

Algeria at the Crossroads: How the United States Can Help the Algerians Fight the Battle Against Violent Islamic Extremists

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Abstract

Algeria is a country generally misunderstood by many Americans both in the policies of her Government and in the writings of her scholars. Algeria's geographical location along the north coast of Africa acts almost as a metaphor for her dilemma; she is considered as part of the Mid-East when convenient, as part of Africa when necessary, and yet she is physically closer to Europe than to the Levant. Fighting terrorism since her birth 60 years ago, Algeria has served as a test case both for those who use terrorism as a tactic and also for those who must respond to this tactic. It is this unique situation, coupled with the globalization of terrorism, that puts Algeria at a precarious crossroads from which she can progress into the modern world or regress into the chaos of uncontrolled terrorism. While the people of Algeria anxiously await a glimpse of the path that their country will take at this crucial juncture, we in the West, particularly in the United States, must ask ourselves two questions: How can we help, and what can we learn?

How the U.S. Can Help the Algerians Fight the Battle against Violent Islamic Extremists?

Algeria is a country generally misunderstood by many Americans both in the policies of its Government and in the writings of her scholars. Algeria's geographical location along the north coast of Africa can be seen as a metaphor for its dilemma; it is considered as part of the Mid-East when convenient, as part of Africa when necessary, and yet it is physically closer to Europe than to the Levant. Fighting terrorism intermittently since its birth 60 years ago, Algeria has served as a test case both for those who use terrorism as a tactic and also for those who must respond to this tactic. It is this unique situation, coupled with the globalization of terrorism, that puts Algeria at a precarious crossroads from which it can progress into the modern world or regress into the chaos of uncontrolled terrorism. While the people of Algeria anxiously await a glimpse of the path that their country will take at this crucial juncture, we in the West, particularly in the United States, must ask ourselves two questions: How can we help, and what can we learn?

To understand how the U.S. can help Algeria combat violent Islamic extremists, the U.S. must first understand Algeria's history. Algeria's fight against modern terrorism began in 1957 when the National Liberation Front (FLN) rose up against French colonialism. The FLN drove the French from Algeria and the nation achieved independence in 1962. During the next three decades Algerians endured coups d'etat, corruption, and violence until reaching a watershed event in 1991 when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a loose coalition of Islamic political groups, was poised to win the parliamentary elections. Instead the Algerian military cancelled the elections, sending the nation into a bloody civil war in which thousands of people lost their lives. The (now banned) FIS party's first order of business was to re-write the Algerian constitution, abolishing democracy and replacing it with a theocracy based on Sharia law. The success of the FIS had less to do with the Algerians desire for a theocracy and more to do with their disenchantment with the corrupt, ruling FLN. While cancelling the elections was surely not in keeping within the ideals of a democracy, in the long term this action probably saved Algeria

from a worse fate of decades of violent extremist oppression similar to the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The aftermath of the cancelled elections was a decade of full scale terrorism, which began to subside early into the 21st century. Unfortunately this peace did not last long. Within the last few years, terrorism in Algeria has re-emerged as part of a globalized movement tied to the international jihadi movement. The recent rise of terrorism in Algeria, dating from 2006, can be directly attributed to the global escalation of violent Islamic extremism and the rise of Al Qaida¹.

While conducting war is a necessary component of the comprehensive fight against violent Islamic extremism, there are more parts to the fight than military action alone; this article concentrates on those other components. The following are twelve suggestions for the U.S. Government regarding how to aid Algeria in its fight against violent Islamic extremism. They range, in order, from a broad globalized scope to a narrow scope tailored specifically to Algeria's circumstances. Some of the suggested points are aimed at decreasing global terrorism trends in general, (which, in turn, will decrease terrorism in Algeria) while others are directed towards Algeria's unique situation. Many of the changes suggested in this article are changes to the way the U.S. approaches foreign policy. These changes are not simply to improve relations with Algeria or Arab nations but to facilitate favorable relations with all nations. Certain themes prevail throughout these suggested changes: respect for other nations, observance of international law, and adherence to American values are suggestions that will not only aid Algeria but also the U.S. and the West with their fight against terrorism.

1. Identify the Enemy and Realistically Define Success

From a general standpoint, the U.S. must realistically define success in its poorly-named "War on Terror." First, the U.S. Government must correctly define the target of this fight. Terror/terrorism is a tactic and as many experts have rightly pointed out, one cannot wage a war on a tactic. The U.S. should begin by identifying the target of the fight – violent Islamic fundamentalists, violent Islamic extremists, Al Qaida and its affiliates, etc. By specifically identifying an enemy, the U.S. can undertake the task of repairing relationships with Muslims who may feel demonized by the U.S. because of their country of birth or religious affiliation. Once the enemy has been clearly identified, the U.S. must define its idea of victory. Terrorism dates to the Roman Empire, and it would be foolhardy to believe that mankind has evolved to a point where we can completely eradicate all forms of terrorism and all terrorists. However, society can achieve a tolerable level of terrorism and, more importantly, turn the tables on the terrorists by persuading the people that they purport to represent to be intolerant to their violent means and choose non-violent options. By eliminating the terrorist organization's followers, we eliminate the leader's power base, crippling the organization. Once again though, success does

¹ United States of America Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Algeria," CIA.gov, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ag.html>

not necessarily mean that all acts of terrorism will be eliminated, but rather reduced to a tolerable level. Once a society can return to a state of a normalcy; fear abated, business thriving, education easily accessible, cities and towns bustling with life and activity, then success has been achieved. Further, the American definition of success should not be tied to the capture of one man. Unquestionably, it would be a huge defeat to Al Qaida if Osama Bin Laden were captured; however, the failure to achieve this difficult goal can sabotage an otherwise successful endeavor. The more realistic and achievable goal would be to render Bin Laden irrelevant; if the U.S. Government takes away his importance, it decreases his power. The failed manhunt for a single individual causes the U.S. to look inept. It would be a better strategy to put the onus on Bin Laden to remain relevant rather than keep the burden and obligation on the U.S. to find and capture him.

By clearly identifying both the enemy and an achievable goal, the U.S. can engage partners rather than alienating them. In the case of Algeria, the U.S. Government must emphasize that the enemy is not the Muslim population in general nor is it composed of the peaceful Muslim populations who call for change around the world, but rather those who have turned to violence against civilians as a mechanism for this change. Algeria's bloody civil war is fresh in the minds of the Algerian people, making this a persuasive concept with which Algerians can easily sympathize. At this point in their history, Algerians can uniquely understand how to make the distinction between enemies and non-enemies when the line is razor thin; the U.S. would be wise to learn from the Algerian experience. With this new found understanding, the U.S. can more effectively approach the Muslim world, allowing close ties to America and the West to be more easily accepted by Muslim populations such as the Algerian people. These closer ties can be utilized to institute programs that will decrease the radicalization of Algerian youth. While charismatic leaders, such as Osama Bin Laden and Hassan Hattab (founder of the GSPC), will not be persuaded by these programs, the U.S. and Algerian Governments can abate the circumstances that cause impressionable people to follow their violent ideologies. Without their legions of followers, violent Islamic extremist groups will simply not have as much power to alter the world on a larger scale.

By realistically defining success as normalcy in day-to-day living, which is an achievable goal, the U.S. and her partners can better focus their capital instead of draining precious resources with no foreseeable end. If the goal remains unachievable (the total elimination of terrorism), nations will tire of the fight, individuals will tire of the sacrifices, and alliances will be strained to their breaking points. The U.S. can avoid straining these alliances, specifically the American-Algeria alliance, by using the cooperation for counterterrorism as a springboard to expand collaboration in other fields (economics, business, education, etc) as opposed to viewing them as one dimensional relationships. If these alliances remain unattainable and one dimensional, failing to evolve over time, they will surely die of exhaustion from chasing an elusive goal.

2. Stabilize Iraq, Give Palestinians a State

It is no coincidence that the continuing war in Iraq and the rise in violent Islamic Extremism in Algeria are occurring at the same time. While the U.S. invasion of Iraq did not cause the rise in violent Islamic extremism in Algeria, the ensuing lengthy instability and violence in Iraq is a causal factor in the recent surge in Algerian violence. By not immediately securing Iraq and not preventing Al Qaida from importing terrorists into Iraq from other Muslim countries, the U.S. is responsible for a rise in violent Islamic radicals around the world. By removing a strong central government (albeit a ruthless dictator) and not immediately replacing it with a government that can retain control over the entire nation, the U.S. has provided a training ground for terrorists to hone their terrorism skills in the open. Without a strong central government, Iraq has plunged into a lawless nation and served as a vacuum attracting outside influences, which include radicalized violent extremists. When these extremists return to their countries, they bring the violent jihad and their well honed skills with them. Prior to the civil war in Iraq, aspiring terrorists either made their way to the various training camps around the world, which were selective in whom and how they recruited their trainees, or remained in their own countries attempting to clandestinely connect with like-minded people. Either way, the process was much more difficult, and the experience not as real world or hands on as actually participating in the jihad first hand. This process is exactly what has happened in Algeria; Algerian aspiring terrorists travel to Iraq and become radicalized violent jihadists with warfare experience. Then they return to Algeria, bringing with them their well-developed war-fighting skills.

In September of 2006, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), currently Algeria's largest and most deadly terrorist organization, announced its alliance with Al Qaida and secured this alliance by changing its name to Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) the following January. While there had been informal ties between the two groups pre-dating these events, and informal ties between Osama Bin Laden and the Islamic Army Group (GIA), GSPC's precursor, this formalized alliance illuminated a disturbing trend in Algeria – the resurgence of violence. Although the alliance is more symbolic than operational, and although this association has caused some rifts in the GSPC organization (which Algeria and the U.S. should be using to their joint advantage), the outcome has been more violence in Algeria. Algerian nationals are traveling to Iraq to participate in the jihad against America and the West and then returning to Algeria and continuing the violence there. The U.S. needs to take two measures to combat this problem. The first is to stabilize Iraq, which will decrease terrorism in Algeria and the rest of the world by removing the terrorists training ground and the decreasing the possible perception of a Western occupation of a Muslim land. The U.S. and Iraq have achieved a fragile success in this area with the violence decreasing significantly since 2007, in part because of the U.S. surge and programs like the Sons of Iraq, designed to bring disaffected

Sunnis into the political process and working against Al Qaida in Iraq. The second is to capitalize on the rift within the GSPC. Some members of the GSPC did not agree with the decision to ally themselves with Al Qaida, preferring to concentrate on the Algerian Government and foreign targets within Algeria instead of the global jihad. The U.S. Government needs to change its methodology of treating Al Qaida and its franchise organizations as one large terrorist group. Instead, it should focus on exploiting the differences among the franchise groups and turning them against Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaida.

By realizing the goal of a cohesive Palestinian state, one crucial point of agreement between the Al Qaida franchises will be dissolved – the plight of the stateless Palestinians. Although this will not have an immediate direct effect on AQIM/GSPC, it will have an effect on global terrorism trends. Even violent Islamic extremists who are not truly concerned with the Palestinian issue on a day-to-day basis use it as a rallying cry against the West because, internationally, most people support the idea of a Palestinian state. It continues to be a major quandary for U.S. foreign policy makers and negatively impacts the way the U.S. is viewed around the world. Creating a contiguous Palestinian state is not a guarantee that violent Islamic extremists will lay down their arms, but it will take the away a significant amount of support for Islamic Extremists, which will eventually erode their power and decrease global terrorism. In light of the recent Israeli incursion into Gaza, even secular Algerians are feeling sympathetic towards the HAMAS Government. If moderate Algerians are not condoning HAMAS's violence, they are not necessarily condemning it either. A contiguous Palestinian state would reduce support for HAMAS among this group and give the U.S. credibility as a fair and impartial nation, both of which contribute to ultimate goal of reducing terrorism.

3. Be Equitable in US Foreign Policy

While true fairness will never be achieved in the realm of foreign policy, the U.S. must nonetheless strive to treat each country with judicious impartiality. The failure to do so is deemed hypocritical by the international community, causing not only anti-American sentiment but also anti-democratic sentiment that affects pro-democracy moderate Muslim leaders around the globe. Two glaring examples of U.S. partiality are Israel and Saudi Arabia. If the U.S. wishes to have credibility as the beacon of democracy, the U.S. must hold true to its democratic values and demand the same standards from Israel and Saudi Arabia as it demands from the rest of the Mid-east and North Africa.

On the topic of Israel, America's unconditional support of Israel not only hurts U.S. relations around the world, but in the long run it hurts Israel's security as well. True friends and true allies should be able to criticize each other while knowing the relationship will remain intact; likewise if one indulges the other, never holding it accountable for its actions, the relationship and the countries grow weaker and less legitimate in the process. In the twenty-year span from 1988-2008, the U.S. has tendered 26 of the 40 vetoes in the United Nations Security

Council; 21 of these vetoes pertained to Israel¹.² By the fact that, not even America's closest ally, Britain, vetoed any of these resolutions; one can conclude that the U.S. is clearly not on the same page as the rest of the world on this matter. One must delve deeper into the text of the resolutions to really understand the hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy in the region. The U.S. veto of the December 19, 2002 draft resolution, expressing deep concern for Israel's intentional destruction of a United Nations World Food Programme warehouse in Beit Lahiya destroying 537 metric tons of donated food supplies and killing several United Nations' employees, is possibly the best example of the America's blatant favoritism in the region²³. This action was a violation of international law that the rest of the world appropriately condemned, while the U.S. refused to offer even the mildest rebuke of "expressing deep concern." By not holding Israel accountable for violations of international law, America fosters not only ill will in the region but also a sense of lawlessness and powerlessness, two emotional roots of terrorism that spread through the region like wildfire.

Regarding Saudi Arabia, America's relationship with Saudi Arabia is as difficult and complex as its relationship with Israel but for plainly different reasons. The world's economic dependency on oil and Saudi Arabia's de facto control over the international oil trade have forced the U.S. to turn a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's horrific human rights record and support of terrorism. In order to begin the process of treating each nation with judicious impartiality and more closely align American alliances with its security interests, rather than its economic interests, the U.S. must decrease its dependence on foreign energy sources – particularly oil. When the time comes that the U.S. and its allies are energy independent from Saudi Arabia, America will be able to openly denounce the House of Saud's policies toward human rights, freedom, and women and call upon the government to institute transparency in their financial institutions and charities. When Saudi Arabia is held to the same standards as other nations, the U.S. will no longer be hypocritical in the region, paving the way for an honest forthright relationship between America and the Maghreb. Demanding democratic reforms and support for the "War on Terror" from countries that have less influence on the world stage, such as Algeria, while allowing Saudi Arabia to hold the world economy hostage in return for purposeful ignorance toward its policies may be pragmatic in the short term. However, this policy only degrades American core values and security in the long term. As long as it appears that the U.S. is willing to compromise its security and values due to its dependency on foreign oil, America's soft power in the region will be negatively impacted, which will decrease its ability to effectively influence democratic change in the region.

4. Abide By International Law

² Global Policy Forum, "Subjects of UN Security Council Votes," Globalpolicy.org.
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/membership/veto/vetosubj.htm>

³ United Nations Security Council, "Syrian Arab Republic: draft resolution,"
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/veto/2002/S1385.pdf>

Whether one believes that American foreign policy is best served by the more passive approach of being the beacon of democracy at home (a shining example of ideals, justice and laws to be emulated) or the converse, a more active approach (that America has an obligation to engage actively as the democratic reformer around the world) the bottom line is the same: the U.S. must be a nation that follows the values that it promotes. If the U.S. presumes to value laws, then the U.S. must follow these very laws. If the beacon of democracy/democratic reformer does not set the example by adhering to international agreements, what moral right does the U.S. have to condemn weaker nations and groups from following in its own footsteps? When the U.S. Government flaunts its disrespect for international norms, it gives credence for others to follow suit, causing internal rebellion toward nascent democracies like Algeria who are attempting to solidify their commitment to the rule of law.

While easier in theory than in practice, the U.S. must close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay. The question of how to close Guantanamo Bay and where to relocate its detainees is a lengthy discussion for another paper; all-the-same, the U.S. Government must admit its mistake and close Guantanamo Bay. Internationally, Guantanamo Bay represents the growing distance between the values of jurisprudence that are the bedrock of the American foundation and America's lack of dedication to upholding these ideals. By disrespecting both the U.S. Constitution and the Geneva Convention in the operation of Guantanamo, the U.S. degrades the very values it espouses around the world and fuels anti-American sentiment. As long as the detention center remains open, the U.S. loses her moral right to condemn nations for lengthy detentions without due process, violations of the basic human rights of prisoners, or mistreatment of American soldiers seized in battle. If the U.S. can skirt the rules and compromise its values in the name of national security, so can every other nation or group. If the most powerful nation in the world resorts to unlawful detentions when the rule of law becomes an obstacle, why would less powerful nations or groups resist the temptation of avoiding the rule of law when it is convenient or expeditious? In addition, the foray into unlawful conduct by a government not only opens the door to retaliation but also fuels those feelings of inefficacy and weakness among smaller entities. These feelings lead to an atmosphere of helplessness, which creates fertile ground for terrorist recruiters.

Furthermore, the U.S. must be above reproach by the world community in her treatment of all detainees -- whether these detainees are labeled Prisoners of War, Enemy Combatants or persons of interest. This same theory applies to both banning torture as a policy and the blatant abuses of humanity as seen in the Abu Ghraib prison debacle. The U.S. simply cannot maintain a policy of allowing torture while also expecting to maintain her soft power and moral high ground. In considering the definition of torture, we must not rush to be extreme. While waterboarding falls within the definition of torture, other harsh interrogation methods certainly do not. Sleep deprivation, loud music and isolation, while not pleasant and generally not the best methods of interrogation, do not fall within the definition of torture. However, included in this

prohibition is extraordinary rendition. Allowing someone else to do the America's dirty work does not absolve the U.S. of culpability. While torture may be expedient and effective in the short term, history has proven its ineffectiveness in the long term. One must remain focused on the strategic goal of ameliorating the situations which cause individuals to turn to violent extremism and not be seduced into the immediacy of quick results that will eventually backfire, as the policy of torture did for the French in Algeria in the late 1950's/early 1960's. One caveat regarding this idea is that in prohibiting the use of torture as a policy, one must be realistic about the limitations of individuals as human beings. There will inevitably be extremely rare situations where torture is the least of all the evils; those situations must be judged appropriately and individually as an imperfect solution to an imminent, extreme danger. The most common example given in support for torture is the nuclear bomb scenario: If one knew with certainty that a terrorist was about to detonate a nuclear bomb in a major city causing massive casualties, torturing one individual could save millions of lives. Should the interrogator have the right to torture the individual? Many people would agree that this is an extreme situation calling for an extreme solution, and torture would be the lesser of the evils.

As far as situations such as the abuses at Abu Ghraib, the humiliation of prisoners must not be tolerated, for this type of treatment again leads to feelings of powerlessness and weakness, not only for those who are being abused but also for their families and communities. The ripple effect of prisoner abuse is the creation of more terrorists. U.S. military commanders must be held accountable for the lack of oversight and the prevailing atmosphere that allowed abuses such as these to occur. In turn, the U.S. government should have been proactive in its media coverage of this episode, turning the Abu Ghraib debacle into an example that the U.S. and its military are not above the law. The prosecutions of the individuals directly involved, as well as their commanders, should have been transparent and public from the outset. In this regard, the U.S. is able show that democracy is not about perfection, but rather it is about how a nation deals with imperfections inherent in human nature.

To lecture other nations, like Algeria, about transparency in their judicial systems, human rights, and the prohibitions of torture without embodying these principles is counterproductive, and further, it causes the U.S. to lose credibility. Nascent democracies, such as Algeria, need an example to follow. When the U.S. falls short of this example and uses security concerns as a rationale for ignoring the law, it sets a precedent for others to follow when the rule of law seems inconvenient, causing a downward spiral in respect for judicial practices.

5. Be More Cautious Regarding Rhetoric

Although this problem is being addressed under President Obama's new administration the damage caused during President Bush's tenure linger on. It is too early in the new

administration to tell if President Obama will avoid the pitfalls of the Bush administration but for now, he seems to have begun some much needed fence mending.

Words have meaning. A large part of the America's image problem of the last few years is rooted in the words of the U.S. Government itself. This image problem extends past the image of America; it affects the image of the West, the image of democracy, and the image of the values that the U.S. holds dear. Those in the Arab world who are lobbying for democratic reform, freedom, and stronger ties to the West ultimately pay the price when America appears arrogant, aloof, or unjust. This price tag for American insensitivity is both in lives lost to violent extremism and in the regression of democratic reforms.

For the President of the United States to be so careless in his choice of words is frankly inexcusable. Perhaps the worst offense, the phrase that causes knots in the stomachs of U.S. Diplomats around the world, is the infamous line so carelessly spoken by President Bush following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center: "This crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a long time"⁴. To the horror of Muslims and diplomats alike, this quote was front page news around the world. Whether President Bush used the word "crusade" carelessly and underestimated the significance of his word choice or he used the word deliberately and was unaware of the ramifications it would cause, or used the word deliberately knowing exactly the ramifications it would cause are all alarming options. Whatever the motivation for the comment, the end result is that it cost lives. While the definition of "crusade" in America is "campaign for a cause", that is clearly not the definition of the word in the Arab world, where the connotation is of Christians invading to slaughter Muslims⁵. To conjure up this image among Muslims at such a sensitive moment, when the U.S. needed help from the Arab world, was foolish. It is hard to convince the Arab world that the U.S. is emphatically *not* on a crusade and that this war is *not* about religion when that is exactly what the President of the United States has said. One could possibly forgive this slip and write it off as emotion in the heat of the moment if it were not for the consistency of these verbal missteps.

President Bush's "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" comment alienated exactly those people who the U.S. should be attempting to win over—those who are on the fence between the U.S. and the terrorists⁶. The U.S. must persuade those people who do not agree with the violent tactics of terrorist organizations (but understand some of their grievances) to choose peaceful methods to address these grievances. These people do not necessarily need to be "with" the U.S. to be against the terrorists. Further forcing them to choose between two entities that they do not like

⁴ Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Bush Vows to Rid the World of Evil-Doers," CNN.com, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.bush.terrorism/>

⁵ Dictionary.com, LLC, "Crusade," Thesaurus.reference.com, <http://thesaurus.reference.com/browse/crusade>

⁶ Cable News Network, LP, "Transcript of President Bush's Address: September 21, 2001," CNN.com, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>

does not bode well for the one insisting on immediate support. The U.S. does not need to give the undecided an excuse to look negatively upon it by backing these individuals into a corner and giving them reason to look toward the terrorists. In doing so, not only does the U.S. pay the price but, once again, the moderates within the Arab world are negatively affected.

The U.S. must also be aware of the appearance of arrogance in its language. Careless language inflames the situation and trivializes the gravity of this battle. “Bring it on” has a place in the football locker room not in international relations where lives are at stake⁷. The U.S. does not need to taunt testosterone filled young males with a game of chicken by challenging them to bring on their best fight. Calling nations the “Axis of Evil” merely widened the rift that many diplomats around the world had been working tirelessly to narrow⁸. The result was to offend the Iranian and Iraqi populations and their fellow Muslims. “Mission Accomplished” was clearly not⁹. There is a fine line between rallying one’s own nation to sacrifice for a long war and intensifying the acrimony between combatants. The United States Government has not successfully navigated this line and its rhetoric only adds to the resolve of the opposition, fueling the fire.

In the same vein, the U.S. needs to better utilize the media without attempting to control it. The U.S. Government needs to fully engage media outlets, such as Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera, to advertise its points. American ideals including democracy, freedom, and the rule of law are nothing to be apologetic about and should be displayed for the world to see not suppressed in the name of political correctness. In addition, the U.S. Government, U.S. media outlets and International media outlets must show the true nature of violent Islamic extremists by showing the innocent victims of their crimes and not glorifying their actions. Both the West and moderate Muslims must call on the Arab media to reveal the cowardice of these violent extremists by displaying the carnage of their actions, particularly when women and children are murdered. The U.S. can utilize the media more appropriately by cutting down on the rhetoric and not falling into the sophomoric trap of turning this battle into a testosterone-filled war of words, but rather by demonstrating the values that made the U.S. a respected superpower. This is true even when these values are imperfectly carried out. In this way, the media serves as a useful tool to show that democracy is not perfect, but it is enduring enough to withstand these imperfections. Simply put, America does not need to lower itself to play the violent Islamic

⁷ Sean Loughlin, “Bush Warns Militants Who Attack U.S. troops in Iraq,” CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/07/02/sprj.nitop.bush/>.

⁸ Cable News Network, LP, “Bush State of the Union Address: January 29, 2002,” CNN.com, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/>.

⁹ CBS Interactive, Inc., “Historic Voyage Photos,” CBSNews.com, http://www.cbsnews.com/elements/2003/05/02/in_depth_politics/photoessay552016.shtml. President Bush’s speech to the crew of the USS Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003 announcing the end of major combat operations in Iraq was given in front of a banner reading “Mission Accomplished.”

extremists' game of verbal bravado because its deeply rooted ideals of freedom and democracy are more eloquent than any leader's exhortation. By proudly embodying these American values, the U.S. can regain the respect it has lost around the world and the moral high ground.

By failing to use the media in the correct fashion, the U.S. Government invites a backlash against the United States, and ultimately those who are negatively impacted are those moderates attempting to reform their own nations. Those who pay the price are moderate Muslims in Algeria, who labor to prove that democracy is compatible with Islam and that their future lies with ties to the West. The U.S. adds an additional hurdle for these moderates to overcome when the West's comments appear anti-Muslim or anti-Arab.

6. Encourage Moderate Muslims to Denounce Violence

Encouraging moderate Muslims to denounce violence has been mentioned several times in this article; however, the theme is worth emphasizing again. The U.S. must put pressure on moderate Muslims, both within the U.S. and internationally, to speak out against the violence perpetrated by violent Islamic extremists. It is the moderate Muslims who have the most influence on the Islamic Extremists and, therefore, will have the largest role in solving this problem. The U.S. can support this action by being cautious not to appear anti-Muslim or anti-Arab but rather anti-violence. Condemning entire nations as evil is counterproductive in empowering peaceful Muslims within those communities to rise up against violent Islamic extremists. The U.S. also must be mindful that condemning the action rather than the person, while difficult, will be more productive as the societal structure of Algeria is based on the extended family and tribe¹⁰. Although many people may view these individuals as evil, to the family and community members who have the most influence on the violent extremist's actions, they are still cousins and brothers. By focusing on denouncing the action instead of the person, the U.S. can include the families and communities in the solution rather than alienating them with judgmental rhetoric. While this method will not work with the leaders or command structure of terrorist organizations (Bin Laden, Al Zawahri, and the like) it is aimed at their followers. Additionally, the U.S. must drive a wedge between peaceful Muslims and violent Muslims not between the 'Christian World' and the 'Muslim World' or the West and the Arab World. The emphasis must be taken off of religion and put on the action itself. In being inclusive by involving peaceful Muslims (including peaceful Muslims calling for change) and focusing on denouncing the violent action itself, the U.S. can better persuade peaceful Muslims to find their voices. However, in convincing moderates to denounce violence, the U.S. incurs an obligation to protect these moderates to the best of its ability. This is particularly true in war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. must stay true to its word and true to the fight.

¹⁰ United States of America Library of Congress, "Algeria," Library of Congress country studies, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+dz0062\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+dz0062))

Algeria can be very helpful to the U.S. in this endeavor; many families in Algeria during the terrorist violence of the 1990's had to cope with a family member actively involved with violence. The Algerian Government learned the importance of condemning the action rather than the individual in convincing families and communities to trust the security forces and the Algerian Government. President Bouteflika's 1999 "Law of Civil Concord" policy, where those who fought against the Algerian Government during the 1990's were amnestied, was an effective tool in destabilizing terrorist groups. Although so-called 'blood crimes' such as rape and murder were not included in the amnesty, ultimately 80% of those fighting against the government accepted the offer and returned to society¹¹. The 1999 amnesty worked well precisely because the Algerian Government opened the door to those who were caught up in the violence but were not hard-core extremists and desired a way out. By encouraging these individuals to lay down their arms, leave their violent organizations and rejoin society the government was successful in dismantling the terrorist organizations. The second amnesty of 2005, the "Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation", was much more controversial as many Algerians believed that the extremists were already given an opportunity to renounce violence during the 1999 amnesty. Because many of the 2500 Islamists who were release under the 2005 amnesty returned to their terrorist organization, many believe this new amnesty diminishes the rule of law – allowing non-repentant criminals to go free and not be held accountable for their crimes¹². These types of tactics and lessons learned are precisely the type of instruction that the Governments of world need to share with each other.

7. Do Not Treat All of North Africa and the Mid-East as One Entity Needing One Solution

Although the rise of violent Islamic extremism around the globe must be viewed as many battles of the same war, the solutions cannot be viewed in the same manner. While there are some overarching themes that most Islamic extremists share (the Israeli-Palestinian issue for one), there are enough differences to approach this battle in two ways. The first method is to maximize and publicize the differences between terrorist groups; while smaller terrorist organizations might share some of the ideology of Al Qaeda, there are enough differences to drive a rift between the groups . Examples of differences between these factions include the idea of global jihad (Al Qaeda) vs. the smaller goal of creating a Muslim state within a certain region (GIA, GSPC), or who may be considered a target. Bin Laden's Al Qaeda did not necessarily agree with Al Zarqawi's targeting of Shiites. These differences must be exploited by the governments who are fighting this problem.

The second approach to this war must be to tailor solutions more specifically to each country. It is naïve to think that all Muslim countries function as one monolithic entity with the same weaknesses. Programs like the U.S. Department of State's Middle-East Partner Initiative

¹¹ United States of America Department of State, "Background Note: Algeria," state.gov, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/8005.htm>

¹² United States of America Department of State, "Background Note: Algeria"

(MEPI) are great in theory, but, in practice, giving large amounts of money for regional programs without tailoring them very specifically for each country is counterproductive. For example, it is foolhardy to treat women's rights the same in Algeria, where women constitute 8% of the Algerian Parliament¹³ as in Saudi Arabia, where women are not allowed to vote¹⁴. The U.S. Government loses credibility when it attempts to institute the same women's rights programs in a blanket fashion across North Africa and the Mid-East; as it shows America's myopic view of the region. The same holds true for instituting democracy reform in Algeria and Morocco. The programs funded by the U.S. Government (and others) must recognize that Algeria is further along in the democratic process than Morocco, which is still ruled by a monarch. To institute a program that is Maghreb-wide, without taking into consideration where each country is along the democratic spectrum, wastes time, money and credibility – and from Algeria's perspective, adds salt to the wound of a long-standing rivalry with Morocco. Algeria's democracy is nascent and imperfect but the programs instituted there need to be more advanced than programs elsewhere in the Maghreb. Continuing to lecture Algeria on issues that they have dealt with, even imperfectly, drains resources and takes focus away from concentrated programs that could significantly decrease violent Islamic fundamentalism¹⁵.

At this point in Algeria's democratic process, international programs need to focus on judicial process, basic rights of prisoners, and police conduct rather than the electoral process itself. An overhaul of the entire Algerian penal system will bring legitimacy to the system and, eventually, trust and respect from the Algerian people, decreasing the feelings of powerlessness and injustice that are partially responsible for young people turning to terrorism. Other legitimate criticisms include the Algeria's lack of freedom of the media and freedom of assembly; President Bouteflika must not be able to hide behind the State of Emergency in curtailing basic democratic freedoms. International pressure, if properly focused on these issues, can bring results; however, unfair criticisms like including Algeria on the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report, when there is no merit to do so, is counterproductive and diminishes U.S. credibility and influence in the region. To help Algeria strengthen its democracy while crippling the terrorist groups, the U.S. must focus on Algerian issues not U.S. special interest agendas.

8. Support Democracy in the Region

In theory, the U.S. policy is to support democracy throughout the world. In practice, the U.S. does not. If the U.S. wants credibility as either the beacon of democracy or the democratic

¹³ United States of America Department of State, "Human Rights Report: Algeria," state.gov, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119112.htm>

¹⁴ United States of America Department of State, "2008 Human Rights Report: Saudi Arabia," state.gov, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119126.htm>

¹⁵ Mildred L. Amer, "Congressional Research Service Report for Congress: Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2008," <http://156.33.195.33/reference/resources/pdf/RL30261.pdf>.

reformer, it must be true to its words. Supporting democracy is not an easy task, and the U.S. must accept that its form of democracy is neither easily exportable nor appropriate for every country. America also must accept that the outcome will not always be to the approval of the U.S., such as the HAMAS victory in the Palestinian territories. America cannot possibly have credibility and sway with those Muslims who are on the fence between violent and non-violent means of change when it disregards the non-violent means (such as elections) when the outcome is not what the U.S. would like. The U.S. does not need to condone HAMAS' violent tactics to maintain a professional relationship; the U.S. does this with many nations around the world, and this professionalism is the historical basis for international relations. The U.S. Government surely did not morally approve of the Soviet purges or the violent tactics of the KGB, but without maintaining a professional relationship, the Cold War might have ended differently. The war against Islamic extremism is the Cold War of today's generation and must be dealt with in a similar manner-- with professionalism and respect for the nation as a whole -- not agreement with its policies. Winston Churchill stated that, "The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment, but to secure a convenience"¹⁶. The U.S. needs to remember this when dealing governments it may find offensive.

In President Bush's February 2, 2005 State of the Union Address, he stated, "America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world"¹⁷. For the Sahrawi people living in the refugee camps in Algeria this statement served as a beacon of hope that the U.S. Government would change its policy from stability over democracy to democracy over stability in the Mid-East. The democratically elected President of the POLISARIO, President Abdelaziz, confided that he saw this as a signal that the US would push Morocco to accept the Baker II accords calling for a democratic referendum in the Western Sahara to decide whether the Western Sahara should have its independence or continue to be ruled by the Moroccan monarch. In fact, that is not what happened, and the U.S. backed off the Baker II accords in favor of a referendum calling for autonomy rather than independence. To President Abdelaziz, this demonstrated the true U.S. position in the region. As he saw it, the U.S. was more concerned about supporting the corrupt monarchy of Morocco, whose country was producing Islamic terrorists, in the name of stability and alliance in the "War on Terror" than on supporting the democratically elected POLISARIO. While his point may be exaggerated a bit, it is not far from the truth. The most poignant comment made by President Abdelaziz however, was that, "the U.S. should be supporting the Sahrawi [in their desire for independence] because they are exactly the type of Muslims that the U.S. says that it wants to support; peaceful, moderate Muslims, who

¹⁶ Winston Churchill, Dedicatio.com, <http://www.dedicatio.com/quote/1224>.

¹⁷ National Cable Satellite Corporation, "President George W. Bush's Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union: February 2, 2005," C-Span.org, http://www.c-span.org/executive/transcript.asp?cat=current&code=bush_admin&year=2005.

respect women's rights and have strong democratic values. But unfortunately the U.S. only seems to pay attention to a situation when violence is involved." He further posed the question, "Do we have to become violent for the US pays attention to us?"¹⁸ If this is the belief in the region, the U.S. must change its tactics and image. If moderate Muslims in Algeria and the rest of the region believe that only violence will capture the attention of the U.S., then they will turn to violence over more peaceful means of change.

9. Do Not Fly the US Flag Too Frequently

While receiving recognition for one's investment, both in terms of time and money, is human nature, the U.S. must not fall into the trap of short term pride getting in the way of long term results. In a significant number of situations it is crucial for foreign recipients to know that aid is coming from the U.S., particular when that aid is food, medicine and humanitarian assistance. However, due to the delicate nature of U.S. relations with the Muslim world at this point in time, the U.S. must be careful not to appear to be meddling or manipulating in the region. In terms of programs tailored toward women's rights, judicial reforms, freedom, democracy, and education it is not always advantageous to have the U.S. flag (and U.S. sponsorship) displayed prominently. Algerian nationals who already have an anti-U.S. bias would be less likely to participate in programs sponsored by the United States. These individuals comprise one of the crucial groups that the U.S. should be targeting with education and reform programs. In addition, those individuals who may not have an anti-U.S. bias, but who are surrounded by family and friends who do have this bias, can be influenced not to attend programs affiliated with the United States. These are the two groups which the U.S. should be luring away from terrorist organizations and the best way to do that is through education, reform, and hope for their future. These two groups are of paramount importance in the effort to combat violent Islamic extremism, as individuals with anti-American feelings are generally fertile ground for terrorist recruiting. The internal Algerian stability and external Algerian alliance with the West, that will be the end result of influencing these target groups to embrace women's rights, judicial reforms, freedom, democracy and education, greatly outweighs, the short term pride of the U.S. Government taking credit for the programs.

In conjunction with the U.S. Government not prominently displaying its sponsorship of some programs, the U.S. should continue to use non-governmental organizations to operate the programs on the ground. People-to-people programs generally incur less resistance and more cooperation than programs that are operated by the government, particularly a foreign government. As discussed elsewhere in this article, Algerians and Americans do not have a significant amount of exposure to each other so this added bit of exposure, on an informal, non-governmental level will improve the U.S. image in Algeria without the U.S. Government

¹⁸ As told to Political Officer Frances J Belisle, U.S. Embassy Algiers, through a translator, in a series of meetings with President Abdelaziz in March 2005.

appearing to be meddling in Algeria's internal affairs. An added benefit of using international NGOs is that the cost can be defrayed by other contributors, and the program becomes an international effort, which, due to the American unpopularity in the region, could be viewed more positively than a solely American effort.

10. Respect the Algerians and Their Continual Fight against Terrorism

Whether it is the intention or not, the United States sometimes appears arrogant in its dealings with other nations. Perhaps it is the enthusiasm for the American system of democracy and justice that is misinterpreted as arrogance, or perhaps it is the age of the nation itself, young in relation to other nations, which gives the U.S. the air of teenage cockiness. Adding to the aura of U.S. hubris is also perhaps U.S. economic influence and cultural ubiquity. Either way, America needs to realize that it can learn from its elders. Although democracy is new and fragile in Algeria, terrorism is not. The Algerians have been fighting modern terrorism on and off since 1957 in one form or another. The battle between the FLN (National Liberation Front) and the French Colonizers is captured in the film *The Battle of Algiers* and serves as a how-to (and how-not-to) guide for both terrorists and governments alike. The FLN progressed from a deadly terrorist organization into a respected political party, which today holds the majority government, only to be assailed itself by violent Islamic fundamentalists. Algeria's latest battle with terrorism has roots in the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front). The (now banned) FIS was a loose coalition of Islamic political groups who attempted to unseat the corrupt and ineffective FLN from power and replace it with a theocracy ruled by Sharia law. The FIS was set to win the 1991 election when the election was cancelled by the Algerian military setting off a civil war. The military's action was arguably valid in that the FIS's idea of democracy was one person, one vote, but only one time and FIS's intention was to rewrite the Algerian Constitution to abolish democracy in Algeria. The ensuing civil war, where upwards of 100,000 people died, was replete with acts of terrorism¹⁹. Despite this grim chapter, Algeria had made great strides in combating terrorism throughout the years to the point of almost abolishing the terrorist groups within Algeria by 2001, when intervening acts caused the groups to resurge with a vengeance. While every controlling party in Algeria since 1957 has made mistakes in dealing with terrorism, they have also learned valuable lessons. The U.S. can learn from both the failures and successes of the Algerian experience to adapt its fight against violent Islamic extremism in a way that aids and not hampers moderate Muslim leaders around the world.

To begin to learn from these experiences and help the Algerians (and the U.S.) combat violent Islamic fundamentalism, first the American government must acknowledge that the Algerians have been fighting this war longer than the U.S. has. In doing this, the U.S. must truly listen to Algeria and treat them as a valuable partner; a partner who has more experience and

¹⁹ United States of America Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Algeria," CIA.gov, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/ag.html>.

more knowledge in this area; a partner who has their own ideas, their own plans, and their own history. While in theory the U.S. calls upon the Algerians to be partners in this war, in practice, the U.S. treats them more like vassals. Although many ideas, such as torture, are not suitable for the U.S. to adopt, America must not immediately dismiss the entire nation of Algeria because of these unsuitable tactics; this would be akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, the U.S. must understand how Algeria arrived at the point of using some of these less desirable tactics and prevent itself from falling into the same traps.

Some of the success that the U.S. and the world can learn from Algeria include the shift of popular support from the terrorist groups to the Algerian Government in the late 1990's/early 2000's. The extremists themselves bear some of the responsibility in the shift of popularity away from their groups because of their extreme brutality, including burning infants alive in ovens²⁰ and parading through the streets with their victims' decapitated heads on spears²¹. This level of barbarity undermined any moral support from the local populace and shifted it toward the government. The U.S. can learn from this by publicizing acts of brutality by Al Qaida and like organizations. Instead of the West avoiding the publication of horrific scenes depicting the slaughter of innocent civilians, the world, particularly the Arab world, needs to see the true work of the violent Islamic extremists. Another tactic that proved successful in Algeria was President Bouteflika's 1999 "Law of Civil Concord" policy which, amnestied thousands of individuals caught in the cycle of violence. By giving these individuals a way out of their situation and an opportunity to lay down their arms the Algerian Government broke the cycle of violence and dismantled the terrorist organizations²². Gaining the trust of the Algerians by reigning in the security forces also helped the government gain credibility. Although there were acts of brutality by the security forces during the late 1990's, the government has since made continual progress in decreasing corruption, instituting a code of conduct and condemning inhumane treatment by these forces. Once the Algerian people began to trust in the rule of law and the Algerian Government they were more likely to help the security forces combat the extremists. During this shift of popular support the Algerian Government used intelligence provided by the local population in more traditional methods such as military strikes and infiltration to cripple the terrorist organizations. These are all lessons that the U.S. and the West need to learn in combating Al Qaida and like organizations.

The U.S. cannot approach Algeria as the ultimate expert in the area of counterterrorism because it is clearly not. To the Algerians, it appears that the U.S. only began to understand the magnitude of terrorism following September 11, 2001, despite the Algerian's pleas for help and understanding long before that fateful day. To atone for this arrogance, the U.S. must engage in true dialogue, rather than a one-sided lecture, which will open the forum for true discussions

²⁰ Algeria-watch.org, "Lost Souls of the Algerian Night: Now their Torturers Tell the Truth," <http://www.algeria-watch.org/mrv/mrvtort/souls.htm>.

²¹ Economist.com, "Algeria: Steady but Stale," http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13240802.

²² United States of America Department of State, "Background Note: Algeria".

about what is needed in this partnership to fight terrorism. To lecture the Algerian government on human rights and then demand access to its territory and actionable intelligence, all while dismissing Algeria's history of grappling with terrorism, is counterproductive. While some of the Algerian tactics, such as kidnapping and raping suspects, were morally repugnant, every nation (including the U.S.) has had its share of abhorrent practices. If the U.S. is going to help the Algerian government with this fight, the U.S. must approach it as a respectful partner. This does not mean that the U.S. condones all of Algeria's actions. In fact, criticism is a valuable tool, but America must understand the motivations and persuade the Algerians that there are better alternatives, while accepting Algeria's criticism of America's own practices as well. Both sides have to be able to openly give and receive criticism from the other for each to develop and adopt better strategies in the long term. In this instance, a little humility on the part of the U.S. will reap a better working relationship and ultimately a successful outcome.

11. Expand Exchange Programs

According to the Interagency Working Group on US Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training (IAWG) FY 2006 Annual Report, 52 Algerian nationals participated in U.S. Government-sponsored programs to the US and 580 Algerian nationals participated in U.S. Government-sponsored programs to other foreign countries. These numbers are unacceptably low. The U.S. needs to concentrate more on the Near East, where there were a total of 3,423 participants to the U.S. and 173,034 to foreign countries – while this sounds like impressive numbers Iraq nationals comprised 1,087 participants to the U.S. and 107,184 participants to other foreign countries. While Iraq's importance should not be diminished – its stability is critical to peace across the region, and its importance in decreasing terrorism cannot possibly be overstated; the U.S. cannot afford to short-change other countries in the region in the name of Iraqi stability. Subtracting the Iraqi numbers from the equation gives a more accurate assessment of exchanges from Near East nationals: 2,336 to the U.S., 65,850 to other foreign countries. In comparison, during the same fiscal year 15,100 European nationals participated in U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs to the U.S. and 121,260 European nationals participated in U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs to other foreign countries²³. In order for the U.S. to expand its influence, while spreading the ideas of capitalism and democracy (which will stabilize regions and allow economies to grow), the U.S. must reassess her priorities. The government-to-government relations between the U.S. and Europe are not unimportant, but the fact of the matter is that multinational corporations can, and should, be bearing the brunt of some of these exchanges. The U.S. Government should concentrate on regions where nascent democracies and grass root democratic organizations are in need of exposure to the U.S./Western ideals. The stable, long-term democracies should not be ignored, but government money for

²³ Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training, "FY 2006 Annual Report," [iawg.gov](http://www.iawg.gov), http://www.iawg.gov/rawmedia_repository/426ce8ac_156c_4af1_891e_b6fa33a1d2cc.

these programs should be more evenly dispersed, concentrating on at-risk regions that would benefit the most from these programs.

Additionally, Algerian nationals do not have the same access to travel to the U.S. as European nationals due to visa restrictions, income levels, and ease of travel, making these exchange programs even more valuable. On the other hand, Americans do not travel to Algeria in great numbers, due to the lingering security concerns coupled with two other factors: with the exception of some energy resources, there is simply not a significant amount of American investment in the country to warrant business travel and not enough Algerian development in the tourism sector for Algeria to be a U.S. tourist destination. Lack of exposure between the Algerian and American cultures breeds a lack of understanding and a lack of U.S. soft power in Algeria. There is simply not enough Algerian exposure to Americans to counter the negative images of Western ideals taught by terrorists groups such as the GIA, GSPC, and its successor Al Qaida in the Maghreb. By increasing exchange programs – both Algerian nationals to the U.S. and U.S. nationals to Algeria – the perception of Americans will be more balanced.

The U.S. Government also needs to sponsor more Professional Exchange Grants involving Algeria similar to the program conducted by Center for Higher Education in the Middle East (CHEME). This multinational program is one of only six projects currently sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Professional Exchange Grants, involving North Africa and the Mid-East. CHEME brings 28 secondary school teachers from 8 countries in the Mid-East to Cambridge, Massachusetts for a month long teaching seminar²⁴. These types of programs are beneficial to the U.S. because the more educational opportunities available to young people in the region, the less they will rely on the teachings of violent extremists.

Other educational programs are included in the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partner Initiative (MEPI), and while the intention should be praised for being on target, the program is not as successful as it should be due to poor funding oversights and too many layers of bureaucracy. The four pillars of MEPI; women, education, economic and political, are exactly the issues that should be addressed in the region, and the women's and educational pillars are great successes. The problem comes in when the local U.S. Embassy is taken out of the equation. Washington has made strides to combat this by putting a MEPI coordinator in each country, but the program would be more successful if the in-country coordinator had more discretion than Washington or the regional headquarters in Tunis and Abu Dhabi. The problems that arise when the regional headquarters or Washington administer programs result from a lack of direct oversight, a lack of understanding to exactly what each country should be focused on, and a lack of follow-up to the programs. Due to the three levels of program administration

²⁴ United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "Grants by Region: North Africa and the Middle East," [Exchanges.state.gov](http://exchanges.state.gov), <http://exchanges.state.gov/citizens/professionals/grant-region/north-africa-and-the-middle-east.html#>

(State Department, regional, in-country), tracking how much money is being distributed to each country and accountability are both problematic. MEPI should not be abandoned, but should be streamlined by removing some of the bureaucratic layers in Washington. Other improvements include giving more discretion to the MEPI coordinator in each country while limiting the function of this coordinator to MEPI projects only -- not as part of a portfolio of an already overworked Foreign Service Officer (State Department has recently instituted the latter). This officer should have full and direct knowledge of every program within the country and should have great discretion in choosing what programs are conducted (or not conducted) in the country. Too many MEPI programs approach the Mid-East as a monolithic entity causing the U.S. to appear unaware that each country is at a different point along the democracy/reform spectrum. When this perception occurs, the U.S. loses credibility in the region and appears as a rich benefactor who would rather write a check and get media attention than take the time to learn the issues in each individual country in order to address them on a personal level.

Educational programs need to be actively expanded into the areas of vocational training as well; giving at risk youth an employable skill will give them a stake in their futures. With life and job skills, these at risk youth will not feel powerless and trapped in their situations -- emotions which can lead to drastic actions. These projects are small investments but will pay huge dividends in the long-run in terms of training this region to have a peaceful, democratic future with a stable and growing middle class.

While increasing the exchange programs to the U.S., the U.S. Government will have to address the problem of individuals from countries needing special processing in obtaining travel visas. Security must remain paramount; however, the U.S. cannot afford to turn security measures into insurmountable obstacles for an entire region, further alienating the very people the U.S. needs to be winning over. Special processing procedures need to be handled both judiciously and expediently, but, most of all, respectfully. Americans must remember that it is the moderate Muslims who are paying the greatest price for the rise in violent Islamic extremism, as they are detested by the extremists and looked upon skeptically by Westerners. Americans and moderate Muslims alike must also remember that moderate Muslims are ultimately the key to defeating the terrorists, as they will be the closest and most influential voice in denouncing the violence, and those who turn to violence.

11 (A). Sponsor Schools

As a compliment to the exchange and educational programs, the U.S. must also commit more grant money to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) sponsoring schools in the country. The most problematic part of this is the Algerian Government itself, as there are very tight controls of the non-governmental organizations which can operate in Algeria. Again, if the U.S. can improve its credibility with the Algerian Government by taking some of the measures already suggested in this article the doors of opportunity will begin to open. There is a precedent

for building schools in Algeria; in 2005, U.S. Embassy Algiers used the Ambassador's Fund grant to sponsor a school in the Sahrawi refugee camps in southern Algeria. This \$20,000 grant was given to an NGO to build a school aimed at young adults (late teens, early 20's) and taught English, Principles of Democracy and Computer Skills. With these skills, young refugees would have marketable skills and not be relegated to a life of United Nations handouts or be so easily seduced by extremists into violent activities to improve their lives. In addition to marketable skills, the subject matter taught at this school encourages a natural working relationship with the West. More schools like these are needed around Algeria, particularly in the rural areas. In addition to academics, vocational and agricultural training should also be included in these schools, giving Algerians a career path rather than just a series of temporary jobs. The vocational and agricultural training will add to the diversification of the economy, which has a complete reliance on the hydrocarbon sector and foster a middle class.

12. Restructure Economy

While Algeria's politics are progressing at a steady pace, its economy is progressing at a much slower pace. Algeria's economic practices not only hamper growth within the country but ultimately play into the hands of terrorist organizations. The lack of a middle class, coupled with the lack of opportunity to advance one's position in life, causes feelings of powerlessness and insecurity about one's future. These emotions create fertile ground for terrorist recruiting.

The main problems with the Algerian economy are its lack of diversification and its antiquated financial sector. Algeria's abundance of energy resources has allowed it to become over dependent on its hydrocarbon exports, with petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas encompassing 97% of export commodities. Unfortunately, Algeria has not taken advantage of the influx of oil and natural gas revenue to invest in diversification of its economy. Without this diversification to create jobs in other sectors, the economy cannot create a solid foundation and a middle class. Another major obstacle is the financial institutions themselves which have not significantly evolved since Algeria's independence in 1962. The Algerian Government has recently called for change on these two fronts; however, these changes are still in developing form with no tangible results. Algeria is moving away from the Soviet style economy, but foreign investors are still wary of doing business in a country whose financial institutions are viewed as antiquated, opaque, and corrupt. Algerian banks are simply not yet able to complete normal business transactions in a timely manner to keep up with the globalized economy. Until recently, Algeria had spurned reforms in its banking system, causing foreign investors, and their money, to steer clear of Algeria; ultimately hurting the youth looking for job opportunities. Algerian financial institutions also need to expand the recently-instituted lending instruments, such as credit cards and loan practices. While a cash based economy might enjoy some benefits, the drawbacks are enormous. Without credit and loans, average Algerians cannot buy cars and houses that would build an investment in their future and a solid foundation for the country. The

lack of available credit stifles the growth of the middle class and the growth of the nation as a whole.

The U.S. is helping Algeria by posting a U.S. Treasury Department representative to the U.S. Embassy in Algiers. This representative is working with the Government of Algeria to take steps to modernize its financial sector by providing technical assistance, transparency, and aiding in regulatory changes. This type of collaboration is exactly what Algeria needs to join the globalized market and prepare for its accession to the World Trade Organization. Algeria must also take steps towards bank privatization to get the money flowing back into the Algerian economy beyond failed state-run enterprises. These innovations, along with membership in the WTO, will create a hospitable climate for foreign investment in sectors other than the hydrocarbon market.

Algeria's unemployment is a constant problem and destabilizing factor within the country. Although the official unemployment numbers for 2008 are estimated at 12.9%, that number must be put into context. In 2003, the unemployment numbers were as high as 31%²⁵. Although there has been some improvement in the Algerian economy, the latest unemployment numbers do not tell the full story. The picture is simply not as rosy as it seems. Three factors must be taken into account when analyzing the drastic drop in unemployment: First, people working in the informal economy are no longer considered 'unemployed'. Second is President Bouteflika's 'contract a durée déterminée' program (CDD), which gives individuals a job for a short amount of time (no longer than two years). This CDD program explains the drop in unemployment numbers, but it is not a long term solution to the problem only a temporary adjustment of economic figures. A mechanism for creating long term careers, rather than manipulating the unemployment numbers, must be implemented. The third is inflation, which has considerably outpaced wages, causing even fully employed Algerians to fall further into poverty. There are several ways to approach this. First is a diversification of the economy while dispersing money in the form of microloans to small businesses. The second is the attraction of foreign investment into the country, which will create more long-term jobs. The third is an introduction of vocational and agriculture schools to teach marketable skills to employable youth. Algeria is currently importing construction workers from China for new construction projects; this is counterproductive in a country with (at best) a 12.9% unemployment rate. With the proper training, Algerian youth could be filling these positions, keeping wages within the Algerian economy, lowering the unemployment figures in a meaningful way, and creating a stable middle class -- which reduces their chances of falling into the terrorist fold. The US has the ability to help Algeria with these three approaches to improving the Algerian economy, which will create a future for at-risk youth and distance them from violent extremist influences²⁶

²⁵ U.S. CIA, "The World Factbook: Algeria".

²⁶ U.S. CIA, "The World Factbook: Algeria".

Conclusion

These twelve suggestions are not quick fixes to the problem of violent Islamic extremists. Just as Muslims extremists did not become violent overnight, the solutions will not convince these extremists to embrace peace overnight. The programs put in place now will take generations to take root, just as the situations that provided fertile ground for the leaders of terrorist organizations to recruit followers took generations to manifest. The evolution of Islamic radicalization was lengthy in coming to fruition, and the process of de-radicalization will be equally time consuming.

These suggestions are also meant to be a compliment to the military wars that are raging in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the military is not the only solution, it is an important part of the solution -- when conducted within the bounds of international law. Brutal leaders such as Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al Zawahri and Abdelmalek Droukdel, and the like, are not candidates for de-radicalization and will not likely change their methodology; therefore, they must be dealt with on a military level and neutralized (killed, captured, discredited, rendered irrelevant) immediately. The long term success of decreasing terrorism to a tolerable level lies within the individuals who are recruited into terrorist organizations. It is these people who need to be redirected into peaceful methodologies using the twelve suggestions enumerated in this article.

To be successful in this endeavor, both the Governments of the United States and Algeria must remember that the relationship between the US and Algeria can be a symbiotic one, with each nation benefitting from an open and honest association. However, the foundation of this relationship must be an equal partnership based on mutual respect and understanding.

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