envisage the war against terrorism through the lens of big-war paradigm, large and costly campaigns, and a practice of hard-power exclusivity. The difference between fighting Al Qaeda in 2011 with a vision that extends beyond the present date and fighting the network now – but veiled by a 2001 mentality – marks the difference between making Westerners *feel* safer and actually making them safe.

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Notes

Note 1. The September 11 attacks (also known as 9/11, September 11, and September 11th) refer to a series of coordinated suicide attacks against the World Trade Center (New York), the Pentagon (Washington, DC), and Pennsylvania in 2001.

Note 2. The *Global Salafi Jihad* movement, according to Shultz (2008), may be understood as, "a millenarian movement [that] seeks a major transformation of the existing political status quo and a return to an idealized past. The *Salafi Jihadists*charge that current regimes and rulers who dominate the *Ummah* (community of believers) are irreparably corrupt, unjust, and repressive. They label them infidels and apostates" (43). As transnational actors, the *Salafi Jihadists*, as explained by Shultz, call for "holy war to (1) expel the United States from Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, and Middle East; (2) eliminate the state of Israel; (3) overthrow apostate governments in the Muslim world; and (4) re-establish the Caliphate, the historic community of Islam which expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula following the death of the prophet Mohammed and came to encompass in the seventh century both Iran and Egypt and by the eighth century North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), India, and Indonesia" (44).

Note 3. Jennifer Sims and Bob Gallucci describe the significance of this battle in an article written in *The Washington Post*. While there analysis explains the importance of intelligence sharing, they also underscore the

psychological implications, complexities, and the negative repercussions of both intelligence sharing and its practice.

Note 4. Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat was involved in kidnapping a number of European tourists in Algeria during 2003, some of whom the group released for ransom, which was paid for by the Federal Republic of Germany in the sum of approximately $6.5 million (Smith, 2007:5).

Note 5. There exists a range of definitions (not fully agreed upon) of the policy of targeted killing. Demonstrating the debate centering on this policy, targeted killing has also been referred to as "extrajudicial killing," extrajudicial punishment," "selective targeting," "assassination policy," "named killing," "long-range how pursuit," preemptive defense," "preemptive strike," "active self-defense," and even "state-sponsored terrorism."   For a concise examination of this policy, see, Hunter (2009).

Table 1. Estimated Total Deaths from US Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004-2011

Year	Deaths (low)	Deaths (high)
2011	322	457
2010	607	993
2009	369	725
2008	274	314
2004-2007	89	112
Total	**1,661**	**2,601**

Source: (New America Foundation, 2011).

Table 2. Estimated Militant Deaths from US Drone Strikes in Pakistan 2004-2011

Year	Deaths (low)	Deaths (high)
2011	306	421
2010	581	939
2009	266	502
2008	134	165
2004-2007	81	103
Total	**1,368**	**2,130**

Source: (New America Foundation, 2011).

Table 3. Estimated Militant Leader Deaths from US Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004-2011

Year	Deaths
2011	4
2010	12
2009	7
2008	11
2004-2007	3
Total	**35**

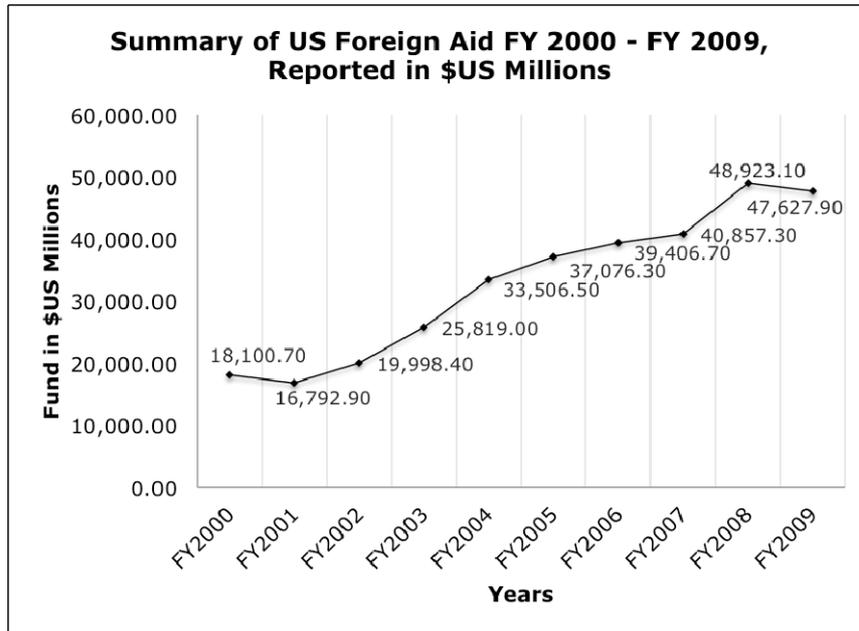**Source:** (New America Foundation, 2011).

Appendix

Figure 1. Summary of US Foreign Aid FY 2000 – FY 2009, Reported in $US Millions

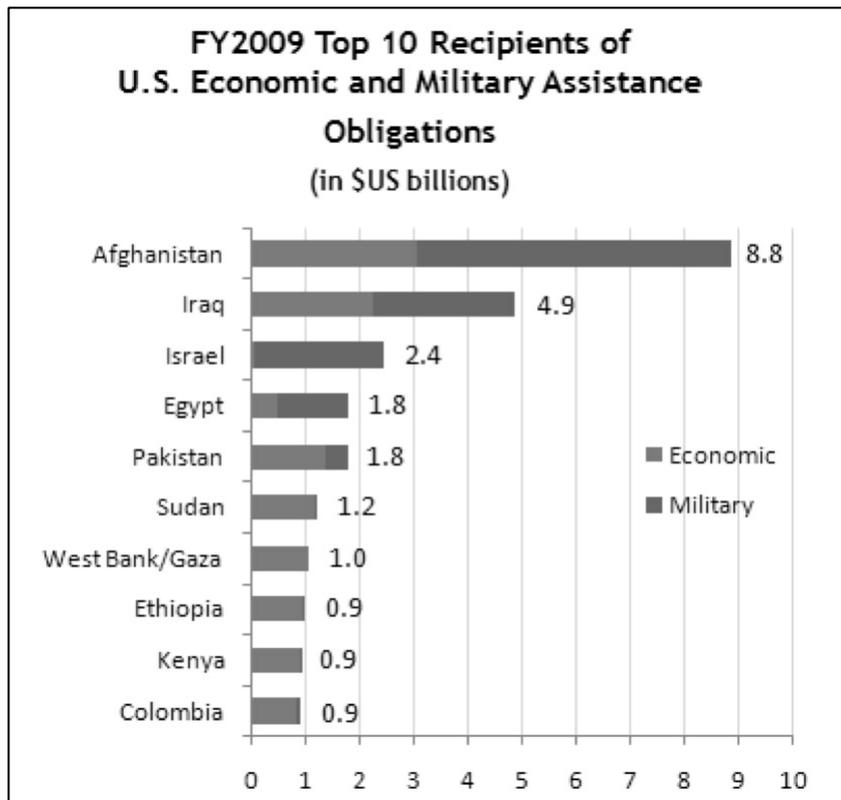**Source:** (USAID Foreign Assistance Database, 2011)

Figure 2. FY2009 Top 10 Recipients of US Economic and Military Assistance Obligations
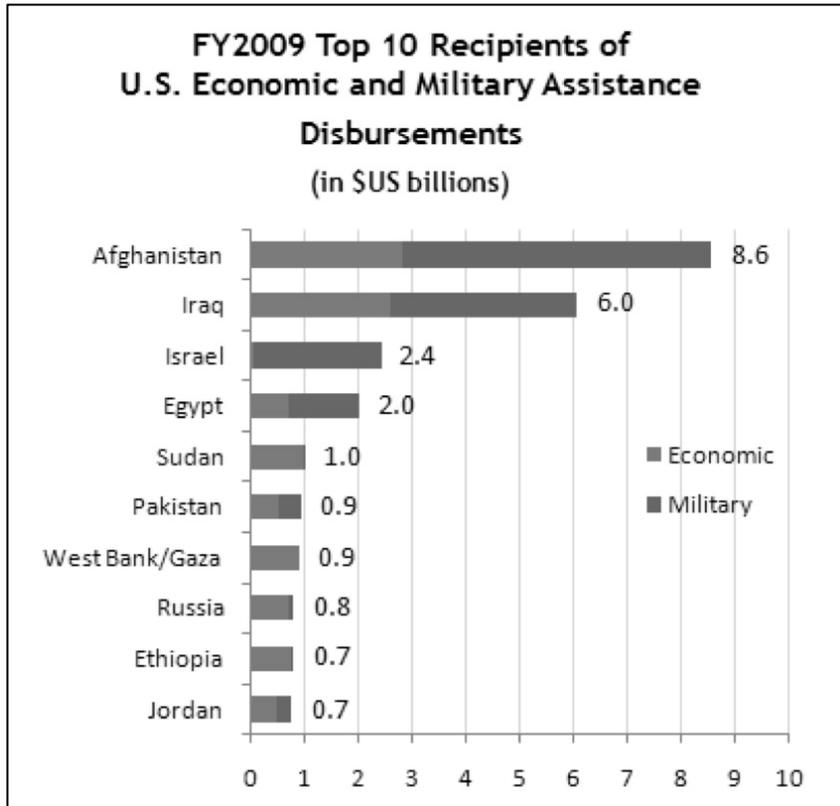
Source: (USAID Foreign Assistance Database, 2011)

Figure 3. FY2009 Top 10 Recipients of US Economic and Military Assistance Disbursements

Source: (USAID Foreign Assistance Database, 2011)

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