Rethinking the Threat of Islamic Extremism: The Changes Needed in U.S. Strategy

By Anthony H. Cordesman


Please provide comments to acordesman@gmail.com

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Executive Summary

The U.S. needs to fundamentally rethink key aspects of its struggle against terrorism and Islamic extremism. It has made great progress in improving its homeland defenses and international counterterrorism efforts. It has restructured its security partnerships with largely Muslim states to help give the same emphasis to counterterrorism that they have given to military security. The United States is also making major progress in defeating the ability of ISIS to hold territory, act as a protostate, and provide a sanctuary for training fighters and efforts to widen its grasp and number of affiliates.

At the same time, far too much of the U.S. effort is now centered around the immediate threat from ISIS, and the external threat it poses to the U.S. homeland and to Europe. Far too few in the United States understand the importance of the strategic partnerships the United States has forged with largely Muslim states, the fact that the primary fight with Islamic extremism is inside Muslim states, and that it is a fight for the future of Islam—rather than the limited threat it poses to faiths and countries outside it.

The threat of Islamist terrorism within the United States and Europe has been all too real, but it has only been a minor aspect of a far more serious series of threats it poses within the Islamic world. The fight is primarily a fight between moderate governments and popular majorities committed to Islam’s traditional values and extremists seeking to use almost any form of violence—and mix of terrorism and asymmetric warfare—to seize power. It is a “clash within a civilization” and not a “clash between civilizations.”

The United States, Europe, and other non-Muslim states cannot defeat terrorism—or defeat the broader threat posed by Islamic extremism—by trying to isolate themselves from Muslim countries, or by treating Muslims as if violent Islamic extremist were more than a tiny minority of Muslims. Islam is growing too quickly, and is far too important a force within the world. Polls show that the vast majority of Muslims oppose extremist ideology and violence, and that most Muslim governments are key partners in the fight against extremism and terrorism, as well as key security partners in dealing with other threats.

The key challenge to the United States is to revitalize its security partnerships, to work with largely Muslim states, and to develop better collective approaches to both the threat of extremism and other threats like those posed by Iran. The United States needs to show that it can act decisively and that it is a partner that its partners can trust. At the same time, the United States must work with its Muslim security partners to help them address their own failings in developing effective counters to extremism and in developing better efforts at collective defense, and to address their failure to fully address the causes of Islamic extremism.

Both the West and Muslim states have also focused too narrowly on the symptoms of Islamic extremism rather than curing the disease. Movements like ISIS, al Qaeda, and the Taliban are the symptoms of the disease of extremism, and not the cause.

Far too little attention is being given to key civil trends and problems within a steadily expanding Islamic world. These problems have been the key causes of Islamic violence and extremism, and the political upheavals within largely Islamic states that began in 2011. They include sharp population pressures, failed governance and corruption, ethnic and sectarian division, grossly inadequate economic development, massive unemployment and dead end careers, and related issues that could feed extremism and violence for decades to come.
The United States—and both its Muslim and non-Muslim allies—need to focus on the fact that extremist violence can be contained and defeated in detail, but no lasting victory can be possible until the causes of extremism are addressed as well as the fight against extremist movements. In practice, the forces that now divide the Islamic world will almost certainly make the “fight” against Islamic extremism part of a struggle that will go on long after ISIS is defeated in Iraq and Syria, and that will have to deal with new movements, and broader tensions between Sunni and Shiites and other minority sects.

The United States and Europe also need to address the forces that alienate Muslims in their own countries, and drive a tiny minority to violence. This cannot be done by excluding Muslims from entering their territory, by letting prejudice and fear dominate security policies, or by confusing the true teachings and history of Islam with extremism. Doing this achieves the very goal that extremist movements have in using terrorism: isolating Muslims from the rest of the world and pushing moderate Muslims towards extremism. The key must be better vetting, better cooperation with the governments in Muslim states in vetting and security procedures, and mobilizing the support of modern Muslims in the United States and Europe. Partnership, not prejudice, is the answer.
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Understanding the Threat of Islamic Extremism

Far too much of the political rhetoric in the United States has focused on Islam as if it was a unique force leading to extremism, and on the threat extremist terrorists pose to the U.S. homeland and to Europe. At the same time, experts need to be careful about criticizing some aspects of President Trump’s campaign. There does seem to be a fear of actually talking about the subject, and an effort to be politically correct by finding ways to avoid linking “Islamic” to “extremism.”

The end result, however, does more harm than good. Far too many discussions of Islamic extremism and violence fail to address or highlight the inherent contradiction between the basic values of Islam, and the extremists who use it as a cover for their extremism violence, hatred, and search for power.

Failing to openly address “Islamic extremism” is like failing to address the fact that all the world’s great religions have dangerous extremists who pervert their values, or to address the historical reality of Christianity during the worst moments of the battles between, during, and in the Reformation and Counterreformation, and the Crusades, or to address the most extreme aspects of Jewish violence during the period before 69 AD.

The reality is that Muslims, non-Muslims, and the Trump Administration cannot afford to ignore the reality that a small minority of Muslims is using Islam to attack the very fabric of modern civilization. Calling such violence “Islamist” extremism rather than “Islamic” may soften the semantics, but it does not alter the reality. Religiously inspired fighting within Islam has a critical source of violence, not only in terms of terrorism but within a far more serious pattern of civil wars, insurgencies, and efforts to seize power within the largely Muslim states.

It is also a pattern of violence whose primary casualties are other Muslims, not only in terms of deaths and injuries, but also in terms of hope for development and for the future. The grim irony behind “Islamic extremism” is that it claims to return to the roots of Islam at a time when Islam led the world in culture, science, medicine, and development—but calls for social, economic, and intellectual practices that are so extreme, that it is hard to see how any state that adopts them can actually grow and develop and meet the needs of its population.

There are Grim Links between Islamic Extremism and Global Terrorism and Violence

The struggle against Islamic Extremism must go far beyond the threat of terrorism to be successful, and terrorism is only part of the overall pattern of Islamic extremism and violence. Nevertheless, Figure One shows that it is still a very critical part. During the period between the start of the upheavals in the Arab world at the start of 2011 and the end of 2015, the START terrorism data base that the U.S. State Department uses to report statistics on terrorism lists a total of 62,022 incidents.¹

Such numbers do present serious uncertainties. The START data base is one of the best and most transparent unclassified data bases on terrorism. However, a review of the START data base shows that it fails to identify the extent to which attacks are made by specific religious extremist groups, or are the result of sectarian fighting.
The detailed data in the chronologies do identify perpetrator groups where this is sometimes possible, but START—like most other unclassified efforts—must draw heavily on media reporting that often avoids making such distinctions for political reasons. As a result, the input data and outputs of the START model are sometimes “politically correct” at the expense of reality. As a result, there is no reliable way to tie counts of terrorist incidents and deaths specifically to Islamic terrorism, or to broadly quantify the religious beliefs of the perpetrator or the target.

However, if one looks at the patterns in the total attacks in largely Muslim states in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia, some broad patterns are all too clear. These states account for 52,295 of the 62,022 incidents or 84 percent of all incidents. Moreover, if one focuses on the total number of terrorist attacks in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, they account for 22,953 incidents or 37 percent of the global total.

### Islamist Extremism as the Cause of Total Terrorist Killings

The number of incidents is only part of the story. The impact of terrorist acts is more critical than their number. There are many ways to measure this impact, and deaths or “number killed” are only one of the most serious. Data on the numbers killed ignore the massive human impact of terrorism on refugees, displaced persons, economic damage, failure to educate, loss of jobs and businesses, effective governance and rule of law, cuts in the GDP and GDP per capita, and economic growth and development—as well as on the inability to implement the true values of Islam.

But every death does matter, and **Figure Two** compares a different set of estimates of terrorist attacks versus deaths, drawn from the START database, and made by the Institute for Economics and Peace in its *Global Terrorism Index 2016.*[^1] **Figure Two** shows that 72 percent of the deaths worldwide occurred in Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria—countries with high levels of Islamist terrorism.

**Figure Three** addresses both incidents and casualties. It shows data reported in the *Arab Human Development Report for 2016* which compares attacks, killed, and wounded. It uses a slightly different definition of the Arab world, but finds that 36.1 percent of the terrorist incidents (26,058 out of 72,184) between 2000-2014 occurred in the Arab world. So did a total of 43.68 percent (74,080 out of 169,589) of the killings, and 49.12 percent (127,957 out of 260,496) of the wounded. These latter calculations are important for several reasons. They cover the fully period from 9/11 to the peak of ISIS gains, well over 90 percent of the area involved is Muslim, the authors and consultants drafting the Arab Development Report are largely Arabs and Muslims, and they chose to use the same START data base used by the U.S. State Department and many analysts in the West.^[3]

The START data base also shows that some perpetrators are far more dangerous than others. According to the START data base, only three Islamist extremist movements—ISIS, Boko Haram, and Taliban—accounted for 55 percent of deaths in 2015. ISIS killed 6,141 in 2015, or average of 6.7 deaths per attack. ISIS accounted for 62 percent of deaths in Iraq, even though the perpetrator in 37 percent of the cases was unknown. Boko Haram killed 5,478, some 75 percent in Nigeria, an average dead of 11 per attack. The Taliban killed 4,502, a figure 18 percent above its total in 2014, and an average of 4 deaths per attack.
Figure One: Patterns in Global Terrorism: 2011-2015

Total Worldwide: 2011-2015

Figure Two: Attacks versus Deaths from Terrorism in 2010-2015

Attacks

Nearly 40 per cent of terrorist attacks in 2015 occurred in Iraq, Nigeria and Afghanistan.


Deaths

2015 saw the first reduction in terrorism since 2010, although it was still the second worst year recorded for terrorism.

**Figure Three: Attacks versus Deaths and Wounded from Terrorism in 2010-2015**

Number of terrorist attacks, 1970–2014

Terrorist attacks and their victims in the Arab region versus the rest of the world, 2000–2014

Islamist Extremism and Insurgency versus Terrorism

Important as these figures are, the Western focus (and that of the Obama Administration and President Trump during his period as a candidate) on terrorism to the exclusion of other forms of violence means that the full impact of Islamic extremism is vastly understated when the total levels of other forms of Islamic extremist violence are ignored. Most of the unclassified data on terrorism do not include at least a significant number of unattributed attacks between sects like those between Sunni and Shi’ites, or the impact of Islamist extremism on the killing, injury, displacement, and kidnapping of minorities. Some only include civilians, and do not include the security personnel that are killed or injured.

At least in the MENA region, the fighting between governments and extremist movements has meant that the major threat to several key governments does not come from terrorism per se, but from insurgencies—where terrorism is only one weapon of many.

No meaningful casualty data exist on the impact of extremism in Libya and Yemen, but it is clear that sect has been a key cause of fighting, suffering, and economic loss in Yemen. It has also been the major cause of casualties in Iraq since 2011, and of much of the casualties in Syria—although such losses have been driven by the ruthless disregard for civilian life by the Assad regime, Iran, Hezbollah, other Shi’ite militias, and Russia.

In the case of Iraq, the best source of data is Iraq Body Count (https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/). Iraq Body Count estimates that—as of the end of November 2016—at least 67,049 Iraqi civilians have died from fighting, triggered largely by Islamist extremism and religious violence since U.S. forces left at the end of 2011. Iraq Body Count also estimates that at least 52,576 civilians have died since ISIS first invaded in late 2013—with a possibility that the total is at least 10,000 higher.

In the case of Syria, there is no way to assign deaths to extremists vs. a collective form of state-driven terrorism and warfighting, but it is all too clear that the number of dead in Syria alone since 2012 is vastly greater than the total killed from terrorism worldwide since 1970. A summary of the different estimates as of October 2016 illustrates this point all too clearly:

Estimates of deaths in the Syrian Civil War, per opposition activist groups, vary between 301,781 and 470,000. On 23 April 2016, the United Nations and Arab League Envoy to Syria put out an estimate of 400,000 that had died in the war.

UNICEF reported that over 500 children had been killed by early February 2012. Another 400 children were reportedly arrested and tortured in Syrian prisons. Both claims have been contested by the Syrian government. Additionally, over 600 detainees and political prisoners died under torture. The United Nations stated that by the end of April 2014, 8,803 children had been killed, while the Oxford Research Group said that a total of 11,420 children died in the conflict by late November 2013. By mid-September 2016, the opposition activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported the number of children killed in the conflict had risen to 15,099, while at the same time 10,018 women were also killed.

The number of fatalities in the conflict, according to the Syrian opposition website Syrian Martyrs, is 151,888, updated to 30 April 2016. The number includes 35,859 rebels but does not include members of the government security forces or pro-government foreign combatants who have died. The Syrian Martyrs number of civilian deaths is significantly higher than the ones presented by other organizations, including the UN, one reason being they record deaths even when no name is given for the reportedly killed individual.

Other estimates range from 292,815 to 470,000…
Estimates by the U.S. State Department indicate that some 70 percent of Iraq’s non-Islamic minorities have left the country since 2003…

**The Broader Costs of Extremism Go Far Beyond the “Butchers Bill”**

These fatalities are only part of the story. No Islamic extremist movement has yet been able to capture and hold enough territory long enough to demonstrate the full extent to which such ideologies will make effective economic development impossible. Far too many critiques of such extremism ignore the fact that Islamic extremism will impose immense economic and human costs on any society that it can control over time. These critiques also ignore the contrast between the advances in science, medicine, and culture that the tolerance of the original Caliphates made possible, and the retreat into dysfunctional education, governance, and economics demanded by movements like ISIS, al Qaeda, and the Taliban.

There is no doubt, however, about the costs of Islamic extremism in blocking the development of Afghanistan under the Taliban, and the damage ISIS has done in the areas it has governed in Syria and Iraq. Its governance has largely destroyed modern education and the basis for global competitiveness. Its restrictive social customs have led to corruption and abuse, and its economics have consisted largely of theft, ideological fundraising, and extortion. Islamic extremism has never even attempted to offer a practical solution to any of the major problems driving instability in the region, it has only exploited these forces and made them worse.

**The Broader Economic costs of Extremism**

The broader economic burden of extremist violence has affected the entire MENA region and much of the rest of the Muslim world. Nothing approaching reliable estimates exist of the cost of the efforts to fight Islamist extremists to the governments involved. However, Iraq spent some 12 percent of its GDP on fighting ISIS and counterterrorism in 2015. Saudi Arabia also spent some 12 percent of its GDP on security in 2015, driven in large part by the threat from extremism, a sectarian threat from Iran, and fighting with Shi’ite Houthi and Salah factions in Yemen.

If one also considers the expenditures of two key countries in South Asia, it seems likely that the total cost of dealing with Islamist extremism in the MENA region, Afghanistan, and Pakistan is now well over 6 percent of the region’s total GDP. This is a critical economic burden on poor developing states, and makes it even harder for moderate regimes in largely Muslim states to meet their people’s expectations and reduce the causes of extremism.

The UN’s Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia published a study in November 2016 entitled *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region in 2015-2016* that addressed the broader costs of the political upheavals and fighting in the MENA region that began in 2011. It concluded on a region-wide basis that,  

> The transition of Arab countries, initiated in 2011 by sociopolitical events collectively known as the Arab Spring, has resulted in instability and, in several cases, war. The adverse effects have been felt not only in those countries enduring armed violence to varying degrees, such as Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, but also in neighboring countries. …The Survey finds that – as compared with projections made before 2011 – conflicts in the region have led to a net loss of $613.8 billion in economic activity, and an aggregate fiscal deficit of $243.1 billion.

Conflicts have worsened other economic and social indicators, such as debt, unemployment, corruption and poverty. The international refugee crisis has placed a strain on communities that have lost populations, on countries coping with refugee influxes, and above all on the refugee populations themselves, which suffer
from poor health and malnutrition, and have limited access to employment and education. Crisis affects everyone, but women have faced the most adverse effects. Greater policy interventions are needed to address these issues and to prevent the rise of a “lost generation” of Arab youth affected by conflict.

The UN report provided the following summary description of the longer-term cost of recovery and reconstruction in Syria,\(^7\)

Now in its sixth year, the Syrian civil war has led to one of the most severe humanitarian crises of the new millennium. The international community has failed to end the conflict or provide adequate aid. Recent estimates put the total death toll at 470,000. The country’s population has decreased by one fifth, due to casualties and emigration. The war has been accompanied by atrocities, the rise of the so-called “Islamic State”, a regional and global refugee crisis, and external intervention that has only fueled hostilities...The conflict has left a once middle-income economy in ruins... According to National Agenda for the Future of Syria (NAFS) estimations, the Syrian conflict has caused losses of $259 billion since 2011, including $169 billion from lost GDP as compared with pre-conflict projections, and $89.9 billion from accumulated physical capital loss.

The *Arab Human Development Report for 2016* raises similar issues. One section warns that,\(^8\)

Armed conflict is destroying the social fabric of the Arab region, causing massive loss of life not only among combatants, but also and increasingly among civilians. Conflicts today are considerably less well defined, and civilians, including children, are paying the price, as many more fatalities occur away from battle zones. For every person killed directly by armed violence, between 3 and 15 others die indirectly from diseases, medical complications and malnutrition.

Conflicts also interfere with economic development by destroying productive economic resources, capital and labor, especially within the territory of the nations where they are fought.

Conflicts divert resources primarily through high military spending, which reflects the multiple conflicts in the region, the legacy of cold war rivalries and the nervousness of political systems on the defensive. Several Arab countries are among the most militarized in the world and are characterized by huge military outlays and high proportions of the population under arms (table 1.4). However, while arms-producing countries may reap economic dividends from the arms trade, this spending represents only missed opportunities to invest in broader economic and social progress among Arab countries.

The five biggest global importers of arms during 2009–2013 were India, China, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, the latter two Arab countries importing 32 percent of the global total

If faced with real military threats, Arab countries, including those with large defense budgets, almost invariably call on foreign troops for protection and pay the major share of the cost. This was the case, for example, of the second Gulf War (1990–1991). “Such dependence mocks the vast sums invested in Arab arsenals”, a recent ESCWA report dryly observes...Rising military expenses curtail spending in more effective areas such as education, health care, poverty reduction or infrastructure. They are also linked to the mounting cost of maintaining armed forces, which makes these expenditures even more exorbitant.

Conflict and destruction trigger massive displacement. In 2014, almost 41 percent of the world’s forcibly displaced population were represented by the Arab region, which has only 5 percent of the world’s population ...The share – more than 22 million people – was almost five times higher in 2014 than 14 years earlier. This increase was first driven by the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the civil war in Darfur around 2003 and then by the Syrian crisis in 2011...Some 98 percent of forcibly displaced individuals from the region originate from the conflict-ridden countries of Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. A sizeable share of these vulnerable groups are children...

Besides displacing hundreds of thousands of refugees outside their borders, some Arab countries are also heavily burdened internally by war-related displacement. One person in five in Lebanon is a refugee, and one in three in Syria is either a refugee (most from Iraq) or has been internally displaced. Somalia’s ratio of internally displaced persons exceeded 10 percent of the population in 2014. Syrians are the single largest group of internally displaced persons, with 6.5 million displaced in the country in 2013.
While this part of the Arab Human development Report does not address the ties between conflict and Islamic extremism in these quotations, almost all of the conflicts involved combined threats from Islamic terrorism with uprisings by sectarian or ethnic groups that were discriminated against in their own country (often for religious reasons) and uprisings against authoritarian or failed governments which later parts of this analysis show have been a critical factor feeding Islamic extremist terrorist and insurgencies.

A later part that focuses more specifically on terrorism and conflicts driven largely by Islamic extremism notes that,9

More than any other phenomenon, conflict strips people, communities and countries of the options they require to become productive, establish security and plan for a better future. It erases hard-won gains in development and makes progress in addressing long-standing challenges all the more difficult.

War and violence inflict enormous damage on young individuals and the prospects for their future. Over the past five years, the Arab region has witnessed a sharp rise in the number of conflicts, accompanied by an increase in the number of violent terrorist attacks... In 2014 alone, the region accounted for almost 45 percent of all terrorist attacks worldwide ... These attacks claimed the lives of more than 21,000 people.

In addition to the deterioration in living conditions, the destruction of property and the suffering and death among people, these events adversely affect human development in the region. A clear example is the contraction of GDP in Iraq, where terrorism is estimated to have cost US$159 billion (in purchasing power parity dollars) since 2005. This is equivalent to 32 percent of the country’s 2014 GDP...In the case of Syria, the ongoing crisis led to a decline by almost 31.0 percent in GDP in 2012, and the drop had almost reached 38 percent by the end of 2013...

Conflict has led countries to allocate large shares of public expenditure to military and security programs, further weakening the prospects for development. Currently among the most militarized in the world, several Arab countries are characterized by huge military outlays, which represent missed opportunities to invest in broader economic and social progress. In 1988–2014, military expenditures in the Arab region reached almost US$2 trillion. Military expenditures increased by a factor of more than two in 2000–2014, and per capita military expenditures in the Arab states grew 2.5 times in 1990–2014.

Another adverse effect of conflict on human development is massive displacement. The Arab region is home to only five percent of the world’s population, but also home to 47 percent of its internally displaced, and 58 percent of its refugees – the latter growing from 34 percent in 2000.9 In a matter of days in June 2014, 500,000 people were displaced in Iraq... In Yemen, at least 2.5 million were internally displaced since the conflict erupted in March 2015 (as of December 2015) ...Three of the six main countries of origin of refugees are Arab countries (Somalia, Sudan and Syria), in addition to the long-standing plight of Palestinians, who constitute the largest refugee group worldwide (more than five million)...

Conflict also disproportionately damages the autonomy and development of women, particularly young women. In situations of conflict or poverty, young women’s educational opportunities are greatly reduced, and the physical and economic insecurity can be a lead determinant in earlier or less-favorable marriages for them. Young women in conflict situations also suffer from higher rates of gender-based violence, and such rates are usually even higher if the women also belong to a minority or marginalized group.

...Two bits of data are indicative: The Arab region is home to 5 percent of the world population, but around 18 percent of the world’s conflicts over 1948–2014...Over 2010–2013, the Arab region was home to one-fourth of the world’s conflicts...

While past conflict is not necessarily a recipe for future violence, the number of people in the region living in countries at high risk of conflict is projected to grow from about 250 million in 2010 to over 305 million in 2020; the number is likely to double over 2010–2050...To stop the past from defining the future, mediating ongoing crises and preventing future violence are crucial.
Iraq and Syria as Case Studies

Iraq and Syria make two grim, key studies in illustrating these points.

In the case of Iraq, key aspects of the other impacts of the fighting have included:

- People of concern rose from 1.4 million in 2013 to 4.7 million in 2015. UN agencies estimate they may reach over 7 million after a successful campaign in Mosul. (OCHA, UNHCR)
- 10.0 million in need in August 2016; 7.3 million targets for humanitarian assistance. (OCHA)
- At least 3.3 million IDPs in August 2016. Some 277,000 refugees outside Iraq. (OCHA)

In the case of Syria, various sources estimate that,

- UNHCR estimated in July 2016 that Syria had 4.8 million refugees out the country—roughly 22 percent of its prewar population—and 6.5 million people—over one-third of its present population—displaced away from their homes and jobs inside Syria.
- It estimated that 13.5 million Syrians needed protection. 12.1 million people were in need of humanitarian aid, including 5.7 million children. 11.5 million lacked access to health care and scarcity of medicine had led to a catastrophic health situation. Poor food availability and quality, and successive cuts in subsidies on bread, had exacerbated nutritional deprivation.
- An estimated 25 percent of schools were not operational by 2014.
- No reliable estimate existed of how badly the economy had suffered since 2011, but the CIA estimated that Syria’s GDP shrank from an already very low $97.5 billion in 2012 to $55.8 billion in 2014. Per capita income was only $5,100 in 2010—before the fighting even began, and ranked Syria only 219th of the world’s nations. Unemployment reached 57.7 percent in 2014, and 82.5 percent of the population lived below the poverty line by then—putting Syria at a rank of 202nd, and at the near bottom of the world’s nations.
- OCHA estimated that Syria's development situation had regressed almost by four decades. Four out of five Syrians now lived in poverty. Since the crisis began in 2011, life expectancy among Syrians dropped by more than 20 years, while school attendance dropped over 50 percent, with more than 2 million children out of school. Syria has also seen reversals in all 12 Millennium Development Goal indicators. The Syrian economy has contracted by an estimated 40 per cent since 2011, leading to the majority of Syrians losing their livelihoods.
- Turkey hosted over 2.7 million registered Syrian refugees. In Lebanon, more than a million registered Syrians lived in over 1,700 communities and locations across the country, often sharing small basic lodgings with other refugee families in overcrowded conditions. In Jordan, over 600,000 men, women and children were trapped in exile. Iraq had also seen a growing number of Syrians arriving, hosting nearly 25,000.  
- In 2009, 94 percent of Syrian children attended primary and lower secondary education. By June 2016, only 60 per cent of children were in school, leaving 2.1 million children and adolescents without access to education in Syria. In neighboring countries, over 4.8 million Syrian refugees were registered with UNHCR, and 35 percent are of school-age. In Turkey, only 39 percent of school-age refugee children and adolescents were enrolled in primary and secondary education, 40 percent in Lebanon, and 70 percent in Jordan. This meant that nearly 900,000 more Syrian school-age refugee children and adolescents were not in school.

The Arab Human Development Report for 2016 provides what seems to be relatively optimistic estimate of the economic cost of the fighting in both countries shown in Figure Four. Nevertheless, it is one which still warns that it has made all of the problems that helped cause the political upheavals in 2011 far worse.  

Regional integration has been affected by the spillovers of conflict in neighboring countries. According to the World Bank, the Arab Mashreq countries – Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria – lost an estimated US$35 billion in output (measured in 2007 prices) during the first three years of the conflict in Syria (2011–2014)
More recently, the trade ties among these countries have nearly collapsed because of the troubles in Syria. The Arab Monetary Fund’s 2015 Arab Economic Outlook Annual Report states that “Syria’s border recurrent closures have impeded regional trade by discontinuing or cutting off a key route connecting the wider Levant and the Gulf states” ...On the investment side, inflows of foreign direct investment to the Arab region declined from US$66.8 billion in 2010 to US$47.5 billion in 2013 and to US$43.9 billion in 2014.

**Figure Five: Illustrative Estimates of the Development Cost of the Wars in Syria and Iraq**

GDP growth rate 2005–2013 in crisis and continuing scenarios (constant prices 2000), Syria

**Source:** Mehchy 2015.

Total accumulated losses in GDP because of terrorism, Iraq, 2005–2014

**Source:** Institute for Economics and Peace 2015.
A “Clash Within a Civilization”

It is hard for those outside the Muslim world to keep the threat from Islamic extremism in perspective. No one in the United States or Europe can disregard the cost of terrorism and extremism in their own countries or in other nations outside the Muslim world. No American can ever ignore “9/11” or the other tragedies that have followed. No one in Europe can ignore the tragedies of the last few years, any more than anyone in the areas affected in Africa and Asia can ignore the cost.

All of the previous data indicate, however, that the levels of Islamic violence outside the Islamic world are largely the spillover of a struggle for its future between moderate regimes and the mainstream of Islam. Once again, it is critical that Muslims, non-Muslims, and the Trump Administration fully understand the real patterns of violence, where the key sources of attacks and casualties are, and where the focus has to be in fighting them.

**Extremist Terrorist Attacks Overwhelmingly Consist of Muslims Killing Fellow Muslims**

Regardless of their rhetoric, Islamist extremist groups focus largely on seizing power in largely Muslim states, and not on attacking the United States or any mix of non-Muslims. “Terrorism” is largely the first phase in an effort to create a major insurgency and seize control of a state. The vast majority of victims of Islamist extremism (some 80 percent or more) are fellow Muslims. This not only is in terms of deaths and injuries, but in terms of refugees, displaced persons, economic costs, and damage to every form of hope for the future.

**Figure Five** helps put the relative impact of Islamic violence in perspective. A graphic published in the *Washington Post*, and drawing on data from IHS Jane’s, shows that there were only 658 deaths in the United States and Europe between January 1, 2015 and July 16, 2016 in attacks involving non-militant deaths. In contrast, there were 28,031 terrorist killings in the rest of the world—43 times as many—and most were in largely Muslim states and involved Muslims killing Muslims.

**So did the Broader patterns in the Human Cost of Such Attacks**

**Figure Six** shows similar patterns for both total attacks and total deaths. Once again, it does not include the numbers caused by sectarian conflict and Islamist extremism, or include the much larger numbers of deaths and injuries caused by Islamist extremist-driven warfare and insurgencies. **Figure Six** does show all too clearly, however, that the MENA region, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa—regions dominated by Muslims killing Muslims—make up far more of the violence than in North America and all of Europe.

These numbers make it clear that the world does not face a “clash between civilizations,” it faces a “clash within a civilization” that can be contained in relative terms as long as far more moderate, secular, and modern governments dominate the Islamic world, and can count on the
support of outside countries like the United States. As the Taliban and ISIS have shown, the situation becomes radically different if Islamist extremism comes to dominate an actual country or some form of “Caliphate” gives terrorism and extremism a broader power base.
Figure Four: Terrorist Attacks in the World: January 1, 2015 – July 16, 2016

Source: Jane’s Intelligence, “Global terrorism in the West compared to terrorism everywhere else,” July 17, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphic/world/the-scale-of-terror-attacks-around-the-world/0c59f92/c44f1f57871f4c6a88d30e25020e53bd.
**Figure Five: Terrorist Attacks and Deaths by Region: 2014-2015**

Attacks by Region

Deaths by Region

Arab Countries Affected by Violence or Conflict Since Major Arab-Israeli Conflicts, the Iran-Iraq War and First Gulf War: 2000-2015 (Does Not Include lasting conflicts like the one in the Western Sahara)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking Beyond “Terrorism” and Focusing on the Broader Threats

In practical terms, these trends highlight the need for the United States to focus on dealing with the threat within Muslim states. Defending U.S. borders cannot bring stability to the Muslim world, and a failure to work with strategic partners in the Muslim world would almost certainly empower a far greater threat from Islamist dominated states. Working with the governments of largely Muslim states, containing and defeating Islamist extremism, preventing the emergence of any Islamist dominated territory or state, are the best ways to deal with the real world nature of the threat.

All Power Corrupts: Key Islamist Extremist Groups Seek Power

The United States also, however, must focus as much on the threat of Islamist extremist insurgency and efforts to seize power as on terrorism per se. The previous data on the interaction between Islamist extremists and insurgency has already shown that describing the “clash within a civilization” as “terrorism” is a misnomer.

Lone wolves and many attacks outside the Muslim world do involve acts of terrorism, but the vast majority of the violence caused by major Islamist extremist groups occurs part of a broad effort to use violence to obtain political power. Like communism or fascism, ideology is a key element of that search that drives the attempts of Islamist extremist groups to make major changes in the social order, but the primary practical goal is to seize control of largely Muslim states.

The key movements involved are shown in Figure Six. This list does involve some non-Islamist groups, and all the groups listed commit acts of terrorism, but it is Islamic extremist movements that clearly dominate. Recent history has also made it clear that the primary goal of the key perpetrators, is not to create fear -- or as one dictionary defines terrorism, to “use violent acts to frighten the people in an area as a way of trying to achieve a political goal.”

The goal of virtually every movement is to use every possible element of force to obtain power and control over specific states or major areas of territory. ISIL wants a Caliphate in Iraq and Syria. Boko Harum wants power in Nigeria and the Muslim areas around it. The Taliban want control over Afghanistan. Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula wants power in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Al Shabaab wants power in Somalia, and so on. Such movements will use virtually any means of violence to create a power base that can achieve this goal. Consciously or unconsciously, however, God and faith become a means to an all too familiar secular and selfish end.

Putting ISIS in Perspective

Figure Six helps communicate another important message about the threat that the Trump Administration and America’s European allies need to take far more seriously. ISIS/ISIL/Daesh has become something of a proxy for all forms of terrorism and Islamist extremism. It is the most serious such threat at present, both because it has held enough territory to create a sanctuary and breeding ground for extremism, and because its high number of foreign volunteers and ties to affiliated movements gives it an advantage in committing acts of terrorism outside its own
“Caliphate,” and potentially surviving military defeats to the extent it can reform somewhere else, or see many of its fighters join other movements.

At the same time, the U.S. and Europe have focused far too much on ISIS to the exclusion of the broader threat, particularly at the political and media levels. The previous data show that ISIS is only one critical movement, and even if the ISIS “brand” is defeated in Iraq and Syria – which is far from a certainty – many of its fighters will disperse. Defeating ISIS is scarcely defeating terrorism.

If looks back to the period before ISIS emerged as a leading group, ISIS attacks only totaled some 4 percent of the total terrorist attacks worldwide between 2000 and 2015, and 12 percent of the attacks in the MENA region.11

The data in Figure Six cover 2014-2015 – which represent the peak years in the strength of ISIS. During this period ISIS did rank as the second leading cause of terrorism out of the top five perpetrators in the START data base. However, ISIS only carried out 2,021 attacks out of a total of 5,889 (34 percent), killed 12,378 out of a total of 33,161 (37 percent), injured 11,869 out of 25,920 (46 percent), and kidnapped/took hostages of 7,939 out of 12,512 (63 percent).

These data do show that ISIS is all too real a threat. However, they also show that even a total defeat of ISIS would scarcely defeat Islamist terrorism, and many ISIS fighters will disperse at the result of even the most successful real world fight and continue to be a threat. There are good reasons why many experts on the U.S. counterterrorism community feel that Islamist threats will be all too real for at least the next decade – the equivalent of the “long war” that many senior officers and U.S. intelligence experts foresaw after 9/11/
**Figure Six: Key Perpetrators and the Search for Power**

Top Perpetrators Carrying Out Coordinated Attacks in 2000-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator Group</th>
<th>Coordinated Attacks</th>
<th>Percent of Coordinated Attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taliban</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qa’ida in Iraq</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI-Maoist) / Maoists</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Shabaab</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New People’s Army (NPA)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulani Militants</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donetsk People’s Republic</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jomaah Islamiya (JI)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated Individual(s)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Global Terrorism Database*

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Five Key Perpetrators: 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Attacks</th>
<th>Total Deaths*</th>
<th>Total Injured*</th>
<th>Total Kidnapped/Hostages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taliban</td>
<td>1093</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>4512</td>
<td>3492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)**</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>6050</td>
<td>6328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>5450</td>
<td>6663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maoists/Communist Party of India–Maoist</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Iran and Sunni-Shiite Tensions and Violence**

Sunni Islamic extremism is also not the only such threat. There is another and very different aspect of religious tension and extremism in Islam, and this is sectarian conflict between Sunnis, Shi’ites, and Islamic religious minorities. While estimates differ, some indicate that Muslims not total some 1.5 billion, that 85 percent are Sunni, and the remaining 15 percent are Shi’ites and other sects. These sectarian splits threaten to become a steadily growing source of terrorism and violence, just as the Christian Reformation and Counterreformation produced an era of terrorism, war, and other forms of extremist violence in Europe.

Most of the movements now designated as Islamic extremists claim to be the legitimate practitioners of Sunni beliefs, but Shi’ite sometimes attack Sunnis and the fighting between the Houthi and other factions in Yemen, between the Alawite led Assad regime and largely Sunni rebels in Syria, Shiite militias and Sunnis in Iraq, and outbreaks of other sectarian violence in countries like Pakistan all illustrate the potential dangers of widening sectarian conflict.

**Iran and Islamic Extremism**

Iran’s “Islamic Revolution,” and its adoption of a Supreme Leader or Guardian, pose the most striking potential source of such tension. In fact, the religious aspects of the regional rivalries between Iran and its Arab neighbors pose threat whose religious aspects are often sharply understated, but are at least as important to the U.S., and to U.S. strategic interests, as ISIS. Iran is a theocratic state with a Supreme Leader who has at least supported Iran’s hard liners in support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Assad regime in Syria, Shi’ite militias in Iraq, and the Houthi in Yemen. It is also a state which supports Shi’ites in sectarian rivalries throughout the region.

Iran cannot be called an Islamist extremist state, and its actions must be interpreted in terms of the fact that Iraq invaded it and triggered the Iran-Iraq War – by far the bloodiest conflict in the MENA region in modern times.

Sunni Arab states have reacted by supporting Sunni factions in such contested states, and there is a growing level of tension between Sunnis and Shiites that affects the region and leads to sectarian violence. Many Sunni Islamist extremists also see Shi’ites as heretics and enemies that must be attacked – a factor that has led to brutal sectarian killings outside the MENA region in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Iran’s actions are defensive as well as offensive, and the U.S. has strong strategic incentives to try to forge some kind of more stable relationship both with Iran and between Iran and its neighbors. At the same time, Iran does represent an openly hostile power to the U.S., and most of its Arab neighbors, and has supported sectarian divisions and the export of its own Islamic revolution in a number of other countries like Iraq and Syria.

**Iran and the Risk of War**

At the same time, these sectarian tensions and conflicts have helped trigger the MENA region’s most serious risk of war. Iran not only has used state terrorism against the U.S. and its Arab neighbors, but its military developments have helped to trigger a massive regional arms race. While Iraq that initially invaded Iran, Iran’s then invaded Iraq and the second half of the Iran-Iraq War was one where Iran tried to conquer its neighbor. Since that time, Iran led the regional
race to acquire nuclear weapons and its nuclear arms control agreement with the 5+1 has only affected part of its ongoing arms race with its Sunni neighbors.

Even if the JCPOA nuclear arms agreement between Iran and the 5+1 is fully successful, Iran actively poses three major threats to its Arab neighbors and potentially to Israel:

- Iran is competing for influence and control with internal Sunni movements and most other Arab Sunni states in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, and to some extent in Yemen and Bahrain.

- Iran has built up a major capability to wage maritime warfare against shipping in the Gulf and Gulf of Oman, using a mix of naval, guards, missile, and air forces, and.

- Iran has built up a major conventionally-armed missile and rocket threat against its Arab Sunni neighbors that it is seeking to give precision warheads which could attack key military, economic, and infrastructure targets.

The secure flow of petroleum exports is critical to U.S. trading partners, particularly in Asia, and the Strait of Hormuz at the gates of the Gulf is the world's most important chokepoint. The Strait has an oil flow of 17 million barrels per day, about 30 percent of all seaborne-traded oil, and Qatar exports about 3.7 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) per year of liquefied natural gas (LNG) through the Strait of Hormuz, or more than 30 percent of the global LNG trade. Accordingly, the Sunni Islamist extremist threat cannot be decoupled from the Iranian threat, or from the growing tension between Sunni vs. Shiite and other sects of Islam in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the world. It is also one of the ironies of the U.S. fight against ISIS that U.S. success in Iraq could lead to a significant increase in Iran’s influence in that country once Iraq is less dependent on the U.S. unless the U.S. can successfully influence the Iraq government and Iraq’s Arab neighbors.

Similarly, defeating ISIS in Syria can polarize Syria into continued rule of part of the country by the same Assad regime that failed to govern effectively before 2011 in western Syria. It can create an eastern Arab part largely under the control of other Sunni Islamist extremist movements, and a Kurdish section in the Northeast polarized against both Syrian Arabs and Turkey. The struggle for security and stability in Syria and Iraq, and against both extremism and Iranian and other outside interference is not going to end regardless of how thoroughly the ISIS "caliphate" is dismantled

**The U.S. Side of Reforging Strategic Partnerships with Muslim States**

U.S. strategy cannot focus simply on the Sunni Islamic extremist threat, any more than it can afford to focus on ISIS. It must deal with all of the critical threats to U.S. strategic interests. In doing so, it must recognize that Muslim states are more than key partners in fighting Islamic extremism, they are key security partners in dealing with Iran and with the sectarian and ethnic tensions and conflicts that interact with the extremist threat.

Strategic partnerships with the Arab Gulf states, Jordan, and Egypt are particularly critical, but such partnerships also include states in North Africa like Morocco, and largely Muslim states in Asia. There are good reasons why the annual U.S. State Department country reports on terrorism have long recognized such states key partners in fighting Islamic extremism and violence.
They provide key power projection routes, and military bases and contingency facilities for deterring and defending against Iran. They buy large amounts of U.S. arms, and train and exercise with U.S. forces in ways that make them interoperable with U.S. forces.

The Obama Administration made progress in improving such strategic partnerships in many areas, but never acted decisively enough to forge partnerships that could bring lasting security in the face of any of these challenges, and never seriously addressed the equally serious civil challenges addressed later in this analysis. It focused far too much on ISIS alone and on the Iranian nuclear threat, but treated even ISIS largely through a build-up of U.S. military efforts that amounted to "creeping incrementalism" rather than decisive force.

The Trump Administration will have to decide whether to pursue or attempt to end the JCPOA nuclear agreement with Iran, and it will need to be careful not to both needlessly reinforce Iranian hardliner's charges that the U.S. cannot be trust and dismantle an agreement where strong U.S. enforcement actions will produce far better results than ending the agreement.

The Administration's most important decisions, however, will be to decide on how to create a level of U.S. effort and strategic partnership with Arab states that can both help them defeat Islamic extremism and bring some degree of lasting stability and meet the goal of deterring Iran, reducing the expansion of its regional influence, countering is growing conventionally-armed missile threat, and dealing with the growing naval-missile-air threat it poses to maritime shipping inside and near the Gulf.

In doing so, the Trump Administration will have to deal with both the broad loss of confidence that America’s Arab allies have in the U.S. as a result of the outcome of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Obama Administration’s failure to act more decisively in Syria. It will also have to deal with the reality that Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are not only key allies in the fighting against Islamic extremism and terrorism, but all play a key role in giving the U.S. bases and power projection facilities it needs to play a role as a key power in the Middle East.

More broadly, it must take account of the fact that the U.S. has a clear strategic interest in blocking the expansion of Islamic sectarian violence in South, Central, and East Asia and potential in Sub-Saharan Africa. This not only involves Sunnis and mainstream Shi’ites, but all of the smaller sects in Islam—including some that extremist groups treat as heretics and targets where virtually any form of violence is legitimate. Strategic interests are involved in nations like Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, but so are the human rights of both Muslim minorities and the other religious minorities that inevitably become caught up in such violence.

**The Arab Side of Reforging Strategic Partnerships**

Arab and Muslim states also, however, need to address key weaknesses in the present strategic partnerships. There is still far too much tolerance of private funding of Islamic extremist causes and far too little attention to the rising costs in human and economic terms that have been addressed earlier in this analysis. Governments have been far too ready to fund movements with strong ties to Islamic extremists, or which are extremist, to serve short-term interests in fighting in areas like Syria or contain Iran without considering the cumulative risk and cost of their actions.
As later sections of this analysis show, many Arab governments have also failed their peoples in the ways that helped trigger the upheavals that began in 2011, and have fed Islamic extremism. Such actions make such governments a threat to themselves as well as the peoples they govern. They have done immense damage to the development and stability of the Arab and Muslim world, and no strategic partnership can save a government that fails its people and becomes its own enemy.

While it is not the focus of this study, Arab efforts at military cooperation have also been far too much of a facade. Hollow rhetoric about progress and cooperation has been substituted for real integration, interoperability, and a focus on effective deterrence and warfighting capability -- as well as cooperation in counter terrorism. There has been far too little progress in common training and facilities, focusing on key mission capabilities, standardization, and creating fully effective integrated operational capability with U.S. and other outside allies.

There also has been far too little effort to adapt regular and paramilitary forces to deal with the threats raised by asymmetric warfare and extremist threats. The war in Yemen, and the failures of Arab states to develop effective relations with Iraq and with Arab rebel movements in Syria, are further examples of the need for more cooperation with both other Arab states and outside partners like the U.S.

These issues have become far more critical in the Gulf, and for bodies like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The previous analysis has shown how critical threats from non-state actors have become and how much damage they do to regional development and even to countries that are not directly involved in serious fighting.

Moreover, security economic are now far more of an issue. Expense has never been a substitute for either effectiveness or efficiency. All of the Gulf states now face major problems because of nearly 50 percent drops in their petroleum export income, and the following analyses show that all of the Gulf governments face serious civil as well as security challenges. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE have spent far more on security than they can afford to spend in the future, and far better security planning and budgeting is critical.

More broadly, the Arab Sunni states, and states with large Shi'ite and other non-Sunni populations need to be far more careful in providing equal rights for other sects, and suitable political and economic opportunities. The same is true of Iran and states ruled by other sects.

A battle for orthodoxy and struggles along sectarian lines not only feed Islamic extremism, they create the possibility of a steady rise in other forms of religious violence. religious tolerance within Islam is critical to progress, stability, and security within the Muslim world and to the survival of today's moderate regimes. If nothing else, Islam has only to look at the example of the Christian Reformation and Counterreformation to see that intrafaith struggles over orthodoxy and ritual are the enemies of both core religious values and civil progress.

Similarly, it is one thing to deter and contain Iran, and quite another to confront and threaten it. The U.S. must work with its Arab allies to guarantee their security, but they must seek to find political solutions to creating more lasting security. The Iranian military threat, and Iran's adventures in other states, present very real risks. However, the present arms race and ow level confrontations within the Islamic world are too costly and too risky for both sides, comes at the cost of development and internal stability, and feeds Islamic extremism. It is effectively a game
that neither side can really win, given the costs of any serious conflict, and which both sides now lose.
The Growing Strategic Importance of Islam and the Causes of Extremism and Unrest

The United States also needs to look beyond extremism and regional threats, and fully recognize the fact that Islam is a sharply growing force within the world, and one that cannot be dealt with in terms of fear, prejudice, and barriers to immigration growing out of the threat posed by Islamic extremism. Muslim populations are already a critical part of global society and the global economy, and will grow sharply as a percentage of the world’s population in the years to come.

The U.S. focus on immigration, and the European focus on refugees, has combined with the threat of terrorism to lead many to ignore the need to deal with Muslim states and create bridges between Islam and other faiths. Even a brief examination of the trends in global demographics shows why the U.S. and other non-Islamic states must work with Muslim states, and build common understanding and efforts to bring stability, security, and development.

Dealing with Massive Population Growth

There is no way to make a precise count of the world’s Muslims, or the demographic importance of largely Muslim states. However, the U.S. Census Bureau’s International Data Base provides good estimates of the total population and population growth in primarily Muslim states and states like India that have massive Moslem populations. The results illustrate just how important it is to avoid any form of Islamic extremism coming to dominate a significant part of the world’s Muslims.13

- A rough count of the population of such states indicates that their total population increased from around 660 million in 1950 to 2,544 million in 2016, and that they will increase to 3,572 million in 2050.
- The 2016 total was 3.9 times larger than the 1950 total, and the 2050 total will be 5.5 times larger.
- These totals would be larger if countries with problems with much smaller Muslim minorities like China, Myanmar, and Thailand were included.

As much as 40 percent of these totals is non-Muslim, but from the viewpoint of any major spread of Islamic extremism or Islamic violence, the key issue is how many people as a whole would be affected and how many regions in the world are involved in the struggle for the future of Islam. The impact in every part of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is clearly massive.

The impact of such population growth is particularly striking in the Middle East and North Africa, which current estimate indicate is already 93 percent Muslim and is the seat of most violent Islamic extremism. The numbers also illustrate how small any estimates of the cadres of Islamic extremists are relative to the total Muslim population.

If one uses the State Department definitions of the Near East and North Africa – which is equivalent to the MENA region, the IDB data base estimates the following trends: 14

- The population increased from around 88 million in 1950 to 418 million in 2016, and will increase to 632 million in 2050.
- The 2016 total was 4.8 times larger than the 1950 total, and the 2050 total will be 7.2 times larger.
- Growth was faster in the Near East. The population increased from 44 million in 1950 to 235 million in 2016 (5.3 times), and will increase to 343 million in 2050 (7.8 times).
It is important to note that these latter data affect MENA areas that have limited arable land, large areas of desert, and many countries with declining rainfall and riverine supplies and/or that have made a major drawdown of fossil water. They would put acute pressure on even the best governed states, and some of the states are rated as among the world’s worst.

**The Growing Impact of Islam**

A study by the Pew Trust goes farther, and provides an estimate of both the current population that actively adheres to Islam and its growth between 2010 and 2050. The basic trends are shown in Figure Seven, and they warn that any U.S. effort to deal with Islamic extremism by preventing Muslims from visiting the United States would fail to begin to cope with the need to deal with roughly a quarter of the world’s population and a faith that will have over a billion more adherents by 2050.

The executive summary to the study notes that study notes that, Globally, Muslims have the highest fertility rate, an average of 3.1 children per woman – well above replacement level (2.1), the minimum typically needed to maintain a stable population. Christians are second, at 2.7 children per woman. Hindu fertility (2.4) is similar to the global average (2.5). Worldwide, Jewish fertility (2.3 children per woman) also is above replacement level. All the other groups have fertility levels too low to sustain their populations: folk religions (1.8 children per woman), other religions (1.7), the unaffiliated (1.7) and Buddhists (1.6).

Another important determinant of growth is the current age distribution of each religious group – whether its adherents are predominantly young, with their prime childbearing years still ahead, or older and largely past their childbearing years.

In 2010, more than a quarter of the world’s total population (27 percent) was under the age of 15. But an even higher percentage of Muslims (34 percent) and Hindus (30 percent) were younger than 15, while the share of Christians under 15 matched the global average (27 percent). These bulging youth populations are among the reasons that Muslims are projected to grow faster than the world’s overall population and that Hindus and Christians are projected to roughly keep pace with worldwide population growth.

The Pew study estimates a growth from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.76 billion by 2015 – a growth of 1.16 billion or 73 percent. These estimates are based on the fact that Muslims have highest fertility rate and the youngest population. Some 34 percent of the world’s Muslims are under 15 years of age versus a global average of 27 percent, and only 7 percent are 60 and older versus a global average of 11 percent. Muslims have a fertility rate of 3.1 versus 2.5 for the world and 1.7 for the unaffiliated.

The main text of the study notes that, Globally, Muslims were younger (median age of 23) than the overall population (median age of 28) as of 2010. Indeed, of all the religious groups included in this study, Muslims had the youngest median age as of 2010. The percentage of the population younger than 15 is another indication of the relative youth of a population. In 2010, 34 percent of the global Muslim population was under age 15, compared with 27 percent of the overall world population.

In the Asia-Pacific region, where about six-in-ten of the world’s Muslims live, the median age of Muslims (24) was five years younger than the median age of the region as a whole (29). Mostly owing to a high number of young immigrants and their children, Muslims in Europe (median age of 32) and North America (median age of 26) also were considerably younger than the general populations in these regions as of 2010.

As a result, the study finds that many other religions are now growing very slowly or declining. The exceptions are Christianity and Hinduism, and the Pew study indicates that Christianity is
growing far more slowly than Islam. It estimates that 29.7 percent of the world’s population was Christian in 2010, and 23.2 percent was Muslim. If the Pew projections are correct, the world’s Muslim population will be roughly equivalent to the Christian population by 2050: 31.4 percent of the world’s population will Christian in 2010, and 29.7 percent will be Muslim—a growth of 6.6 percent in terms of the world’s total population.

The U.S., and Europe are affected by the fact that,18

“The number of religiously unaffiliated people, also known as religious “nones,” is increasing in places such as the United States and Europe, and we project continued growth. Globally, however, the opposite is true: The unaffiliated are expected to decrease as a share of the world’s population between 2010 and 2050 (from 16 percent to 13 percent). This is attributable mostly to the relatively old age and low fertility rates of large populations of religious “nones” in Asian countries, particularly China and Japan…

“In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050, with corresponding rises of religious “nones” as well as Muslims, Hindus and others. At mid-century, Judaism will no longer be the largest non-Christian religion in the U.S.: Muslims are projected to be more numerous than people who identify as Jewish on the basis of religion.

As Figure Six shows, the Pew study also finds that the primary growth in Muslim is taking place outside the MENA region – against illustrating the dangers in tying the actions of violent extremists in the Middle East to all of Islam. Muslims will increase by 5.2 percent of the population of Asia-Pacific, 5.6 percent of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa, and 4.3 percent of the population of Europe. They already make up well over 90 percent of the population of the MENA region and their share will only increase by 0.7 percent during 2010 to 2050. The increase in North America will be from 1 percent to 2.4 percent, and no increase will occur in Latin American and the Caribbean.

The cumulative impact of trends is so large that they may well be the demographic equivalent of the economic emergence of China. At the same time, they will have a massive impact on the stability and security of the countries involved. Almost all of the growth is taking place in developing states with limited resources. It already has led to major increases in the demand for all forms of state support for jobs, education, and social services and has ensured that there is a high ratio of dependents to actual productive workers.

In the case of the Middle East, and much of Central Asia, population growth taking place in areas where water and arable land are limited, and where agricultural productivity is increasingly tied to increased need for capital and mechanization and to reductions in the work force of actual farmers. As a result, population growth sharply exceeds the ability to provide rural jobs. This leads to population mobility and hyperurbanization – shifts that inevitably put different ethnic and sectarian groups into closer contact, and have a significant increase in creating urban slums and low income areas – another source of tension.
Figure Seven: Global Growth of Muslim Populations – Part One

During the next four decades, Islam will grow faster than any other major world religion.

By 2050, Christians and Muslims will make up nearly equal shares of the world’s population.

Figure Seven: Global Growth of Muslim Populations – Part Two

10 Countries With the Largest Muslim Populations, 2010 and 2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2010 Muslim Population</th>
<th>% of World's Muslim Population in 2010</th>
<th>2050 Muslim Population</th>
<th>% of World's Muslim Population in 2050</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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<td>Subtotal for Rest of World</td>
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<td>World Total</td>
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Age Distribution of Muslims by Region, 2010

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Projected Scenarios for Muslims With and Without Migration, 2050

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<th>% Muslim With Migration</th>
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<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
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<td>Middle East-North Africa</td>
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<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>Latin America-Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>29.7</td>
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Putting Islamic Extremism in Perspective

This population growth frightens some, as does the migration of Muslims outside traditionally Muslim areas. Islam’s history of tolerance and moderation is often lost in the current Western focus on the Islamic extremist threat and its beliefs. The limits to popular support for such extremism is also lost in the flood of reporting on the numbers of “foreign volunteers” and individual extremists and extremist cells.

Limited Numbers of Volunteers and Fighters

This reporting rarely takes note of the fact that the high end of the estimated totals of such volunteers scarcely involve mass movements, or anything like the waves of fighters for fascist and communist extremism that existed in Europe between World War I and World War II. This latter point is illustrated in Figure Eight, which compares the estimated flow of volunteers to the total population at a peak point in the rise of ISIS.

The striking thing about movements like ISIS is not that they have become so large, but that they have stayed so small. The total number of ISIS fighters has always been very limited in relative terms, and has never come close to the government forces that opposed it. Estimates of the numbers of Islamic fighters have always been low relative to even Moslem youth in the most eligible age groups. For example, U.S. defense spokespersons estimated that ISIS only had a strength of some 6,000 core fighters in Mosul during the key periods of in the fighting in late November and early December 2016.

Figure Eight: Foreign Fighter vs. Total Population per Million

![Bar chart showing foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq per million population](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034)
Polling Data Show Limited Support for Extremism and Violence

It is far harder to estimate the exact levels of public support for Islamic extremist movements, which vary sharply by county and over time. The polling data on these issues is not always reliable, and often involves small or skewed samples. Such data are particularly difficult to interpret when polls measure Moslem anger against various actors or failures in their governments rather than support extremism per se, or when polling uses ambiguous terms like Sharia out of a context that distinguishes between extremism and mainstream Islamic values.

As a result, some polls show substantial support for movements like Al Qa’ida and ISIS in broad terms and others do not. **Figure Nine** draws on polling results presented in a recent paper by Brynjar Lia for the Middle East Policy Council to illustrate the range of such results. The often sharp swings in given countries over time seem to be driven by local events and news, and indication that broad attitudes may not be a reliable indication of strong real support.

A series of U.S. government and NATO polls in Iraq and Afghanistan show very limited support for extremism even in countries with conservative Islamic practices, and where Al Qa’ida, Taliban, and ISIS have been able to make significant military gains. It was the internal divisions in the countries involved, and the failures of their governments and security forces, that created windows of opportunity for relatively small extremist forces.

A range of various other polls and prisoner interviews indicate that even supporters of extremist movements know far more about what they were against than about what the extremist movements they supported were for. At a popular level, the governments involved were often seen as corrupt, failing to meet the needs of their people for security and jobs, and as biased again large ethnic and sectarian portions of the population – perceptions broadly validated by UNDP, IMF, World Bank, and NGO reports on the governments and economies of the countries involved.

Nevertheless, polls generally indicate that religion is a very powerful force in countries with large Muslim populations, but that a deep commitment to Islam does not mean a commitment to extremist beliefs or practices. Two recent polls illustrate these points.

**Figure Ten** summarizes a Pew study of the level of popular support for Sharia in a range of largely Moslem countries, but it is clear that support for Sharia does not mean support for movements like ISIS or violence. The Pew team conducting the poll found that,^{19}

- Recent surveys show (that most people in several countries with significant Muslim populations have an unfavorable view of ISIS, including virtually all respondents in Lebanon and 94 percent in Jordan.
- Relatively small shares say they see ISIS favorably. In some countries, considerable portions of the population do not offer an opinion about ISIS, including a majority (62 percent) of Pakistanis.
- Favorable views of ISIS are somewhat higher in Nigeria (14 percent) than most other nations. Among Nigerian Muslims, 20 percent say they see ISIS favorably (compared with 7 percent of Nigerian Christians). The Nigerian militant group Boko Haram, which has been conducting a terrorist campaign in the country for years, has sworn allegiance to ISIS.
- More generally, Muslims mostly say that suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilians in the name of Islam are rarely or never justified, including 92 percent in Indonesia and 91 percent in Iraq. In the United States, a 2011 survey found that 86 percent of Muslims …say that such tactics are rarely or
never justified. An additional 7 percent say suicide bombings are sometimes justified and 1 percent say they are often justified in these circumstances.

- In a few countries, a quarter or more of Muslims say that these acts of violence are at least sometimes justified, including 40 percent in the Palestinian territories, 39 percent in Afghanistan, 29 percent in Egypt and 26 percent in Bangladesh.

- In many cases, people in countries with large Muslim populations are as concerned as Western nations...about the threat of Islamic extremism, and have become increasingly concerned in recent years. About two-thirds of people in Nigeria (68 percent) and Lebanon (67 percent) said earlier this year they are very concerned about Islamic extremism in their country, both up significantly since 2013.

Figure Eleven shows the results of another poll that was presented at the 2016 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA), and which was reported on in the Washington Post. When it came to support for extremist ideology, the authors found that,

20 The findings were stark: Not many Arabs sympathize with the Islamic State. The percent agreeing with the Islamic State’s goals range from 0.4 percent in Jordan to 6.4 percent in the Palestinian territories. The percent agreeing with the Islamic State’s use of violence range from 0.4 percent in Morocco to 5.4 percent in the Palestinian territories. The percent agreeing that the Islamic State’s tactics are compatible with Islam range from 1.0 percent in Jordan to 8.9 percent in the Palestinian territories.

It’s important to dig deeper, though. While very few respondents express positive attitudes toward the Islamic State, it is possible that some who support the Islamic State’s goals or tactics or believe the group’s actions are compatible with Islam decline to answer the question or say they don’t know, rather than explicitly express approval of the Islamic State.

… What about younger and poorly educated men, who seem to be a primary audience for the Islamic State message? Breaking out the responses of male respondents age 36 or under who have had less than secondary schooling shows that even among this key demographic there is also little support for the Islamic State’s goals or for its use of violence, and that few consider the Islamic State’s tactics to be compatible with the teachings of Islam. Indeed, in some instances, positive attitudes toward the Islamic State are held by fewer individuals in the key demographic category.

… Only 3.4 percent of poorly educated younger Tunisian men express support for the Islamic State’s goals, and only 2.3 percent agree with its violent tactics. Nevertheless, it is notable that Tunisians in the demographic category that is the primary target of the Islamic State messaging are significantly more likely than other Tunisians, and their counterparts in other Arab countries, to consider the Islamic State’s tactics compatible with Islam.

The scholars conducting this research also found that the more young men actually learned about ISIS and its actual beliefs, the less they supported it. More importantly, however, they found that the same samples perceived critical problems in their governments, economies, and social structures that are summarized in Figure Twelve.
Figure Nine: Varying Estimates of General Support for Islamic Extremism

Pew Research Center 2014

Figures show the aggregate share of respondents choosing "very favorable" and "somewhat favorable" to the question "[p]lease tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of al Qaeda" (in percentage).

Note: Data unavailable for Palestine in 2010 and 2012, and for Tunisia for 2010 and 2011.


Doha: Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2015


Figure Ten: The Importance of Religion in the Islamic World - Part One

Public Support for Sharia by Country (Percent)

[Diagram showing percentage of Muslims favoring Sharia by country, with countries and their respective percentages listed.]

### Figure Ten: The Importance of Religion in the Islamic World - Part Two

Religion is an Important Part of Your Daily Life? Percentage Answering Yes

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*Source: Gallup 2015.*

*Note: "..." not available*

Figure Eleven: Arab Popular Attitudes Towards the Islamic State

Attitudes Towards the Islamic State in Five Arab Countries

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Refuse/Don’t Know</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitudes Towards the Islamic State of Younger Less Educated Men and Others

Figure Twelve: How Arab Young Men Perceive Key National Challenges

For the second year in a row, Arab youth view the rise of Daesh as the top obstacle facing the Middle East and nearly 4 in 5 express concern about the terrorist group’s rise.

What do you believe is the biggest obstacle facing the Middle East?
- Rise of Daesh: 50%
- Threat of terrorism: 38%
- Unemployment: 36%
- Civil unrest: 34%
- Rising cost of living: 30%
- Lack of strong political leadership: 25%
- Palestinian-Israeli conflict: 23%
- Lack of jobs for young people: 22%
- Lack of democracy: 22%
- Loss of national values: 17%
- The threat of a nuclear Iran: 17%
- Slow economic growth: 16%
- Lack of opportunities for women: 13%
- Other: 1%
- Don’t Know: 1%

How concerned would you say you are about the rise of Daesh?
- Concerned: 22%
- Not Concerned: 77%

Lack of jobs is seen as the top reason young Arabs believe people join Daesh, although 1 in 4 do not understand why anybody would join the group.

Which of the following, if any, do you think are the primary reasons why some young people are attracted to Daesh? Please choose up to three reasons.
- Lack of jobs and opportunities for young people: 24%
- The belief that their interpretation of Islam is superior to others: 18%
- Religious tensions between Sunni, Shia and other religions in the region: 17%
- The rise of secular Western values in the region: 15%
- A desire to establish a caliphate, ruled by religious values: 13%
- The Palestinian-Israeli conflict: 13%
- The American invasion of Iraq: 12%
- Perceived corruption of national Arab governments: 12%
- The chance for glory and to be recognised as a hero: 9%
- Perceived suppression of religious values by Arab governments: 8%
- Western governments trying to impose democracy and their secular values in the region: 7%
- The chance to be on the winning side of a fight: 6%
- The presence of Western troops in the region: 5%
- Other: 3%
- I can’t explain it – I don’t understand why anybody would want to join Daesh: 25%

Fewer than half of Arab youth believe there are good job opportunities available to them, and the issue is particularly acute in the countries where Daesh has actively recruited young people.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: “There are good job opportunities in the area I live in”

Dealing with the Political and Civil Causes of Violent Islamic Extremism

Both the previous data on population growth, and the polling data showing the level of concern with issues like corruption, employment, and security serve as an introduction to another area where U.S. policy towards Islamic extremism needs to change. There is a clear need to continue to disrupt and destroy extremist movements and counter extremist religious ideology and indoctrination efforts. At the same time, there is an equal need to find new ways to address the causes of alienation and anger within the Muslim world, and the failures of current governments, that serve as key causes of terrorism and all forms of violent extremism.

The Impact of “Failed Secularism”

Religion is clearly a critical force in shaping the political views of Muslims, and the political structure of largely Muslim states. It also is a key aspect of the life of Muslims in Europe, the United States, and other areas where they are a small minority, and often feel isolated or the subject of prejudice. Polls like the one summarized in Figure Twelve, and many earlier polls in individual countries and the MENA region show, however, that support for Islamic extremist practices and goals is heavily shaped by the failure of governments to meet the needs of their people, and alienation in countries that are largely outside the Muslim world.

It is no coincidence that the growth of extremism has taken place in countries where work by the UN, World Bank, IMF, and NGOs has shown for decades that their governments did not meet the needs of their peoples. Population pressure has been key factor in creating some of the problems involved, but so has failed governance, corruption, failed economic development, repression, and discrimination by sect, ethnicity, and tribe. The rise and success of extremism has been at least as much has been as much the result of “failed secularism” as the efforts of extremism movements to use their version of Islam to recruit Muslim fighters and supporters.

The forces involved are complex, do not follow any single pattern, and cannot be separated in any clear way from the political and religious causes of violence and extremism. At the same time, the level of correlation between many obvious examples of “failed secularism” and extremism is too close, not to involve a high degree of correlation.

Population Pressure, “Youth Bulges,” Jobs, Poverty and Alienation

The previous analysis has already shown the acute level of population growth, how young many largely Muslim populations are, and how rapidly the labor forces has grown (and will grow) in most Islamic states. Figure Thirteen highlights these forces in the MENA region, where key governments failed for decades to meet the needs of both their youth and general population for economic growth and jobs.

The estimated population growth between 1950 and 2015 reached the following levels in key countries – often in spite of civil conflict and war:

- Egypt grew 4.5 times.
- Iran grew 5.0 times
- Iraq grew 7.4 times
• Libya grew 6.8 times
• Syria grew 4.9 times
• Tunisia grew 3.2 times
• Yemen grew 5.7 times
• Afghanistan grew 4.1 times
• Pakistan grew 5.0 times

To put these changes in perspective, Western Europe’s population grew by only 1.4 times during this same period, and the U.S. population grew by 2.1 times.

The key unstable countries in terms of a “youth bulge” are highlighted with red arrows in the lower part of Figure Thirteen, and Afghanistan is added to the total.

In far too many MENA and largely Muslim states, this population pressure has led to massive youth unemployment or underemployment, hyperurbanization and growing slums, dead end careers in the form of government or SOE employment, a slow deterioration education and other services.

As a result, no accurate data are available on the scale of key problems in many countries, although World Bank, IMF, UNDP, and Arab Human development reports warned how serious the situation was become well over a decade before the political upheavals the began in 2011. They have also made it clear that Governments sharply understate unemployment and non-productive, “make work,” and state subsidized jobs that make up underemployment.

Furthermore, no current data are available on the scale of such problems in most crisis and conflict states since 2010, but the situation has clearly become far worse. Some sources put youth unemployment/underemployment in Tunisia at 40 percent in 2015, and it is unlikely that the figure is below 20 percent in anything but the wealthiest petroleum export countries – where non-productive government and SOE jobs disguise the problem.

As noted earlier, the lack of water and arable land has also forced much of the growing population and labor force into urban areas. While there are no reliable data, the percentage of urbanization in many largely Muslim countries has almost certainly tripled between 1950 and 2016 – usually creating large slums and pushing sects, ethnic groups, and tribes into a new – and sometimes tense or hostile – proximity. As a result, population pressure not only increases unemployment, especially among youth, it creases new population concentrations in slums in urban areas where costs are generally higher than in rural ones.

Many governments disguise the scale of such problems although they do so at their peril. While many largely Muslim countries seem to sharply underreport their poverty rates, the definition of poverty they use also often set too low a threshold for poverty in increasingly urbanized country. Moreover, little effort has been made in most such countries to address key practical issues like the ability to afford the cost of marriage or an independent home, or trends in the distribution of income that favor the rich and successful at the expense of the rest of the population.
Figure Thirteen: The Gulf and MENA Region as a Case Study: Population Growth and the “Youth Bulge” - Part One

The Arab Youth Bulge Compared to Other Regions in the World -- 1970–1990 and 1990–2010: The biggest rise in youth populations in the Arab region (in 1,000s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>25,521</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>55,832</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10,147</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20,208</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11,326</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab states</td>
<td>11,085</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29,458</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41,800</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62,016</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>47,810</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>32,583</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>73,303</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>121,189</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>162,809</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>172,880</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>29,189</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52,018</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31,860</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2,286</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-13,110</td>
<td>-2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>169,880</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>378,188</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>192,653</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-57,138</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-76,549</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>1,921</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1,413</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>16,429</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9,816</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6,477</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7,471</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>70,146</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>146,539</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-6,248</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-95,377</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-38,726</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>6,452</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15,792</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-13,312</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-26,805</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-8,315</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>6,652</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>-2,167</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>-6,418</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>-3,783</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>-2,044</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report team calculations based on UNDESA 2013c.

Demographic Pressures in Selected Countries: 1950–2050 (In Thousands)
Figure Thirteen: The Gulf and MENA Region as a Case Study: Population Growth and the “Youth Bulge” - Part Two

The Broader MENA “Youth Bulge:” Percent of Native Population Under 25 Years of Age

Failed Governance

These factors interact in far too many largely Muslim states with failed governance. Far too many governments with largely Muslim populations have failed key portions or all of their populations. World Bank and NGO reports by bodies like Transparency International have consistently reported extraordinary levels of corruption, nepotism, kleptocracy, and cronyism over extended periods of time -- with a steadily widening gap between a rich power structure and the rest of the population.

Figure Fourteen shows both the World Bank ratings of corruption in MENA governments and the ratings of overall governance. It uses measures of how well a given government functions rather than its level of democracy or human rights. It is not surprising that both the general population and the nation’s youth see corruption – the most obvious flaw in governance – as the key source of the government’s failures, but it is equally obvious that much of the problem lies in the low overall quality of governance and not simply in corruption.

Figure Fifteen shows the long history of failure in several key countries with largely Muslim populations and histories of major political upheavals and violence. What is striking about all of the cases shown -- and virtually all of the cases where Islamic extremism has been a major factor -- is just how consistently the government of such countries has failed at the secular level. Repression and authoritarianism have succeeded for years in several of these states, but only at the cost of making a nation’s problems steadily worse until they eventually created political explosions, violence, and civil war.

* • Iraq shows a consistently dismal pattern of governance under Saddam, U.S. occupation, and Maliki. This tracks with equally critical World Bank and IMF assessment of its economy. The U.S. made many mistakes during the period following its invasion in 2003, but the poor pattern of governance long predates the U.S. invasion, and was largely Iraqi-driven after 2005-2006.
  • Syria and Libya show that stability and freedom from violence under the Assads and Qaddafi -- before 2012 -- did not mean anything approaching effective overall governance. Once again, the governments’ policies were equally bad in dealing with economic development.
  • Yemen is another crisis country with a dismal history of both governance and development -- factors that are closely related, have a key impact in job creation and the stability of youth, and often create serious tensions between ethnic and sectarian groups, and key factions within the population -- with the less successful sometimes moving from resentment to political upheavals or violence.
  • Afghanistan has been a conflict state ever since the late 1970. Like Iraq, it shows a consistently dismal pattern of governance, regardless of rule and the shift from the Taliban to something approaching a secular democracy. Its consistent history as one of the most corrupt governments in the world -- coupled to constant internal violence -- has been a key factor in public resentment of the government although polls have shown limited support for the Taliban and other forms of Islamic extremism.
  • Pakistan is one of the world’s leading centers of terrorist attacks, but also has been a de facto sponsor of state terrorism through its ties to the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and a variety of Islamist extremism groups it has helped train and arm to put pressure on India. Its poor overall standards of government have help encourage internal instability, as have its poor development policies.

The alienation caused by poverty interacts with alienation because of corruption, a lack of opportunity, and low overall incomes. Figure Sixteen provides an illustrative comparison of the very different levels of GDP per capita in given countries with largely Muslim populations, and serves as a rough metric of economic well-being or suffering. Such data can be deeply misleading because many of the countries listed in this Figure have terrible income distribution,
with a small, corrupt, ruling majority taking much of the nation’s wealth. GDP per capita also does not reflect acute differences by sect, ethnicity, tribe and other factors, and the problems women face in employment and income in many states.

Even so, the widely different GDPs per capita in **Figure Sixteen** do reflect some of the practical realities of failed economic policies, and the impact of government barriers to economic development, outside investment, doing business in, and employment. **Figure Seventeen** also makes it clear that several the countries with the worst GDP’s per capita have suffered the most from political upheavals and civil war.
Failed governance leads to violence and extremism, or civil conflict. Authoritarianism and repression do not suppress them, simply bottle them up until they explode.

Figure Fifteen: Failed Governance: Key Case Studies in World Bank Ratings – Part One

Figure Fifteen: Failed Governance: Key Case Studies in World Bank Ratings – Part Two

Income Group, Region, or Country: Libya

Voice and Accountability

Political Stability and Absence of

Government Effectiveness

Regulatory Quality

Rule of Law

Control of Corruption

Income Group, Region, or Country: Yemen, Rep.

Voice and Accountability

Political Stability and Absence of

Government Effectiveness

Regulatory Quality

Rule of Law

Control of Corruption

Figure Fifteen: Failed Governance: Key Case Studies in World Bank Ratings – Part Three

Figure Sixteen: GDP Per Capita – A Metric of Failed Economic Development and Government Activity

Figure Seventeen: From Wealth to Poverty: GDP Per Capita in Moslem Majority Countries

Dealing with the Growth of Muslim Populations and the Secular Causes of Islamic extremism

There is no reliable way to know the extent to which such secular pressures have driven a small minority to support Islamist extremism, and how such secular forces interact with exposure to extremist religious beliefs. Such forces also do not explain very different secular or non-religious factors that lead to the limited level of Muslim support for violent extremism in Europe and the United States, and cases like “lone wolf” attacks where psychological factors may be more important than any mix of religion and material causes.

There can be little doubt, however, about the extent to which extremism and terrorism have been strongest in countries that have been both the subject of intense population pressure, failed government, and failed economic growth and development. In case after case, these nations have had massive political upheavals, see large parts of the population to turn to violence, and given extremism leverage and opportunity.

Extremism and Failed States

This combination of population growth, failed governance and failed development has several major implications for U.S. policy. First, it reinforces the need for the U.S. and non-Muslim states to work with largely Muslim states and treat them as strategic partners. No U.S foreign and security policy can succeed that tries to ignore or isolate the Islamic world.

Second, it reinforces the need for every aspect of U.S. foreign and national security policy to clearly separate Islamic extremism from Islam. Like the previous analysis of the Islamic Extremist threat they show that Muslims are critical partners in the fight against extremism. the U.S. must build mutual understanding, rather than to try to exclude Muslims or see them as a threat.

Third, it highlights a critical missing dimension in U.S. strategy, as well as in most regional efforts to deal with extremism and instability. Counterterrorism and military security are critical, but they are not enough. They only deal with half the problem and they can only provide temporary fixes to problems that have other and deeper and more lasting causes.

Population pressure, the youth bulge within the Muslim world alone involve forces that cannot be dealt with by even the most effective counterterrorism and security efforts. Combined with failed governance, corruption, and failed economic policies; they create underlying forces for instability that will last at least one to two decades. There are no quick answers because the future growth of the labor force and strain on most Muslim states is already born, political and governance reform are inevitably slow and evolutionary, and the economic challenges are so great.

There are good reasons why the Arab Human Development Report for 2011 warned that it would take more than a decade to carry out such reforms before any of the full implications of the political upheavals that began that year became apparent, and why the report for 2016 has concentrated on calls upon Arab countries to invest in their young people and "empower them to engage in the development process as an urgent and critical priority in its own right and prerequisite to achieving sustainable."21

Figure Twelve has already provided an example of polls that show just how concerned Arab young men are with the impact of the failures and problem caused largely by their governments.
Figure Eighteen provides another indication of such attitudes in the broader polling efforts reported in the UNDP's 2016 Arab Human Development Report, while Figure Nineteen uses the same source to show how many young Arab see unemployment as a critical issue and tie it to government policies. 22

The Implications for U.S. Strategy

Countering Islamic extremism, along with the broader forces of instability and conflict, requires U.S. policies that address the very different levels of civil strain and tension in given Muslim countries, and that go far beyond traditional diplomacy and the "normal embassy." They also require patient long-term efforts, many of which will have to involve cooperation with other states and international organizations.

As U.S. efforts at nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown, efforts to rebuild other nations from the outside, and impose different values from those sought by its population, are incredibly wasteful failures and ones the U.S. and its allies cannot possibly afford. The story could be very different if it means patient but proactive U.S. efforts to persuade states to adopt necessary reforms, and working with other states, the UNDP, World Bank, and IMF to reform plans and provide affordable incentives.

Fighting Islamic extremism and instability in the Muslim world must address causes as well as the symptoms. Cooperative efforts in bringing development and jobs and at least offering hope for the future is one critical step. More quietly pushing for more honest and effective governance is another -- particularly when it focuses on popular benefits and support rather than trying to restructure the political and legal system.

The civil problems that help drive extremism and stability will take years and probably well over a decade to solve, particularly given the long history of inaction in the past, and the damage that the political upheavals have triggered since 2011. It is hard to see, however, how any effort to end Islamic extremism and instability can succeed unless they are addressed.

The Implications for Largely Muslim States

Once again, however, the U.S. and outside states can only do so much. No outside power can save Arab governments from themselves and event since 2011 have warned just how fact self-inflicted wounds can sometimes be. Reforms in local counterterrorism and security practices that cutoff or reduce the remaining elements of support for religious extremism and violent Islamic extremists are only one cause of those self-inflicted wounds.

As the Arab Human Development Reports have point out since 2002, and continued to point out in 2016, Arab governments need to became far more honest, transparent, and effective. Corruption, favoritism, nepotism, and cronyism are as dangerous as extremism. As Figures Eighteen and Nineteen show, governments that fail their peoples threaten themselves and their own survival. Repression without major reform and development simply makes that threat worse over time and the eventual prospect of civil war, major political upheavals, and violent Islamic extremist more likely.

At the same time, Muslim government must take full responsibility for make such changes and reforms. No amount of outside security and economic aid can help unless they do. If there is any key lesson of the history of development and stability in the post-colonial/postwar era, it is that no outside force can help a government that does not help itself.
Figure Eighteen: Perceptions of Greatest Challenges

What are the Most Important Challenges Your Country is Facing Today (percent)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Economic Situation</th>
<th>Financial and Administrative Corruption</th>
<th>Enhancing Democracy</th>
<th>Achieving Stability</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>41.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>83.9</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>36.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arab Barometer 2014.

Youth perceptions: What do you believe is the biggest obstacle facing the Middle East?

Source: Asda’a 2015.

Figure Nineteen: Overdependence on State Employment and Perceptions of the Reasons for Unemployment

Youth unemployment rate (percent of total labor force ages 15–24, modelled ILO estimate), 1991–2013

Perceptions of youth on the constraints to obtaining a job, selected Arab countries, 2013

**Extremism and Western Fears, Prejudices, and Alienation**

There is a separate, but related, set of problems in dealing with Muslim minority populations in Europe, the U.S., and other countries with different dominant religions and cultural patterns. Muslims often suffer from both religious and racial prejudices, and face the same discrimination that other waves of immigrants have faced in the past.

Unfortunately, it only takes a few terrorist acts in the name of Islamic extremism to have a massive impact on U.S. and European public opinion and turn such prejudices into fear and rejection. Past attacks outside the Muslim world have shown that the end result can be the alienation of non-Muslims and broad hostility to Islam, which in turn helps create of forces that encourage a small minority of Muslims in the West and non-Muslim countries to become violent extremists.

Figure Eight and the previous polling data have shown that the numbers of actual extremist fighters are limited and that most Muslims do not support Islamist extremist views of Islam or its use of violence. Exaggerated fears and false perceptions, however, can all too easily become the reality.

Regardless of the actual numbers involved -- and of that fact so few Muslims support Islamic extremist ideology or act in support of such movements -- it only takes small numbers of extremist attacks in western and non-Muslim states to polarize Western opinion against native-born Muslims, immigrants and refugees, and visiting businessmen, students and tourists.

Moreover, the more the U.S. and other outside countries support largely Muslim countries and governments in fight Islamic extremism, the greater the incentive Islamic extremist movements have to use terrorism to divide the U.S., Europe, and outside powers from Moslem states and to provoke anger and violence between Moslems and non-Moslems.

This weakens U.S., European, and other outside support for the fight against Islamic terrorism in the largely Moslem states where that fight is most important, and most needs to be won. At the same time, it serves to encourage Moslem hostility toward the U.S. and its non-Moslem allies inside the Moslem countries extremists most want to control. Moreover, major victories against movements like ISIS do not put an end to extremism, they disperse key figures and surviving fighters -- many of which return to non-Muslim countries. This creates new cadres with formal training and/or experience in the fighting in Muslim states where Islamic extremist have propaganda centers, sanctuaries, and ongoing insurgencies.

Wherever Islamic extremism gets a secure foothold in largely Islamic states, or even becomes a major source of violence and insurgency, it creates networks of recruiting and indoctrination that reach out into other countries, that attract volunteers and would be fighters, and create cadres that extremist groups can use. The more the U.S. and European aid in Muslim counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts, the more incentives that Islamic terrorist movements have to use such assets to carry out strikes in the West and to attempt to separate the West from Islam, and undermine popular support for Western strategic partnerships with largely Muslim states.

At the same time, the prolonged fight against Islamic extremists polarizes a few individual Muslims and non-Muslims who lack such ties to extremism. This leads to “lone wolf” attacks by largely self-indoctrinated individuals, some born as citizens of the U.S. and other non-Muslim countries. Most either fail or produce limited bursts of nearly random violence, but again, even
limited successes and casualties produce major outbursts of fear and anger and create climate of 
broad distrust of Muslims and Islam. Serious successes have even more impact.

**Figure Twenty** illustrates some of the risks involved, although it also presents the critical 
problems that the horizontal axis does not show the number of volunteers involved. It is based on 
a report in the Washington Post of a study by German authorities that covered German 
volunteers to ISIS and that was reported by the German newspaper *Die Welt*. 

The fact such volunteers are returning will create at least a limited threat, and the German study 
found that only 10 percent of the returnees to Germany were disillusioned with extremist 
ideology, and that 8 percent might have returned to Germany just to recover from being on the 
battlefield and would try to return to Syria and Iraq. Some 48 percent remained committed to 
extremist ideology and stayed friendly with other extremists. Moreover, local mosques were 
often more of a problem in the West than in many Muslim states. Most of those who left for 
Syria or Iraq were reported to have been radicalized by friends or individuals they met in 
mosques or in Islamic seminars.”

What is also striking, however, are the limited numbers involved. The same study found only of 
784 Germans who joined violent extremist groups in Iraq and Syria to interview. The number of 
fighters in peaked in the third quarter of 2014, but then dropped sharply, and only a handful left 
Germany after ISIS began to suffer serious reversals in Syria and Iraq. Only 275 Germans were 
known to have returned to Germany and most did so in 2013 and 2014. Rather than try to create 
new cadres in Germany, ISIS seems to have executed at least some for trying to leave Syria and 
Iraq.

Various media reports on returnees to France, Belgium, and Russia are far more ambiguous, and 
the number of attacks in the U.S. from Muslims and other Americans who have never left the 
U.S. for any contact with extremists still serve as a warning. There will be further attacks for 
years to come, and successful fights against extremists in the Muslim world may lead to more 
attacks outside it.

This does not, however, mean the U.S. or any other largely non-Muslim state should try to bar 
Muslims or limit contact with and alliances within the Muslim world. It means that every effort 
should be made to improve vetting and screening with minimal intrusion on both an international 
and internal level, that effective homeland defense and coordination between states in tracking 
suspect individuals and actions is critical, and that largely non-Muslim states must do 
everything possible to build popular understanding of Islam and the real nature of the threat, 
counter efforts at extremist indoctrination, and reduce the causes of alienation between Muslims 
and non-Muslim in their own countries.
Figure Twenty: Illustrating the Correlation Between Attacks on ISIS and the Flow of Potential Terrorists Back to Their Home Countries,

Number of foreign fighters leaving Germany
Fewer people are joining militant groups in Syria and Iraq

Source: German authorities

Number of foreign fighters returning to Germany

Source: German authorities
Conclusions

The preceding analysis has shown that Islamic extremism is a critical threat that dominates global terrorism and is the key source of broader violence within the MENA region. It has also shown that the United states needs to fundamentally rethink key aspects of its struggle against terrorism and Islamic extremism.

The United States has made great progress in improving its homeland defenses and international counterterrorism efforts. It has restructured its security partnerships with largely Muslim states to help them give the same emphasis to counterterrorism that they have given to military security. The United States is also making major progress in defeating the ability of ISIS to hold territory, act as a protostate, provide sanctuary for training fighters, and ISIS’s efforts to widen its grasp and number of affiliates.

At the same time, far too much of the U.S. effort is now centered around the immediate threat from ISIS, and the external threat it poses to the U.S. homeland and Europe. Far too few in the United States understand the importance of the strategic partnerships the U.S. has forged with largely Muslim states, the fact that the primary fight with Islamic extremism is inside Muslim states, and that it is a fight for the future of Islam—rather than the limited threat it poses to faiths and countries outside.

The threat of Islamist terrorism within the United States and Europe has been all too real, but it has only been a minor aspect of a far more serious series of threats it poses within the Islamic world. The fight is primarily a fight between moderate governments and popular majorities committed to Islam’s traditional values and extremists seeking to use almost any form of violence, and mix of terrorism and asymmetric warfare, to seize power. It is “clash within a civilization” and not a “clash between civilizations.”

The United States, Europe, and other non-Muslim states cannot defeat terrorism or the broader threat posed by Islamic extremism by trying to isolate themselves from Muslim countries, or treating Muslims as if violent Islamic extremists were more than a tiny minority of Muslims. Islam is growing too quickly, and is far too important a force within the world. Polls show that the vast majority of Muslims oppose extremist ideology and violence. Most Muslim governments are key partners in the fight against extremism and terrorism, as well as key security partners in dealing with other threats.

The key challenge to the United States is to revitalize its security partnerships, work with largely Muslim states, and develop better collective approaches to both the threat of extremism and other threats like those posed by Iran. The United States needs to show it can act decisively and is a partner that its partners can trust. At the same time, the United States must work with its Muslim security partners to help them address their own failings in developing effective counters to extremism, better efforts at collective defense, and their failure to fully address the causes of Islamic extremism.

Both the West and Muslim states have also focused too narrowly on the symptoms of Islamic extremism rather than curing the disease. Movements like ISIS, Al Qaida, and the Taliban are the symptoms of the disease of extremism, and not the cause.

Far too little attention is still being given to key civil trends and problems within a steadily expanding Islamic world. These problems have been the key causes of Islamic violence and
extremism, and the political upheavals within largely Islamic states that began in 2011. They include sharp population pressures, failed governance and corruption, ethnic and sectarian division, grossly inadequate economic development, massive unemployment and dead-end careers, and related issues that can feed extremism and violence for decades to come.

The United States—and both its Muslim and non-Muslim allies—need to focus on the fact that extremist violence can be contained and defeated in detail, but no lasting victory is possible until the causes of extremism are addressed as well as the fight against extremist movements. In practice, the forces that now divide the Islamic world will almost certainly make the fight against Islamic extremism part of a long struggle that will go on long after ISIS is defeated in Iraq and Syria. A struggle that will involve dealing with new movements and broader tensions between Sunni and Shiites and other minority sects.

The United States and Europe also need to address the forces that alienate Muslims in their own countries, and drive a tiny minority to violence. This cannot be done by excluding Muslims from entering their territory, letting prejudice and fear dominate security policies, and confusing the true teachings and history of Islam with extremism. Doing this achieves the very goal that extremist movements have in using terrorism: isolating Muslims from the rest of the world and pushing moderate Muslims towards extremism. The key must be better vetting, better cooperation with the governments in Muslim states in vetting and security procedures, and mobilizing the support of moderate Muslims in the United States and Europe. Partnership, not prejudice, is the answer.

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5 Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Syrian_Civil_War

6 UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2015-2016, November 2016, pp. 6-7.

7 UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2015-2016, November 2016, pp. 83-85.


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