

HAS OUTREACH TO THE MUSLIM WORLD BY THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAD AN IMPACT ON MUSLIM ATTITUDES TOWARD TERRORISTS AND TERRORISM?

August 21, 2011

gloria-center.org

Prominent U.S. officials have claimed that only dwindling numbers of isolated extremists support terrorists engaged in violent attacks against Americans. Survey research on Muslim publics' attitudes reveals a different picture, one that undermines this interpretation. Evidence from key Arab states and some other important Muslim states (Pakistan, Nigeria) is reviewed. Markedly hostile views toward the security interests of the United States and its allies are shown to exist, despite efforts of the Obama administration. Since anti-U.S. terrorism retains the support of significant minorities, recruitment of much smaller numbers of actual terrorists should be expected to continue.

INTRODUCTION

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the national security of the United States and its allies continues to be threatened by mass casualty terrorism arising from non-state actors, militants inspired by their particularly extreme reading of the tenets of Islam. Recruitment to this cause is a global phenomenon not localized to the several venues in which U.S. armed forces currently are engaged in combat operations. Thus, improving cooperation with U.S. objectives has become a high priority in relations with Muslims in general, as well as with Muslim populations in key foreign states. How effective have recent steps taken by the United States been?

Early in the Barack Obama administration (2009-) numerous well-publicized efforts were undertaken to help reshape Muslim perceptions of the United States and its policies. This was, and is, an important component in the U.S. strategy to reduce the threat posed by al-Qa'ida, its affiliated terrorist organizations, and those unaffiliated sympathizers who undertake violent actions. President Obama's new approach had multiple audiences: governments of Muslim states, attitudes of Muslims publics, even the regard with which U.S. foreign policies are held by interested third parties, such as European governments and publics.

This paper attempts to measure the dividends associated with these efforts chiefly by reporting and analyzing one key element: trends in Muslim opinions as measured through survey research. It utilizes public opinion polls conducted during the Obama Presidency, 2009-2011, including surveys done by the Pew Research Center,^[1] by Zogby International for the Brookings Institution,^[2] by GlobeScan for the British Broadcast Corporation,^[3] and by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (hereafter: PIPA)^[4] of the University of Maryland.

The first component in the Obama communications strategy was to alter the diction with which American officials spoke of Muslim terrorists so to make clear that the United States was not at war with Islam or most Muslims. Top counterterrorism officials consciously deleted terms connoting a religious connection to the enemy from their vocabulary: out went jihad, jihadist, and other terms derived from the extremists' narrative, and in their place came new jargon: "the cancer of violent extremism."^[5] Talk of a "global war"

stopped, and John Brennan, Obama's top counter-terrorism advisor, publicly stated that "the President does not describe this as a 'war on terrorism'." [6]

Though even Obama himself had described U.S. policy as a "war" with a "handful" of "Al Qaeda terrorists and their affiliates" in May 2009, [7] official phrasings evolved further by September 2009. By then the goal was said to be to create an effective strategy against "al Qaeda and its extremist allies," [8] and the enemy had become characterized as "an exceptionally small minority of Muslims." [9] In December 2009, Obama's goals were presented as more limited still: to "defeat al Qaeda *in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, and *to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future*" (emphasis added). [10]

Throughout, the message consistently conveyed was that while the United States was engaged militarily against a "loose network of extremists," they and their sympathizers were isolated from the Muslim mainstream, and were enemies of both Muslims and Americans. [11] The core idea was aptly expressed by Brennan: "Why should a great and powerful nation like the United States allow its relationship with more than a billion Muslims around the world be defined by the narrow hatred and nihilistic actions of an exceptionally small minority of Muslims?" [12]

Concurrently, policy shifts signaled new sensitivity to Muslim concerns, including the announcement of a firm timetable for withdrawal from combat in Iraq by the end of August 2010, an embrace of the "Palestinian people—Muslims and Christians—[who] have suffered in pursuit of a homeland," [13] and suggestions that the U.S. patience for continued war in Afghanistan was joined to a plan to begin withdrawal from there in 2011. [14]

Thus rebranded, the new American message was delivered directly to Muslim audiences in a series of high-profile presidential events in predominantly Muslim countries, including an April 2009 town hall talk with Turkish students and a speech to parliament in Ankara (Turkey), and a major address in Cairo (Egypt). At Cairo University in June 2009, Obama publicly conveyed a conciliatory message, using deft rhetoric to emphasize mutual interests of Americans and Muslims worldwide. The threat of violence to both was characterized as involving only "a small but potent minority of Muslims... we reject the same thing that people of all faiths reject: the killing of innocent men, women, and children." [15] Well covered in their entirety by regional satellite television news outlets Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, these public speeches went beyond government-to-government approaches favored during the George Bush Presidency [16] and embodied outreach to the whole of the Arab and Muslim world, a process in which the United States was heard to identify with popular causes there including the creation of a Palestinian state.

Initially, Obama was received politely, and Egyptian audiences shown on television were enthusiastic; but the wider Egyptian public seems to have had some doubts, as polls taken prior to the Cairo speech revealed. In early 2009, PIPA showed that, by a margin of more than four to one, Egyptians *supported* those who engaged in attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and in Afghanistan. [17] In a poll taken in the weeks before and after Obama's speech, Pew reported that about one in seven Egyptians (15 percent) expressed support for suicide bombings in defense of Islam. [18] Another survey taken by Zogby in March-April 2009, the *2009 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, showed the highly unpopular U.S. presence at war in Iraq to be the "most central" issue by which the Egyptian public then intended to judge Obama's policy; and 42 percent of Arabs in the region overall listed resolving Iraq above all other issues, including the Arab-Israeli conflict (which 26 percent listed as "most important"). [19]

Since the Cairo speech, the Obama administration has not just talked; it has continued to reshape U.S.

policies to harmonize with preferences widely held in the Muslim world. Going beyond the bully pulpit, Obama's announced timetable for withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq, a timetable heard with skepticism in the Arab world, was achieved at the end of August 2010, when the U.S. combat role in Iraq indeed was brought to an end. The Obama administration also publicly assumed positions that appear to have been designed to convey that distance had developed between the United States and Israel.

Pointedly, Obama declined to visit the Jewish state and, when his vice president did pay a visit, the occasion was turned into a media spectacle highlighting tensions in bilateral relations, ostensibly due to U.S. objection to the announcement by an Israeli local government zoning authority permitting previously uncontroversial Jewish building in the eastern part of Jerusalem to resume. Later, the White House did little to correct journalists' interpretations that he had treated frostily Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a private White House dinner (March 23, 2010). Further, the Obama administration declined to use the U.S. veto at the United Nations to prevent a UN investigation into a May 31, 2010 incident involving Israeli commandos seizing a group of private Turkish ships attempting to deliver supplies to Gaza in defiance of an Israeli blockade.

Still, Muslim impressions of the United States, impressions that had developed over decades, may not so easily be tweaked. Moreover, the continuing realities of the War in Afghanistan—a war that Obama escalated—and the associated U.S. counterterrorism policies, clouded Obama's message. Ubiquitous internet images of U.S. soldiers in combat in Iraq remained available online at websites such as YouTube, and these videos continued to be widely viewed. While dated, these images reinforced the message contained in new videos of ongoing activities of U.S. Armed Forces fighting elsewhere in the Muslim world. Notably, U.S. air attacks on "violent extremists" in Pakistan sharply intensified to 198 in Obama's first 28 months in office (compared to 45 in the entire George W. Bush administration);^[20] in September 2009, U.S. Special Forces killed a key militant leader Somalia;^[21] in December 2009, new air raids were conducted in Yemen; and on May 1, 2011, U.S. Navy SEALs killed Usama bin Ladin in a raid on his compound at Abbotabad, deep inside Pakistan.^[22]

These realities dovetailed with sharply increased U.S. troop levels and intensified fighting in Afghanistan in 2009-2011, complicating the project of reducing the impression that U.S. counterterrorism policies amounted to a war against Muslims; but the basic assumptions in Obama's policy continued, as illustrated in his December 1, 2009 speech touting a new approach in Afghanistan. Even as substantial U.S. troop increases in Afghanistan were announced, it was declared that Muslim "public opinion has turned... we have forged a new beginning between America and the Muslim world—one that recognizes our mutual interest in breaking a cycle of conflict, and that promises a future in which those who kill innocents are isolated." Reaching out even to the Taliban, Obama alluded to a negotiated end, not victory, when he imagined, "We will support efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens."^[23]

As has been argued elsewhere,^[24] if Muslim views continue to reflect the pattern shown during the Bush years, this reading of Muslim opinions is delusional. The threat to the United States posed by adherents to the revolutionary doctrines espoused by Usama bin Ladin, al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and others was larger than was assumed by the Bush administration, chiefly because the social base that sympathized with their doctrine, political program, and terrorist actions was wide. This view, it must be acknowledged, challenges the interpretations of certain other scholars.^[25] However, since only small numbers of actual perpetrators are needed to make the terrorist threat operational, and since ample numbers of such threats

have persisted into 2011, one needs tools other than beliefs to guide one to discover if these threats truly are the last gasps of a tiny minority, or are the continuing manifestations of actions consistent with the attitudes and opinions of a significant portion in Muslim societies.

How large a portion of Muslim societies should properly be regarded as a national security threat to the United States cannot be left unanswered simply because authorities may prefer to regard it a politically taboo question. Indeed, in private, the Obama team apparently has been willing at least to entertain ideas different from their own public statements about the size of the support base for the “violent extremists.” As Bob Woodward has reported about Obama’s first strategic review of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan, aboard Air Force One on March 18, 2009, former CIA analyst Bruce Riedel briefed Obama himself on this very matter, stating then that “Bin Laden can’t be found *because he is swimming in a sea of like minded people*” (emphasis added)[26] in the tribal areas of Pakistan; Obama later adopted Riedel’s recommendations as U.S. strategy.

This empirical matter remains of central importance in understanding Obama-era policies. For example, the appeal of the central tenets of the ideology of militant Islamism, when combined with generalized anger over targeted U.S. Predator drone killings of militants in Pakistan, can be read to have yielded but a single volunteer, Faisal Shahzad, who alone attempted but failed on May 1, 2010, to detonate a car bomb in Times Square, New York City. Such an interpretation supports a narrow counterterrorism policy, chiefly targeting those committing violent acts. However, if one looks at other facts in the Shahzad case and interprets them differently, if the focus is placed on the “martyr’s videotape” released later by the Pakistani Taliban—a tape that clearly showed Shahzad’s attack to have benefited from assistance given by that Pakistani militant group[27]—then different policy inferences follow. Though not helped specifically by al-Qa’ida, evidence in the Times Square plot can be read broadly, and when it is so interpreted, it suggests both that individuals still at large inside the United States must have assisted Shahzad, and that Pakistani organizations—an organization specifically signaled in repeated[28] peace feelers by the Obama administration—remain joined to real operational terrorist threats to American civilians inside the United States.

This points to a more basic problem in using analysis of individual incidents in order to know the problem fully: Every single (even every thwarted) act of terrorism can be read either as evidence that the threat is narrow and Obama’s emphasis is right, or it can be read as a symptom of a broader phenomenon than Obama’s concepts accommodate. From a law enforcement perspective, as well as from a counterterrorism perspective focused on stopping operational plots, there is strong temptation to urge that assets be allocated on the basis of Obama’s assumption: Narrow targeting suits the tools available to address the problem. However, from a public policy perspective focused on maximization of public safety, the proliferation of more than thirty plots inside the United States involving self-starter volunteer terrorists in 2009-2011 alone suggests at least an initial need to entertain alternate possibilities. When one casts the net somewhat more broadly so as to identify trends, patterns, and foreign states most likely to be places of origin of air travelers to America bent on terrorist acts (e.g., the Christmas 2009 air attack on Chicago that originated with a radicalized Nigerian embarking from Yemen), one may discover that the threats in the age of Obama quite resemble those that vexed Bush.

This article cannot attempt, and should not be read to support, a critique of each of the several elements in the Obama administration’s counterterrorism policy. Here the aims are more limited: have changed U.S. policies, 2009-2011, had significant impact on Muslim opinions about matters of central concern to

U.S. national security? Looking at the first two plus years of this administration in terms of Muslim publics' reactions is truly a short slice of time, so this exercise must continue to be repeated and replicated. Attitudes have been forming over a longer period, so at times the trends over several years will be depicted below; but in order to have a clear picture that Obama-era policies are well conceived, one would anticipate them to coincide with a reduction in the portion of Muslim publics who are attracted to the doctrines and practices of militant groups who target the United States, its armed forces, and its interests. For this, one must look at the data.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE UNITED STATES, ITS PRESIDENT, AND ITS PEOPLE

Among the central myths of the Obama era is that he has reshaped the global image of the United States, helping foreigners to view the country more favorably, hence disposing them to be more likely to cooperate with U.S. goals. This is partially true, partially false. When looking at how Europeans and Japanese regard the United States, the myth aligns with reality. Comparing 2008, the final year of the Bush presidency, with 2010, one finds favorable ratings of the United States to be up 32 percent (to 63 percent favorable) in Germany, up 31 percent (to 73 percent favorable) in France, up 28 percent (to 61 percent favorable) in Spain, up 16 percent (to 66 percent favorable) in Japan, up 12 percent (to 65 percent favorable) in the UK, and even up 11 percent (to 57 percent favorable) in Russia.

Yet when the Muslim world is the focus, these dramatic changes in 2008-2011 disappear, and the landscape becomes more depressing, if more varied. In the large and important Muslim states of Egypt (down 2 percent to 20 percent favorable toward the United States), Turkey (down 2 percent to 10 percent favorable), and Pakistan (down 8 percent to 11 percent favorable), little changed during the 2008-2011 period. In other large and important Muslim states, the Obama years have brought some notable gains in U.S. favorability ratings: Indonesia (up 17 percent to 54 percent favorable in 2011), and Nigeria (up 17 percent to 81 percent favorable in 2010).^[29] Reflecting on these facts, it is fair to say that in most of these Muslim societies, very few have viewed the United States favorably in either the Bush or the Obama years.

In 2010, when Pew surveyed random samples in 22 countries, the four worldwide with the most unfavorable views of the United States were all Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim states. This remained true in 2011: Egypt (79 percent unfavorable), Jordan (84 percent), Turkey (75 percent), and Pakistan (75 percent).^[30] Pew found Muslim views of the United States were less favorable in 2010 than in 2009 in Indonesia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan.^[31] Positive views of President Obama declined in Pakistan (from 13 percent positive in 2009 to 10 percent positive in 2011), in Egypt (from 42 percent positive in 2009 to 35 percent positive in 2011), in Jordan (31 percent to 28 percent), and in Lebanon (46 percent to 43 percent).^[32] Brookings also compared Arab attitudes toward Obama himself, and found very substantial slippage to have occurred from 2009 to 2010. In the first weeks after his 2009 inauguration, Obama received a 45 percent positive rating, and negative marks from less than one in four (23 percent) Arabs in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Morocco, Lebanon, and Jordan. By July 2010, that sunny reception was completely gone: 62 percent of Arabs held negative views of Obama, and only 20

percent viewed him positively.[33] The *Arab Public Opinion Poll 2010* found that while a majority of Arabs in 2009 had been “hopeful” about U.S. policy in their region, by mid-2010, less than one in six (16 percent) still were hopeful; and 63 percent agreed that they were “discouraged” about it.[34]

Arab attitudes toward the American people, and not just toward its government, its policies, and its leaders, also matter. This is not simply because al-Qa’ida and other militant jihadists enthusiastically target American civilians as a central element in their announced and practiced strategy.[35] Attitudes toward civilians matter because repeated polls of Arab populations have shown that virtually no sympathy exists for civilian victims when those victims come from other disliked, non-Muslim populations, i.e. Israelis. In 2010, when asked to describe “your feelings” when “you watch Israeli civilian casualties in the conflict with the Palestinians,” 75 percent of Arabs agreed with the statement that the “Israelis brought it on themselves,” and 59 percent reported that they felt “revenge.” Only two percent reported that they felt “empathy.” Identification of feelings of revenge was found to be particularly high among Egyptians (65 percent) and Jordanians (68 percent).[36]

The assertion here is that attitudes toward Israeli civilian victims have relevance in thinking about Arab attitudes toward potential American civilian casualties, and it is rooted in an additional response found in Telhami’s poll for Brookings. When asked to name the countries “you think pose the biggest threat to you,” Arab populations surveyed in 2010 responded Israel (88 percent) and the United States (77 percent).[37] These were the top two “threats.” Separately, both Pew and Brookings also looked at Muslim attitudes toward “the American people” (i.e., civilians) in 2010. Pew found Americans to be least popular worldwide in Turkey and Pakistan. This is not news: In Pakistan, Americans never have been very popular, and in 2010, the favorable rating of 18 percent was virtually unchanged from the 2002 rating of 17 percent favorable. In Turkey, declining affection for Americans has been a steady trend in the years since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has taken over: down from 32 percent favorable in 2002 to 16 percent favorable in 2010.[38]

In its 2010 study, Brookings did not report its national samples, preferring to present on this question the aggregate numbers for all six Arab nations surveyed. Combining those answering “very favorable” and “somewhat favorable” into one positive category (and doing the same with the parallel “unfavorable” responses), one discovers that only slightly more than one in four Arabs (28 percent) view Americans favorably, and 57 percent hold unfavorable views of Americans.[39] Taken altogether, these surveys show very limited portions of the Muslim and the Arab populations to hold a positive attitude toward the American people.

ATTITUDES TOWARD TERRORISM

When it comes to talking about Muslim attitudes toward terrorism, upbeat commentary has steadily engaged U.S. readers during the Obama years. In July 2009, a Pew study stated that “over the last few years... many fewer Muslims than earlier in the decade [are] saying that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilians are justified to defend Islam from its enemies,” and, “Among the Muslim populations surveyed, support for suicide terrorism is limited...[and] Most reject Bin Laden.”[40]

Only later, and without self-correction, did Pew release data it had gathered prior to releasing the report cited above, surveys taken in May-June 2009 in the Palestinian territories and in June 2009 in Nigeria,

which showed the “limited” support for bin Laden actually amounted to *majority* support for him among Nigerian Muslims (54 percent) and Palestinians (51 percent).[41] In 2010, Pew again volunteered an overall interpretation that echoed the misleading July 2009 commentary quoted above: “There is no country in which a majority of Muslims endorse suicide bombing, voice confidence in Osama bin Laden, or express a favorable view of al Qaeda... Overall support for suicide bombing is much lower now among Muslim publics than it was in the middle of the last decade, although there have been slight increases in Jordan and Egypt.”[42]

Pew’s focus on majority opinion is substantially irrelevant: the United States confronts not an opponent in an election, but an adversary using organized violence to achieve political ends; but similarly misleading foci of some other public opinion scholars have so impressed that they have been invited inside the Obama administration. In 2007, the noted polling organization Gallup released a book-length study entitled *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. [43] The authors, John Esposito, a widely known Georgetown University Middle Eastern specialist and former (i.e., 1988) President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (M.E.S.A.), and his co-author, Dalia Mogahed, Senior Analyst and Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, flatly stated, “Muslims truly reject terrorism,” as they presented the terrorists’ status in Muslim societies “as ‘out group’ activity as any other violent crime.”[44]

This Gallup data was interpreted to show that only 7 percent of Muslims are “politically radicalized,” and that “about 9 in 10 Muslims are moderates.”[45] Curiously, the authors did not include anywhere in the book the data sets or tables to back up these assertions. Nonetheless, in 2009, Mogahed became a White House appointee to the “Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships” in the Obama administration, a role in which she remains in 2011.[46]

Even if the accuracy of these suspiciously low numbers is stipulated, far different inferences make more sense: If between seven and ten percent of Muslims worldwide are radicalized non-moderates, the potential behaviors of these 100 million plus Muslims are troubling. In the twentieth century, revolutionary leaders often succeeded in achieving their objectives with substantially less than majority support. Fidel Castro’s revolutionary army likely contained no more than 2,000 fighters, in a Cuba of 7 million.[47] Lenin and his Bolsheviks polled a mere 23.7 percent of the popular vote (winning 24.7 percent of the seats) in a November 1918 election for a constituent assembly to write a new Russian constitution,[48] but that level of passive public support, when paired with no more than 100,000 Red Guards, proved sufficient to seize and ultimately hold power over a country of more than 130 million.[49] In the twentieth century, it was not the ability of revolutionaries to gain active involvement of popular majorities that mattered; it was the willingness of small numbers of people to use violence with the tacit support of many and the active support of a few. In this context, it must be recalled that Usama bin Laden was not running for office any more than Fidel was.

The relevant question, therefore, is whether the current adversary, al-Qa’ida, enjoys *sufficient* social support to sustain its campaign targeting Americans, the United States, and its allies. Thus, one must set aside horserace-viewing eyes when reading public opinion polls and instead look at the size of, and trends in, the views of minorities in global Muslim populations, which, nevertheless, may actively support the U.S. enemy. Have these minorities gotten smaller in the wake of the Obama charm offensive?

Muslim Support for Suicide Bombing and Attacks on “Civilian Targets”

In light of events in January and February 2011, it is important to retain focus on Cairo. Shortly before Obama spoke there in June 2009, Pew had reported that 15 percent of Egyptians justified suicide bombing. Pew conveyed this in a nine-nation table entitled “Declining Support for Suicide Bombing.”^[50] Yet the percent of Egyptians who justified suicide terrorism honestly could then have been said to be “declining” only in an unsettling way: It is true that support was at its high in 26 percent in 2006, and it fell to 8 percent in 2007, but since then those who justify suicide attacks on civilians have only become more numerous, to 13 percent in 2008, and up again to 15 percent in 2009.

To measure Obama’s impact, one can look at responses to the same question in 2010 and 2011: In 2010, 20 percent, and in 2011, 28 percent of Egyptian Muslims told Pew that when they thought about “suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets,” these types of violence “often” or “sometimes” were “justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies.”^[51] While one must avoid reading too much into slight year-to-year variations, a reasonable interpretation would be that a persistent minority of Egyptians—more than one in four Egyptians in 2011—regarded a central tactic of the U.S. enemy, at least in some circumstances, as “justified.” This was a four-year upward trend in Egypt, 2008 to 2011, in regard to support for suicide bombing and “other forms of violence against civilian targets” (i.e., a war crime in international law).

Moreover, an uneven but upward trend seems underway regarding suicide terrorism in the wider global Muslim community in the Obama years. As in Egypt, support went up in Turkey (from 3 percent in 2008, to 4 percent in 2009, to 6 percent in 2010, and to 7 percent in 2011). Elsewhere, recent declines follow rising support: Lebanon (from 32 percent in 2008, to 38 percent in 2009, to 39 percent in 2010, before slipping to 35 percent in 2011), Indonesia (from 11 percent in 2008, to 13 percent in 2009, to 15 percent in 2010, before slipping back to 10 percent in 2011), and in Pakistan (from 5 percent in 2008 and 2009, to 8 percent in 2010, before falling to 4 percent in 2011).^[52] The trend among Muslims in the only other two Muslim nations Pew reported about, Jordan and Nigeria, is less clear but no less disconcerting. In Jordan in 2011, 13 percent justified suicide bombings, down from 20 percent in 2010, and 25 percent in 2008, but Jordan is, in a technical sense, at peace, unlike Lebanon or Pakistan. Small comfort, too, can be taken from Pew’s poll of Nigerian Muslims: one in three (33 percent in 2008; 34 percent in 2010) justified attacks against civilians “to defend Islam,” down from 43 percent in 2009.^[53] Table 1 (below) summarizes at a glance:

Table 1: “Some people think that suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Do you personally feel this kind of violence is justified?”^[54] (Figures listed below are the sum of those answering “often justified” and “sometimes justified”).

	2002	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turkey	13%	3%	4%	6%	7%
Pakistan	33%	5%	5%	8%	4%

Indonesia	26%	11%	13%	15%	10%
Egypt	n/a	13%	15%	20%	28%
Jordan	43%	25%	12%	20%	13 %
Nigerian Muslims	47%	33%	43%	34%	n/a

If one sets aside attention to the trends and looks only at the size of the population groups corresponding to these levels of Muslims justifying attacks on civilians, among those polled in Lebanon, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, and Egypt, the picture that emerges simply cannot be fitted to convenient notions of a socially isolated, tiny group of extremists. The population equivalents of Pew's 2010 "justifiers" of suicide bombing equaled 2.2 million Turks, 30.9 million Pakistanis, 13.5 million Egyptians, 59.4 million Indonesians, 900,000 Jordanians, and 37.9 million Nigerians.[55] Yet choosing to believe that extremists are small in number seems to be the preference guiding those closest to Obama's ear. This was made evident on December 6, 2009, when National Security Advisor (retired Marine Corps Gen.) James Jones told CNN viewers that "[t]he maximum estimate is less than 100 operating in the country" (i.e., Afghanistan).[56] In a social milieu in which between one sixth and one third of Muslims across many nations justify their actions, the small numbers of enemy fighters in any combat area, even if true, do not necessarily equate with support for the U.S. effort against them.

An April 2010 Pentagon status report on Afghan support for the U.S./N.A.T.O. forces reported in the *Washington Post* stated less than three in ten Afghanis saw U.S. soldiers as "good," and that that level of support had actually fallen nine percent in the four months after Obama's December 2009 announcement of a new strategy for Afghanistan.[57] Gen. Jones also seemed to be cherry-picking which "facts" to emphasize: in the whole Afghanistan-Pakistan theatre of operations in spring 2009, a leaked Department of Defense estimate placed the total number of fighters in arms and under the direction of the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and related jihadi organizations at nearly 60,000.[58] It must be emphasized: this estimate included no anti-American terrorists engaged in other hot spots (e.g., Iraq, elsewhere in the Middle East, in Yemen, or the Horn of Africa, etc.), nor did they include affiliated groups outside Afghanistan-Pakistan, nor jihadi self-starter volunteers throughout the rest of the world. Thus, the dimensions of the enemy can be reduced to the barest minimum.[59] While the 60,000 fighters in Afghanistan-Pakistan in 2009 were quite likely composed mainly of locals, ample evidence has continued to indicate that some internationalists have joined them.[60]

Attitudes Toward bin Ladin

In war, taking measure of an enemy's capabilities requires multiple indicators of the scope of its human support base. Another relevant measure is to solicit attitudes toward the leader of the jihadi movement: the reputation of defunct al-Qa'ida leader Usama bin Ladin serves as a second barometer of Muslim opinions worldwide about jihadi radicalism. Though there was slippage, bin Ladin retained considerable support, though not often majority support, across the Muslim world throughout the years of the Bush presidency.

Since 2003, Pew has asked whether Usama bin Ladin was a leader in whom the respondents had confidence would "do the right thing regarding world affairs." In 2003, they found that 71 percent of Palestinians, 58 percent of Indonesians, 55 percent of Jordanians, 49 percent of Moroccans, and 45

percent of Pakistanis agreed.^[61] Though bin Ladin’s positive support fell in the following years, more than one in three Pakistanis and Indonesians, and about one in five Jordanians and Egyptians, retained confidence in bin Ladin in late 2008 (i.e., at the close of the Bush years). In Obama’s first year (2009), a majority of Palestinians and Nigerian Muslims still had confidence in bin Ladin. Beyond the trends and percentages revealed, in looking at the real numbers here, it is fair to conclude that worldwide still, *well over one hundred million* people had “confidence” in bin Ladin at the time of his death. Table 2 (below) illustrates, 2003-2011:^[62]

Table 2: Confidence in bin Ladin to “do the right thing”

Confident	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011 real number
Usama bin Ladin will “do the right thing”								^[63]	
Pakistan	45 %	51 %	38 %	38 %	34 %	18 %	18 %	21 %	36.05million
Jordan	55 %	60 %	24 %	20 %	19 %	28 %	14 %	13 %	0.83million
Indonesia	58 %	35 %	33 %	41 %	36 %	24 %	24 %	24 %	57.01 million
Egypt	n/a	n/a	26 %	18 %	18 %	23 %	18 %	21 %	16.73 million
Turkey	15 %	7 %	4 %	5 %	3 %	3 %	2 %	3 %	2.21 million
Palestinian Territories	70 %	n/a	n/a	57 %	n/a	51 %	n/a	34 %	1.15 million
Nigerian (Muslims only)	44 %	n/a	61 %	52 %	58 %	54 %	27 % ^[64]	n/a	21.36 million

The 2011 survey (above) was completed prior to bin Ladin’s death. Nonetheless, substantially, these figures all display continuity when read in light of two surveys of Muslim attitudes conducted by PIPA (the Program on International Policy Attitudes) at the University of Maryland in 2007 and 2008. PIPA included questions that surveyed attitudes toward bin Ladin, examining samples in four important Muslim states: Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia. The specific question was “Overall would you say your feelings about Osama bin Laden are very positive, somewhat positive, mixed, somewhat negative, or very negative.” Compressing the two positive choices into one positive response, the two negative choices into one negative response, and omitting the mixed feelings, Table 3 (below) reports the results.

Table 3: “Feelings toward bin Ladin”^[65]

	2007	2007	2008	2008	2011 real number ^[66]
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	represented by the highest
	toward	toward	toward	toward	recent positive
	bin Ladin	bin Ladin	bin Ladin	bin Ladin	(in boldface)
Egypt	39	17	44	17	35 million
Indonesia	22	19	14	26	52.26 million
Pakistan	25	13	25	15	42.93 million
Jordan			27	20	1.74 million
Palestinian Territories			56	20	1.90 million
Turkey			9	68	6.63 million

Does this affection persist? The evidence is inconclusive. In 2008-2010, Telhami’s “Arab Public Opinion Poll” (released in 2010 by the Brookings Institution) also asked a bin Ladin question, though its form is not comparable to these other questions since respondents were simply asked to express which world leader the respondent “admired most.” This six-nation study found admiration for bin Ladin to be declining, from 14 percent in 2008, to 9 percent in 2009, down to 6 percent in 2010.^[67] The Pew and PIPA studies found somewhat higher levels of positive response to questions about bin Ladin. Yet bearing in mind the results of all of these polls, it is hard to see how an analysis of Muslim publics’ view of bin Ladin can conclude that a “decline in support” is the main theme. Rather, a close reading of all the evidence points to different inferences than those made by their authors and different inferences than those preferred by the Obama team. Since significant minorities have sympathized with bin Ladin, and since this support has persisted over nearly a decade, until strong evidence shows clear facts to the contrary, it should be assumed this indicates actual sympathy with bin Ladin continues to exist among substantially more than one hundred million Muslims worldwide.

Muslim Attitudes Toward Ongoing U.S. Wars

In the latter part of the Bush presidency, repeated surveys showed key Muslim publics to support in overwhelming numbers those mounting armed resistance to U.S. military efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2007 and 2008, PIPA survey respondents were asked if they approved of attacks on U.S. military forces in Iraq (Table 4) and in Afghanistan (Table 5). The specific question was: “Thinking about attacks on Americans, please tell me if you approve of them, disapprove of them, or have mixed feelings.”

Respondents were given options that included strongly approve, approve, have mixed feelings, disapprove, and strongly disapprove. The tables here have merged the two positive responses into one column.

Table 4: Do you approve of attacks on U.S. military troops in Iraq?[\[68\]](#)

	2007	2008	Real number represented by highest positive response (in boldface)
	%who approved	% who approved	
Egypt	87	83	65.25 million
Indonesia	17	26	58.76 million
Pakistan	31	26	50.22 million
Turkey		40	29.6 million
Jordan		72	4.32 million
Palestinian Territories		90	3.06 million

Table 5: Do you approve of attacks on U.S. military troops in Afghanistan?[\[69\]](#)

	2007	2008	Real number represented by highest response (in boldface)
	Percent who approved	Percent who approved	
Egypt	87	83	65.25 million
Indonesia	18	22	49.72 million
Pakistan	30	29	48.6 million
Iran [70]		26	18.5 million

PIPA, unfortunately, has not released later surveys that follow up on these important questions. Yet these dated responses show that while President Obama has distinguished between his opposition to the Iraq War and his support for the War in Afghanistan, such distinctions had little relevance to these Muslim respondents. Meaningful levels of support existed for those who attacked U.S. soldiers in each of the two campaigns, and without doubt, the problem was particularly acute in Egypt, the largest Arab state in the Middle East. To learn if the Obama approach has coincided with a reduction in these problems, one must rely on somewhat different questions.

For the fifth straight year, in 2011, Pew surveyed seven Muslim populations on the question of whether U.S./NATO troops in Afghanistan should be kept there “until the situation has stabilized” or be removed “as soon as possible.” Table 6 (below) makes plain that among Muslims, broad opposition to the War in Afghanistan has persisted in the Obama years, and majorities everywhere (except Nigeria) want the United States out even before stability is achieved within Afghanistan. As was the case regarding levels of support for those who attack U.S. troops (see Table 5, above), the lack of support for U.S. Afghanistan policy remains most acute in the Arab Middle East.

Table 6: Afghanistan: Should the United States and N.A.T.O. remove their troops as soon as possible? (Percent agreeing)[71]

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Turkey	74%	72%	66%	65%	75%
Lebanon	70%	66%	68%	69%	71%
Egypt	82%	80%	71%	81%	78%
Jordan	78%	76%	86%	81%	87%
Indonesia	80%	56%	66%	62%	71%
Pakistan	75%	72%	72%	65%	68%
Nigeria (all, not just Muslims)	42%	45%	41%	41%	n/a

As Pew’s narrative that accompanied its 2010 figures stated, “Obama receives overwhelmingly low ratings from publics in predominantly Muslim countries for his job performance on Iraq and Afghanistan.”[72] Despite very different U.S. policies under Obama—timed withdrawal from Iraq versus escalation of the war effort in Afghanistan—Muslim views of the two conflicts tightly correspond as if the two conflicts are one and the same. As Table 7 illustrates, with the exception of Nigeria, majorities in 2010-2011 in every Muslim nation disapproved of Obama’s handling of each of the two wars.

Table 7: Muslim views in 2011 on “the way... Obama is dealing with” Afghanistan and Iraq[73]

	Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama
	policies in	policies in	policies in	policies in
	Afghanistan (2011)	Afghanistan (2011)	Iraq (2010)	Iraq (2010)
Turkey	5%	70%	4%	68%
Lebanon	23%	71%	19%	78%
Egypt	18%	76%	20%	79%
Jordan	12%	87%	20%	74%
Indonesia	28%	56%	39%	52%
Pakistan	9%	52%	6%	53%
Nigeria	58% (2010)	27%	55%	28%

Attitudes Toward al-Qa’ida and the War Against It

Since September 11, American war efforts and counterterrorism efforts have focused most on stopping further attacks on the United States by al-Qa’ida. In 2010, Pew reported the responses of key Muslim publics, as well as that of a mixed sample in Nigeria. The first question was “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of al Qaeda.” As previously, the results depicted in Table 8 (below) have combined the “very” and “somewhat” responses into a single column:

Table 8: Muslim Views of al-Qa’ida in 2010-2011[74]

	Favorable		Unfavorable	
	2010	2010	2011	2011
Turkey	4%	75%	4%	76%
Egypt	19%	72%	21%	73%
Jordan	34%	61%	15%	77%
Lebanon	2%	95%	3%	95%
Palestinian Territories	n/a	n/a	28%	68%
Indonesia	22%	55%	21%	57%
Nigeria	27%	42%	n/a	n/a

A second 2010 question probed whether the U.S. war effort against al-Qa'ida enjoyed support, and is summarized in Table 9, below.

Table 9: Which comes closer to your views: Do you favor or oppose U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism? (2010 and 2011)[75]

	Favored in 2010	Opposed in 2010	Favored in 2011	Opposed in 2011
Turkey	19%	59%	14%	67%
Egypt	18%	73%	21%	68%
Jordan	12%	82%	9%	80%
Lebanon	30%	66%	35%	61%
Indonesia	67%	23%	55%	33%
Nigeria	67%	25%	n/a	n/a
Pakistan	19%	56%	14%	65%

These responses indicate that while the U.S. wars in the Muslim world do not have uniform support, the al-Qa'ida enemies of the United States and its allies have yet to convert that opposition into majority support. Indeed, the Egyptian public seemed to be wishing a pox onto both houses. Yet again, the United States and al-Qa'ida are not campaigning in an election. When significant minorities view al-Qa'ida favorably in places such as Egypt, Indonesia, and Nigeria, it in all likelihood represents a reality in which many millions of potential recruits may exist. The higher percentages of al-Qa'ida sympathizers in Jordan can provide only small comfort due to that state's small population.

Moreover, these 2010-2011 figures from Pew fundamentally align with earlier results reported by PIPA regarding surveys done in 2007 and 2008, when Pakistanis, Indonesians, Egyptians, and Moroccans were asked if the respondents supported al-Qa'ida's attacks on the U.S. mainland, and whether they agreed with al-Qa'ida's attitudes toward the United States. In that 2007 survey, about 15 percent of the population in each was shown to support both al-Qa'ida attacks on the United States and to agree with al-Qa'ida's attitude toward the United States.[76] In 2008, 21 percent in Egypt and 16 percent in Pakistan supported al-Qa'ida's attacks on the United States; and a further 33 percent in Egypt and 15 percent in Pakistan opposed the attacks but agreed with al-Qa'ida's attitude toward the United States.[77]

CONCLUSION

When one-fifth to one-sixth of the people in key Muslim countries support those who attack the United States, when many hundreds of millions express support for attacks on U.S. armed forces, when persistent minorities sympathize with bin Ladin and with suicide bombing of civilians, this poses a significant problem, especially in a world where most people remain largely passive about engagement in civic life, even as aroused minorities confront and bring down unpopular leaders (e.g., Tunisia, Egypt in

2011). What continues to matter to the security of the United States and its allies is the ability of small numbers of armed Muslim revolutionaries to articulate popular themes around which to construct a sufficiently attractive narrative that induces small numbers of committed people to join them in hating and attacking those they define as enemies. This is the essential strategic context in which thinking about public support for Muslim extremists, their goals, and their tactics must proceed. In war, attitudes matter because they guide some people's behavior. Americans' laser-like attention to the preferences of national majorities is largely irrelevant.

Whether to actually attack Americans is not likely ever to be put to a popular referendum, anywhere. What is gained in looking at surveys on these matters is a rough sense of the social playing field on which hidden threats loom. It did not take millions of Egyptians to fly American Airlines Flight 11 into the North Tower of the World Trade Center; it took one: Muhammad Atta, aided by four fellow Arab jihadists. The difficulty lies in discerning where the contemporary playing field ends, where the crowd merely watching the game ends, and where the part of the crowd cheering heartily enough to join the game begins.

The jihadi organizations—hiding as if they merely are part of the crowd—need only find a few new suicide terrorists to replace those who necessarily die in pursuit of their particular version of Islamism. Social environments help that process along, as much for unaffiliated self-starters looking to join a jihadi organization as for “lone wolf” jihadists looking to pick up their handgun and “go Fort Hood.”^[78] In the third Obama year of 2011, key Muslim communities still contain social leaders who continue to view U.S. responses to jihadi violence as illegitimate,^[79] significant numbers continue to adore bin Ladin, hate the United States, and are likely to support jihadists when they attack American soldiers. Initial signs that the Obama presidency offered a brake on social support for jihadism have proven to be a mirage.

**Dr. Gordon L. Bowen is Professor and Chairman at the Departments of Political Science and International Relations, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia USA.*

**This paper was originally presented to the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), November 4-6, 2010 at the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, USA. It was modified and updated in February 2011.*

^[1] Pew Research Center, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home, Global Image of U.S. Continues to Benefit* (Washington D.C., Pew Research Center, July 17, 2010),

<http://pewglobal.org/files/pdf/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Spring-2010-Report.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2011).

This survey was conducted April-May 2010, and was released July 17, 2010; and Pew Research Center, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image: Obama's Challenge in the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, May 17, 2011),

<http://pewglobal.org/files/2011/05/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Arab-Spring-FINAL-May-17-2011.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2011). This survey was conducted in March-April 2011

^[2] Shibley Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll* (Washington, D.C: the Brookings Institution and Zogby International, 2010),

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2010/08_arab_opinion_poll_telhami/08_arab_opinion_po

<http://www.gloria-center.org/2011/08/has-outreach-to-the-muslim-world-by-the-obama-administration-had-an-impact-on-muslim-attitudes-toward-terrorism/> (accessed February 14, 2011). This survey was conducted June 29-July 20, 2010, and released August 5, 2010.

[3] British Broadcasting Corporation and PIPA, *Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline* (Washington D.C. and London: BBC/PIPA, April 18, 2010), http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pipa/pdf/apr10/BBCViews_Apr10_rpt.pdf (accessed February 14, 2011). This survey was conducted between November 30, 2009 and February 16, 2010.

[4] PIPA/World Public Opinion.org, *Public Opinion in the Islamic World on Terrorism, al Qaeda, and U.S. Policies* (College Park, MD: Program on International Policy Attitudes, February 25, 2009), http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/feb09/STARTII_Feb09_rpt.pdf, pp. 9-10, (accessed February 14, 2011). This poll was released in late February 2009, but interviews were conducted in late 2008.

[5] John Brennan, “Remarks by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan at CSIS,” The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, May 26, 2009), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-assistant-president-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism-john-brennan-at-csis> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[6] John Brennan, “Remarks by John O. Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism – As Prepared for Delivery ‘A New Approach to Safeguarding Americans,’” Office of the Press Secretary, August 6, 2009), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-John-Brennan-at-the-Center-for-Strategic-and-International-Affairs (accessed February 14, 2011). This speech was delivered to CSIS in Washington, but was released by the White House.

[7] President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President on National Security at the National Archives,” Office of the Press Secretary, May 21, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-On-National-Security-5-21-09/ (accessed February 14, 2011).

[8] President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President at Wreath-laying Ceremony at the Pentagon Memorial, Arlington, Virginia,” Office of the Press Secretary, September 11, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Wreath-Laying-Ceremony-at-the-Pentagon-Memorial (accessed February 14, 2011).

[9] Brennan, “A New Approach to Safeguarding.”

[10] President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” Office of the Press Secretary, December 1, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[11] *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: The White House, May 2010), 17, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, p. 22 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[12] Brennan, “**New Approach to Safeguarding.**”

[13] President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt” Office of the Press Secretary, June 4, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/ (accessed February 14, 2011).

[14] Specifically, Obama said, “After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home” from Afghanistan; Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward”

[15] Obama, “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning, Cairo University.”

[16] Obama did not dispense entirely with the behind-closed-doors approach, either. He made a visit to King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia at his private farm near Riyadh in early June 2009; Voice of America News, June 3, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-03-voa6-68788802.html> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[18] Pew Global Attitudes Project of the Center for Research, *Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image Around the World* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Center for Research, July 23, 2009), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/264.pdf>, pp. 83-84, 99 (accessed February 14, 2011). The Egyptian section of the poll was taken May 24 to June 11, 2009.

[19] Shibley Telhami, *2009 Arab Public Opinion Survey* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland and Zogby International, 2009), http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/0519_arab_opinion/2009_arab_public_opinion_poll.pdf, p. 9 (accessed August 10, 2010). Survey was conducted April-May 2009, and released May 19, 2009.

[20] Bill Roggio and Alexander Mayer, “Charting the Data for U.S. airstrikes in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” *Long War Journal*, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[21] Jeffrey Gittleman and Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Militant in Southern Somalia,” *New York Times*, September 15, 2009, A1, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/africa/15raid.html> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[22] Karen De Young, “U.S. Helps Yemen in Attacks Against Suspected al-Qaeda Targets,” *Washington Post*, December 19, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/18/AR2009121804785.html> (accessed February 14, 2011). See also: Brian Ross, et. al., “Obama Ordered U.S. Military Strike on Yemen Terrorists,” ABC News, December 18, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/cruise-missiles-strike-yemen/story?id=9375236> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[23] Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward.” This was not the first time Obama wooed the Taliban. In a March 6, 2009, interview aboard Air Force One, the president responded positively to a *New York Times* reporter who asked, “Do you see a time when you might be willing to reach out to more moderate elements of the Taliban, to try to peel them away, towards reconciliation?” Obama replied, “...part of the success in Iraq involved

reaching out to people that we would consider to be Islamic fundamentalists, but who were willing to work with us because they had been completely alienated by the tactics of al Qaeda in Iraq. There may be some comparable opportunities in Afghanistan and the Pakistani region...” “Obama’s Interview Aboard Air Force One,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2009 (accessed March 18, 2009 via LexisNexis). The argument that through negotiations the Taliban can be substantially reduced as a threat to the United States most decisively has been refuted by Barbara Elias, “Know Thine Enemy: Why the Taliban Cannot Be Flipped,” *Foreign Affairs*, November 2, 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65639/barbara-elias/know-thine-enemy> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[24] See Gordon L. Bowen, “Measuring the Enemy: Social Support for Islamist Terrorism,” in Adam B. Lowther and Beverly Lindsay (eds.), *Terrorism’s Unanswered Questions* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009), pp. 32-59; Gordon L. Bowen, “A Small Subset? Measuring Social Support for Islamist Terrorism in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia,” *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, Vol. 28 (Fall 2006), pp. 131-50; and Gordon L. Bowen, “Revisiting the Pyramid: Militant Islamism as a Revolutionary Movement,” *Virginia Review of Asian Studies*, Vol. 9 (Fall 2006), <http://vcas.wlu.edu/VRAS/2006/VRAS%20Bowen.pdf>, pp. 49-84 (accessed February 14, 2011). See also: Gordon L. Bowen, “More Than al Qaeda and Its Affiliates: The Popular Appeal of the Terrorist Threat to the National Security of the United States,” Kim Shienbaum (ed.), *Can America Maintain Its Political, Military, and Economic Preeminence?: Sixteen Key Challenges* (Ceredigion, UK: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).

[25] Particularly misguided underestimations of the threat are to be found in John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (New York: Gallup Press, 2007); and Fawaz A. Gerges, “Al-Qaida Today: A Movement at the Crossroads,” *Open Democracy*, May 14, 2009, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/47959/pdf> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[26] Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), p. 106.

[27] Brian Ross and Laura Setrackian, “New Terror Tape: Times Square Bomber Wimped Out on Suicide,” ABC News, July 14, 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/terror-tape-times-square-bomber-wimped-suicide/story?id=11162584> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[28] Secretary of State Hilary Clinton also suggested negotiations with the Taliban in early 2009; see: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “Remarks at the International Conference on Afghanistan,” U.S. Department of State, March 31, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/03/121037.htm> (accessed February 14, 2011). This position was reiterated later. John F. Burns and Peter Baker, “British Plan Would Deploy Bigger Afghanistan Force,” *New York Times*, October 15, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/15/world/asia/15prexy.html?_r=1 (accessed February 14, 2011). Burns and Baker quoted Clinton saying in Moscow on October 15, 2009: “Our goal is to disrupt, dismantle, defeat al Qaeda and its extremist allies.... Not every Taliban is an extremist ally.”

[29] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 37; Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, pp. 1, 15-16, 92-95. Further confirmation of Obama’s positive impact on European views of the United States can be found in German Marshall Fund, *TransAtlantic Trends 2009* (New York:

<http://www.gloria-center.org/2011/08/has-outreach-to-the-muslim-world-by-the-obama-administration-had-an-impact-on-muslim-attitudes-toward-terror-transatlantictrends.org>, 2009), <http://www.gmfus.org/trends/>, pp. 6-8 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[30] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 37; Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, p. 13.

[32] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 44

[33] Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, p. 6.

[35] Greg Miller, "Bin Laden threatens to Kill Americans If Khalid Sheik Mohammed Is Executed," *Washington Post*, March 26, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/25/AR2010032503168.html> (accessed February 14, 2011); "Bin Laden Tape Harangues Obama," BBC, September 14, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8253827.stm (accessed February 14, 2011), which included the threat "If you stop the war, then fine. Otherwise we will have no choice but to continue our war of attrition on every front..."; Middle East Media Research Institute, "Osama bin Laden in New Message," MEMRI, September 14, 2009, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/3627.htm> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[36] Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, pp. 40-41.

[38] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, p. 18.

[39] Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, p. 14. The technique used here of combining slight and strong poll responses has its detractors, as is found in a critique of Pew's use of the technique in reporting results early in the 2000s. See: Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, *Correlates of Public Support for Terrorism in the Muslim World*, Working Paper (Washington D.C.: U.S. Institute for Peace, May 17, 2007), <http://www.usip.org/resources/correlates-public-support-terrorism-muslim-world-0> (accessed February 14, 2011). A different criticism finds it improper to combine results of separate national samples to create an overall "Arab" opinion at all; see: David Pollock, "Slippery Polls: Uses and Abuses of Opinion Surveys from Arab States," *Policy Focus*, No. 82 (April 2008), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=290> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[40] Pew, *Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image*, pp. 83-84. Pew also stated that among Palestinians, only, the level of support for suicide terrorism is both high and getting higher, but referred to this as "one key exception" to the larger trend.

[41] Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Mixed Views of Hamas and Hezbollah in Largely Muslim Nations: Little Enthusiasm for many Muslim Leaders* (Washington: Pew Center for Research, Feb. 4, 2010), 26: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=268> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[42] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than At Home*, p. 65.

[43] Esposito and Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?*

[46] The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "President Obama Announces Additional Members of Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships," Office of the Press

Secretary, **April 6, 2009**,

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Announces-Additional-Members-of-Advisory (accessed February 14, 2011).

[47] Carl Leiden and Karl M. Schmitt, *The Politics of Violence: Revolution in the Modern World* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), p. 190; Richard Fagen, "Revolution: For Internal Consumption Only," in Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), *Cuban Communism*, (New York, NY: Trans-action Books, 1970), p. 38.

[48] Oliver H. Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 21, 78-80.

[49] D. N. Collins, "A Note on the Numerical Strength of the Russian Red Guard in October 1917," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (October 1972), pp. 270-80.

[50] Pew, *Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image*, p. 84.

[51] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 55; Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, p. 170; Pew, *Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah: Most Embrace a Role for Islam in Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, December 2, 2010), <http://pewglobal.org/files/2010/12/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Muslim-Report-FINAL-December-2-2010.pdf>, p. 34 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[52] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, pp. 55-56; Pew, *Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah*, p. 34.

[53] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, pp. 65, 170-71. No Nigerian results were reported by Pew in 2011.

[55] Pew, *Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah*, p. 34; 2011 population estimates from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population. Nigerian figures have been adjusted to reflect that only approximately 50 percent of the national census is Muslim.

[56] John King, "Transcripts: State of the Union with John King," CNN Television USA, December 6, 2009, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0912/06/sotu.01.html> (accessed August 17, 2010).

[57] Craig Whitlock, "Pentagon Sees Afghan Instability Leveling Off," *Washington Post*, April 29, 2009, p. A9.

[58] TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA), "HB 9 Paramilitary Terrorist Insurgent Groups," March 1, 2009, p. 7, status: Unclassified/FOUO not for public distribution; leaked originally from: <http://wikileaks.org/leak/us-afghan-insurgents-2009.pdf> (accessed August 17, 2010; no longer available May 31, 2011). Available at: <http://www.mbc.edu/faculty/gbowen/us-afghan-insurgents-2009.pdf> (Accessed: February 14, 2011).

[59] Outside government, clear thinking about the issue of the size of the social support base for terrorism in the Muslim world clearly is being impeded from entering the discourse. No controversy in 2010 swirled as rapidly as did the controversy over the "Ground Zero Mosque," yet its imam and chief advocate, Feisal

Abdul Rauf, felt free to make counter-factual statements on this topic without challenge, such as the following one in a September 13, 2010, webcast with Council on Foreign Relations President Richard Haass: “Every religion in the world has extremists. Sadly, Islam is among them. All faiths have among their members those who distort and twist the core values for their own agendas. They advocate positions that we here and that decent people all over the world—and, I assure you, *99-point-whatever percent of the Muslims in the world absolutely, totally find this abhorrent*. Let there be no mistake, ladies and gentlemen. Islam categorically rejects the killing of innocent people” (emphasis added). In reply, Haass did not challenge the imam’s overblown claim, choosing instead to make a different, though related, point: “I think that skirts over a real issue. And again, to refer to something *you said, 99-plus percent of all Muslims are not terrorists. But when one looks at the world today, 99 percent of the world’s most dangerous terrorists are Muslims*” (emphasis added). See: “A Conversation with Feisal Abdul Rauf,” Council on Foreign Relations Website, September 13, 2010, http://www.cfr.org/publication/22940/conversation_with_feisal_abdul_rauf.html (accessed February 14, 2011).

[60] Michael P. Noonan, “E-Notes: Disrupting the Foreign Fighter Flow,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (October 2009), <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200910.noonanm.disruptingforeignfighterflow.html> (accessed February 14, 2011). Regarding Uzbek fighters in Pakistan and Afghanistan, see: Jeremy Binnie and Joanna Wright, “The Evolving Role of Uzbek-led Fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (August 2009), pp. 5-7. Regarding at least one Nigerian’s training with the Taliban and returning to Nigeria to attack there, see: “Nigeria: Islamist Concedes Link to Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, September 3, 2009, p. A6.

[61] Pew Center for Research, *Views of a Changing World* (June 2003), <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf>, p. 3 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[62] 2003 figures: Ibid. Attitudes about Iraqi resistance to U.S. from *ibid.*, p. 4; 2005 figures: Pew Center for Research, ***Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics*** (Washington, D.C.: Pew Center for Research, **July 2005**), <http://pewglobal.org/2005/07/14/islamic-extremism-common-concern-for-muslim-and-western-publics/>, p. 46 (accessed: February 14, 2011); 2006 figures: Pew Global Attitudes Project, “The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Center for Research, June 2006), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253topline.pdf>, p. 61 (accessed February 14, 2011); 2008 figures: Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on Increase in Europe,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Center for Research, September 2008), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/262.pdf>, p. 40 (accessed February 14, 2011); 2009 figures: Pew, *Mixed Views of Hamas and Hezbollah*, pp. 21, 32; 2010 figures: Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, pp. 65, 132-33 (accessed August 13, 2010).

[63] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, pp. 45-46; Pew, *Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah*, p. 30. Real number equivalents used in this table and throughout this article are illustrations of the contemporary (i.e., 2011) potential support base of terrorists though it is recognized that the poll was taken a few months earlier, in 2010. 2011 population estimates from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population (accessed: February 14, 2011). Nigerian figures have been adjusted to reflect that only approximately 50 percent of the national census is Muslim. Population totals also were compared to most recent figures appearing in World Bank, *World*

Development Report: Selected Indicators (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2008),

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2009/Resources/4231006-1225840759068/WDR09_22_SWDIw

, pp. 352-53 (accessed February 14, 2011). Their figures generally list a 2007 date. Other sources consulted, e.g. United Nations, *Population and Vital Statistics Report*, Series A, Vol. 60, No. 2 (New York: United Nations, 2008),

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/vitstats/Sets/SeriesA_July2008_complete.pdf, pp. 4-11

(accessed February 14, 2011), rely on possibly more precise national censuses, but many of these are too dated to be of current value. National numbers used in computations in this chapter were: Indonesia 237 million, Pakistan 171.7 million, Egypt 79.7 million, Turkey 73.7 million, Jordan 6.4 million, Nigeria 158 million (but real numbers for Nigeria have been reduced by half, given that only 50 percent of the Nigerian census is Muslim). Palestinian territory populations were not listed by the World Bank. Estimate of 3.4 million used here comes from Population Resource Center, "Executive Summary: Israel and the Palestinian Territories," <http://www.prcdc.org/files/Israel.pdf>, p. 1 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[64] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, pp. 65, 133. There are problems with the results from the 2010 Nigeria sample on the bin Ladin question. Detailed year-by-year figures are listed on page 133. They do not agree with earlier Pew reports on Nigerian Muslim views, see: Pew, *Mixed Views of Hamas and Hezbollah*, p. 21, from which the 2009 number in the current author's table is derived. Nor do they fit Pew's own description of Nigerian Muslim views on this elsewhere in the narrative section of Pew's April 2010 report, e.g. on page 65. This discrepancy probably arose from an apparent failure to disaggregate Muslims' responses from non-Muslim Nigerians' responses in the tables on page 133 of the 2010 report.

[65] 2007 figures: Steven Kull et. al., *Muslim Public Opinion on U.S. Policy, Attacks on Civilians, and al Qaeda* (College Park, MD: Program on International Policy Attitudes, April 24, 2007),

http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf, p. 16 (accessed May 31, 2011);

2008 figures: Steven Kull et. al. and PIPA/World Public Opinion.org, *Public Opinion in the Islamic World on Terrorism, al Qaeda, and U.S. Policies: Questionnaire* (College Park, MD:

worldpublicopinion.org/Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, February 25, 2009), http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/feb09/STARTII_Feb09_quaire.pdf, p. 12 (accessed May 31, 2011).

[66] World Bank, *World Development Report*, pp. 352-53.

[67] Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, p. 66.

[68] Kull and PIPA, *Public Opinion in the Islamic World on Terrorism: Questionnaire*, p. 14.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 15. Responses to the Afghanistan question were not reported by PIPA for Turkey, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories.

[70] PIPA/World Public Opinion.org, *Iranian Public on Current Issues* (Washington D.C.: World Public Opinion.org, September 18, 2009),

http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/sep09/IranUS_Sep09_rpt.pdf, p. 7 (accessed February 14, 2011).

[71] Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 52; Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at*

Home, pp. 21, 150-52.

[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 159, 162; Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 53.

[74] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, p. 108; Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, p. 53. See also: Pew, *Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah*, p. 27.

[75] Pew, *Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home*, pp. 140-41; Pew, *Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image*, pp. 49-50.

[76] Kull and PIPA, *Muslim Public Opinion on U.S. Policy*, p. 16.

[77] Kull and PIPA, *Public Opinion in the Islamic World*, p. 24.

[78] I.e., to emulate Palestinian-American Nidal Malik Hasan, accused killer of 13 and shooter of 43, on November 5, 2009, at Fort Hood, Texas.

[79] E.g., more than 60 percent of Pakistani journalists surveyed in early 2011 were found to regard U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan as “terrorism”; see: Lawrence Pintak and Syed Javed Nazir, “Inside the Muslim (Journalist’s) Mind,” *New York Times*, February 12, 2011), http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/02/12/opinion/20110213_pakistaniopart.html (accessed February 14, 2011).