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In 2014, the global terrorist threat has evolved, driven by the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Shams (ISIS), its military victories in Iraq, and the inspiration it engenders among radical jihadists worldwide. The threat posed by ISIS should not be overstated, however, and ISIS' rise does not diminish or supplant the threat from other terrorist groups intent on attacking U.S. interests. Core al-Qai'da (AQ) continues to plot even as its capabilities have been diminished.¹ In Syria, AQ affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) poses a considerable threat to Syrian civilians and to U.S. interests in the region.² Global AQ affiliates such as al-Qai'da in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al-Qai'da in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) may rush to emulate, to compete, or to cooperate with ISIS.

Therefore, the United States and its allies now enter a period of dangerous competition among the global jihadist movements – for legitimacy, for adherents, for foreign fighters, and, most importantly, for a proven track record of success. In this complex dynamic of global jihadi terrorism, the individual fighters, their organizational affiliations, and the organizations themselves are fluid. Previous testimonies before this Committee have focused on how these general trends came about and how to respond to this variegated global terrorism landscape using all available Intelligence Community tools.³

This testimony focuses on the longer-term solutions, in particular, by outlining four critical areas where sustainable counterterrorism efforts are required. Current Congressional discussions are rightly focused on the immediate means of defeating ISIS in Syria and Iraq.⁴ Last week, the President outlined a strategy involving military force to target ISIS using U.S. airpower, military assistance to partners operating on the ground, preventative measures to limit ISIS attack capabilities, and a comprehensive humanitarian response. The United States is now joined by a broad and diverse coalition of regional and Western nations in implementing the above strategy. Such a multilateral approach, including the commitments by Arab partners in support of U.S. military actions, is unprecedented.⁵ It will help to mitigate the potential negative perceptions of this U.S. military intervention in the Arab world.

¹ Barbara Starr, "Stream of Al Qaeda Threats Has U.S. Intelligence Concerned," CNN, May 21, 2014.

² Ken Dilanian, "Al Qaeda's Syrian Cell Takes Aim at the West," Associated Press, September 14, 2014.

³ "Worldwide Threats Hearing," House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, February 4, 2014.

⁴ "Security Situation in Iraq and Syria: U.S. Policy Options and Implications for the Region," House Armed Services Committee, July 29, 2014; "Jihadist Safe Havens: Efforts to Detect and Deter Terrorist Travel," Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, July 24, 2014.

⁵ Lizzie Deardem, "Islamic State: 'There is No Time to Lose' in Fight Against ISIS, French President Says as Summit Starts," *The Independent* [UK], September 15, 2014; Jeremie Baruch, "Les Membres de la Coalition Internationale face a l'Etat Islamique [The Members of the International Coalition Against the Islamic State], *Le*

Thus, U.S. allies share the threat perception and have committed to working with the United States to degrade and to destroy ISIS. It is critical for the United States to build on this multilateral cooperation, translating the regional and global consensus on ISIS to focus on four particular longer-term counterterrorism efforts: reaching specific diplomatic agreements with Arab, Turkish, and European allies; conducting effective counter-radicalization messaging campaigns, including countering violent extremist programs; implementing counter-financing strategies to diminish funds flowing to ISIS and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq; and increasing U.S.-led assistance efforts to address gaps in governance, institutions, and the rule-of-law in the Arab world.

The Competitive Islamist Landscape

The threats that are emerging from ISIS, JN and AQ, within Iraq and Syria and beyond, reflect the systematic changes that are shaping the global terrorist threat. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the global jihadi movement has taken advantage of the greater number of weak states in the Arab world and the porosity of borders among them in order to spread, decentralizing jihadi networks. As NCTC Director Matthew Olsen recently noted, jihadi terrorists are active in over eleven insurgencies in the Muslim world.⁶ In the meantime, across the region, institutions intended to buttress the rule-of-law – whether courts, police services, or local governance structures – are often weak and under-resourced. Because of the diffusion of these groups, there is greater potential for personal and organizational competition, reflected in the current tensions between ISIS and core AQ/JN. While AQ remains the official leader of the global jihadist movement,⁷ there is greater autonomy among the AQ affiliates, from AQIM to AQAP, because of the trends toward decentralization.

This competitive, diverse, and diffuse jihadi landscape has a number of implications for the United States. First, the threat from core AQ, while potentially diminished, nonetheless endures. In early September 2014, AQ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri publicly announced the formation of an AQ branch on the Indian subcontinent, targeting India, a key U.S. counterterrorism ally.⁸ While the long-term impact of al-Zawahiri's announcement remains to be seen, the timing suggests a signal from core AQ to the international jihadist movement that it will not cede its global leadership role to challengers such as ISIS.

Second, AQ's Syria affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) continues to threaten the United States and its allies.⁹ Analysts have argued that Abu Muhammad al-Julani, the leader of JN who has pledged

Monde, September 15, 2014; Mina al-Oraibi, "U.S., Gulf, and Arab Allies Meet to Discuss ISIS," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, September 11, 2014

⁶ The Honorable Matthew G. Olsen, "Remarks," Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, September 3, 2014.

⁷ "Al Qaeda Denies Decline, Acknowledges Mistakes by its Branches," Reuters, September 14, 2014; Tim Lister, "Al-Qaida Battles ISIS to Lead Global Jihad," CNN, September 10, 2014.

⁸ Julie McCarthy, "Will Al-Qaida Find Followers in India?" National Public Radio, September 5, 2014.

⁹ Brett McGurk, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Iran, testimony to the Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, February 5, 2014.

his allegiance to al-Zawahiri and to AQ core, is restructuring his organization toward a long-term competition with ISIS by recruiting larger numbers of the foreign fighters flowing into Syria.¹⁰ There is evidence that JN remains popular among Jordanian jihadists, posing an internal security threat to a key U.S. ally in the region.¹¹

Third, the competition between JN and ISIS could take on a “race to the bottom” dynamic that in and of itself is destabilizing and threatening to U.S. interests. Each group could find that it needs to up the ante by increasing its anti-Western focus, both ideologically and operationally, as a way to attract followers. A sensational plot against a Western target could become a means for both groups to assert their jihadist supremacy. In the meantime, the competition between JN and ISIS – and by extension between AQ and ISIS – is very bloody and will complicate U.S. and allied efforts to support a cohesive, moderate Syrian opposition. There is a long-standing dispute between Abu Muhammad al-Julani and ISIS’ commander Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, including an assassination attempt against al-Julani that was reportedly ordered by al-Baghdadi in May 2013.¹² JN fighters were prominent participants in January’s rebel offensive against ISIS, an ultimately unsuccessful campaign that was at the time called “Syria’s second revolution.”¹³ In February 2014, ISIS assassinated Abu Khalid al-Suri, a Syrian al-Qaida strategist who served as a liaison between Ahrar al-Sham and AQ’s global leadership.¹⁴

Meanwhile, AQ has tried to publicly distance itself from ISIS’ methods and draw a more positive contrast between JN’s tactics and those of its rival. In February, core AQ disavowed its ties with ISIS over reports of ISIS’ brutality against Syrian civilians and rebels. In August 2014, JN released the journalist Peter Theo Curtis, a U.S. citizen that it had held hostage since October 2012, after the intervention of Qatari authorities.¹⁵ On September 11, JN released 45 Fijian United Nations peacekeepers that had been seized near the Golan Heights, suggesting that the group is trying to draw a “more moderate” distinction between itself and ISIS.¹⁶ Such a distinction is a mirage, however, given the violent tactics that JN has utilized against Syrian civilians. While significant organizational and leadership conflicts exist between AQ and ISIS, both organizations are ultimately seeking the same goal: using violence to institute a sharia-

¹⁰ Mohammed Al-Khatieb, “Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIS, Compete for Foreign Fighters,” *Al-Monitor*, July 18, 2014 and Rod McGuirk, “Australian Police Arrest 2 Men on Terror Charges,” *Associated Press*, September 10, 2014.

¹¹ Aaron Zelin, “The War Between ISIS and al-Qaeda for Supremacy of the Global Jihadist Movement,” *Research Note 20* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 2014), 8.

¹² Nelly Lahoud, Muhammad al-‘Ubaydi, “The War of Jihadists Against Jihadists in Syria,” *Counter-Terrorism Center Sentinel*, March 26, 2014; Nicholas A. Heras, “Syrian Jabhat al-Nusrah Commander Wounded in Damascus Skirmish,” *Jamestown Foundation Militant Leadership Monitor*, May 31, 2013.

¹³ Jamie Dettmer, “Syria’s Al-Qaeda Gang Wars,” *The Daily Beast*, January 9, 2014.

¹⁴ Mariam Karouny, “Syrian Rebel, Friend of Al Qaeda Leader, Killed by Rival Islamists,” *Reuters*, February 23, 2014; Mitchell Prothero, “Key Anti-Assad Rebel Leader Acknowledges Al-Qaida Past, Potentially Complicating U.S. Aid in Syria,” *McClatchy*, January 17, 2014.

¹⁵ Bryan Bender, Dan Adams, “Militants Free US Writer with Mass. Ties Who was Held in Syria,” *Boston Globe*, August 24, 2014.

¹⁶ “Syria Rebels Free UN Peacekeepers,” *Al-Jazeera*, September 11, 2014.

based state in the lands that they control.¹⁷ ISIS, JN, and AQ threaten the stability of the Middle East by challenging the state boundaries that have existed in the region since the end of the First World War and are providing a training ground for Arab, Western, and other global foreign fighters.¹⁸ In short, whether they compete with each other, or pursue their similar ends on parallel paths, both ISIS and AQ threaten U.S. interests in the Middle East and beyond.

Sustainable, Longer-Term Counter Terrorism Responses

Given that the threat landscape is more diverse, diffuse, and internally competitive, the counterterrorism response must be multilateral in nature, to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Indeed, President Obama's four-part strategy for defeating ISIS, as articulated on September 10, 2014, is founded on an important premise: Perhaps more than at any moment since September 11, 2001, a productive consensus is emerging among the United States, its Western allies, and the key regional powers (and their citizens) on the need for a strong and unambiguous response to the terrorist threat. To sustain and strengthen this consensus, U.S. airstrikes, intelligence support and assistance, and military training and assistance must be complemented by muscular diplomatic work. The current convergence in threat perception in the region can translate into practical regional and multilateral cooperation. There are four particular areas where coordinated action can help to address the longer-term terrorist threat:

(1) Translate Multilateralism into Results

Currently, there is a great deal of convergence among the United States, its Western allies, and regional Middle East powers on the assessment of the threats posed by ISIS. Using this common threat perception as a foundation, the United States must push these allies even further, through private diplomatic pressures, to execute meaningful domestic actions and decisions. For example, the European and Turkish allies must secure their external borders and improve border security within Europe, in order to disrupt the travel of foreign extremists into Syria and Iraq from Europe's southern and eastern rim. Many partners in Europe will need help – and in some cases prodding – to identify and disrupt the travel and financing of foreign fighters and their facilitators. The Global Counterterrorism Fund (GCTF) offers one multilateral venue to improve border security capacity across North Africa and Europe, in a way that seeks to slow the flow of foreign fighters to Syria.

In addition, U.S. diplomats should continue to push several European governments where there is legislation pending to criminalize unauthorized participation in a foreign war. Such legislation

¹⁷ Dafna Rand, Anthony Vassalo, "Bringing the Fight Back Home: Western Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria," Policy Brief (Center for a New American Security, August 2014), 4; Hassan Hassan, "Al-Nusra Declares An Emirate, but is it Significant?" *The National (UAE)*, July 15, 2014; Aaron Zelin, Nicholas A. Heras, "International Jihad and the Syrian Conflict," *Fair Observer*, August 7, 2013.

¹⁸ J.M. Berger, "The Islamic State vs. Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, September 2, 2014; Katherine Zimmerman, "Competing Jihad: The Islamic State and Al Qaeda," (AEI Critical Threats Program, September 1, 2014).

will not in all cases stop the flow of foreign fighters, but may at least provide an additional law enforcement tool in countries that do not already prosecute for such crimes. Although most of these countries have already passed laws that penalize membership in particular designated groups, such as ISIS or the al-Nusra Front, the collection of reliable evidence tracing European citizen participation within these groups remains difficult.¹⁹ It is usually far simpler to criminalize participation in foreign wars than to prosecute based on alleged membership in designated terrorist groups. U.S. diplomats should engage institutions such as the European Union, Europol, and Interpol to ensure a coherent and collaborative European domestic law enforcement implementation regime. The new United Nations Security Council Resolution that President Obama will introduce in New York next week offers a concrete vehicle to promote higher standards for domestic counterterrorism legislation.²⁰

Finally, with Turkey and the Arab Gulf states, it is critical that the United States not only push for a coalition against ISIS but also for greater consensus on the particulars of how to resolve the Syrian conflict. The persistence of this conflict is one of the greatest drivers of jihadi terrorism and is creating the instability throughout the region upon which jihadi networks thrive. The United States should work with its allies to forge a clear, specific picture of the Syrian end game, based on a number of principles: de-escalation among the conflicting parties, de-centralization of power away from the regime, and diffusion of the sectarianism fueling the fighting. The Gulf states and Turkey must come to terms with the practical recognition that any short-term resolution of the conflict will likely involve a number of locally-governed territories, linked through a loose power-sharing system as part of a protracted transition that eventually ends the Assad rule.

The September 7, 2014 Arab League announcement of collective security in the face of the ISIS threat is a very promising development. In an historic decision, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has agreed to host a base on its territory to train moderate Syrian oppositionists to fight ISIS and the regime. The first challenge here will be to define with greater clarity which groups comprise the Syrian “moderate opposition.” There are many other non-ISIS but powerful Islamist trends within the Syrian rebellion, and many of them might be considered “moderate” by our allies but not by the United States. Second, the Arab League and Turkey need to reach consensus with the United States and other regional actors on what the transfer of executive authority means if Syrian President Bashar al-Assad rejects a transitional government. Can *de facto* power sharing occur in Syria absent an actual brokered agreement, by freezing the current conflict and slowly eroding the regime’s executive power over time? Third, the Arab League states and Turkey must begin discussing who will rule the territory liberated from ISIS. Rather than allow it to fall back

¹⁹ Richard Barrett, “Foreign Fighters in Syria” (The Soufan Group, June 2014), 27, <http://soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters-in-syria/>. 27.

²⁰ Somini Sengupta, “Nations Trying to Stop Their Citizens from Going to Middle East to Fight for ISIS,” *The New York Times*, September 12, 2014.

into regime hands, it might be necessary to begin planning for a liberated zone under United Nations and Arab League control.

(2) Ensure that Counter-Radicalization Messages are Data-Driven

Second, U.S. efforts should also remain focused on the sources of radicalization – the ideas and beliefs that are influencing individuals to join the fight in the Levant and Iraq, where 12,000 foreign fighters have joined ISIS, al-Nusra, and the other jihadist groups. Allegedly, nearly 3,000 of these foreign fighters are from Tunisia alone.²¹ In the post-September 2001 period, the U.S. government found it difficult to ensure that these messaging campaigns were effective in the Arab world.²² Policymakers must first agree on the right messages that will influence the ideological arc of jihadist organizations as well as their appeal to foreign recruits. Then, policymakers must determine which modalities, voices, surrogates, and influencers can best transmit these messages across diverse parts of the Arab and Muslim world. Messaging efforts are complex, in part because it is often uncertain how they will be received by the intended audiences.

That said, the U.S. government has thirteen years of data at its disposal.²³ This is information that can be analyzed to build an effective counter-radicalization campaign, including by taking into account the vast use of social media by the jihadists movements and those who ideologically sympathize with them. A data-driven analysis should inform the approach of the State Department’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), which has developed a pilot program for English-speaking international audiences. The twitter hashtag “#thinkagainturnaway” seeks to dissuade radicalization by highlighting the brutality of terrorist organizations.²⁴

More work needs to be done to determine which types of messaging would actually deter would-be jihadi recruits and which messages reach putative sympathizers. For example, it is unclear whether exposure to the brutality of the terrorist organizations and the violence that they are committing against Syrian and Iraqi civilians is dissuading would-be jihadists. In fact, the brutality might entice certain individuals to join. There is some initial evidence to suggest that publicizing the internal inconsistencies within the doctrine and practices of various Islamist and jihadi groups can be particularly effective in repulsing Westerners in particular, but also those in

²¹ Richard Barrett, “Foreign Fighters in Syria” (The Soufan Group, June 2014), 27, <http://soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters-in-syria/>. 13.

²² Walter Douglas, Jeanne Neal, “Engaging the Muslim World,” (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2013), 9.; Marc Lynch, “Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications: ‘The Conversation,’” *Foreign Policy*, February 20, 2009

²³ Steve Tatham, “U.S. Governmental Information Operations and Strategic Communications: A Discredited Tool or User Failure? Implications for Future Conflict” (United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, December 2013);

²⁴ Jacob Silverman, “The State Department’s Twitter Jihad,” *Politico Magazine* (July 22, 2014), http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/07/the-state-departments-twitter-jihad-109234_Page3.html#.U9p4nflDWwI.

the region, from joining.²⁵ By participating in Twitter, Facebook, and other social media conversations begun by ISIS and al-Nusra, using text and videos, the State Department's CSCC and other U.S. government messaging efforts can make ISIS and its ilk look incompetent or hypocritical. In short, any messaging campaign must be tailored – to the Western foreign fighters, to the Arab foreign fighters from different parts of the Middle East, and to those in Syria and Iraq, as well as to those who might be supporting ISIS, AQ, or other groups.

(3) Design a New Counter-Finance Strategy

Third, national security planners should consider all available economic statecraft tools to target and squeeze the extremists' assets. ISIS or AQ leaders' decision-making about whether to pursue a large-scale attack against the West could ultimately turn on the question of financial viability. A counter-financing strategy against ISIS, al-Nusra, and other groups would begin with increasing U.S. resources dedicated to intelligence collection and analysis on the financing dimension. The operational strategy would involve a number of components, prioritizing the continued targeting of private donors, particularly in the Gulf countries, who have and may still be providing cash to al-Nusra and other groups. There is evidence that U.S. partners are becoming more cooperative in this domain than they have been in the past.²⁶ As discussed above, however, there may remain different understandings between the United States and its allies regarding which elements of the Syrian opposition are appropriate to support.²⁷

Second, targeted financial measures could be effective, including by sanctioning banks, couriers, and other entities that might be connected to the extremist groups. A greater focus by the United States on entities and individuals providing "material support" to known bad actors would identify and publicize those individuals involved in the financing of ISIS and other groups. Many financial institutions, corporations, and governments around the world use the list of those banned via U.S. targeted financial measures to impose their own domestic constraints on identified entities and individuals, so a U.S. ban would have a global mimicry effect.

Focusing on ISIS' sources of economic funds in the areas now under its control is key because ISIS, unlike other extremist groups fighting in Syria and Iraq, may not depend as much on foreign patronage.²⁸ In order to target ISIS coffers in particular, it is necessary for the United

²⁵ Another example of State doing this well is with its comment to the Egyptian Ikhwan after the embassy attack; see Ron Recinto, "U.S. Embassy calls out Muslim Brotherhood for conflicting tweets," The Lookout blog on news.yahoo.com, September 13, 2012, <http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/the-lookout/u-embassy-calls-muslim-brotherhood-conflicting-tweets-190521793.html>.

²⁶ Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry Seeks Arab Consensus in Campaign Against ISIS," *The New York Times*, September 11, 2014; "GCC 'Resolves' Spat with Qatar, Envoys to Return-Gulf States Ready to Help Counter IS Jihadists," *Kuwait Times*, August 30, 2014.

²⁷ Elizabeth O'Bagy, "Jihad in Syria," Middle East Security Report 6 (Institute for the Study of War, September 2012), 39.

²⁸ See for instance, Bryan Price, Dan Milton, and Muhammad al-Ubaydi, "The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant: More than Just a June Surprise," The Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, (June 30, 2014), <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-islamic-state-in-iraq-and-the-levant-more-than-just-a-june-surprise>.

States to help the Kurds, Turks, and the Iraqi government analyze ISIS financial information collected in raids and from informants, and then use that information to plan counter-finance operations. The United States has significant experience in this regard and could employ the expertise developed by the Treasury/Department of Defense Afghan Threat Finance Cell initiative. Iraqi and Kurdish forces should continue to focus militarily on pushing back ISIS from the oil production sites it has seized in northern Iraq, and to restrict its ability to process oil at its refining facilities in eastern Syria. The Iraqi government must also engage Turkey, Jordan and the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds to prevent ISIS from seizing any additional oil facilities in the region. A related part of this strategy requires communicating the danger to the global oil industry – traders, shippers, insurers, and purchasers. Global energy industry firms must be aware of the risks.²⁹

To achieve results, any U.S. counter-financing strategy must begin by building consensus at home. Across the Intelligence Community, agencies must agree that counter-financing efforts are critical to limiting the operational capacity of terrorist organizations in general, and therefore efforts to track the financiers of terrorist organizations must rank high as an analytic and operational priority.

(4) Support Strong Governance in the Arab World

Fourth, over the next weeks and months, the U.S. policy debate will rightly focus on the immediate threat environment, particularly as ISIS, AQ, and its affiliates respond to the U.S. strategy as well as the military actions. Planning the military response to the threat, however, should not preclude simultaneously considering the underlying drivers of the jihadist problem, particularly across the weak states in the Middle East and North Africa. U.S. policymakers must renew their interest in supporting the development of the rule of law in many parts of this region, not only because it will provide immediate security advantages in the fight against ISIS, but also because good governance and economic opportunity will be critical to counterterrorism over the long term. In Iraq, it is clear that an inclusive, representative and accountable government is an essential first step in the counterterrorism response to ISIS.

The ideal of good governance may seem far off at this moment, given the beheadings, the cruelty, the loss of life, and the carnage that have spilled across Syria and Iraq. Ultimately, however, strong and effective institutions at the local and national level, which provide services and jobs, opportunities and fairness, are the best way to shield communities in the Arab and Muslim worlds from the rise of future groups similar to ISIS and to defeat the ISIS ideology.³⁰ Before the Arab Spring, there were too many strong states that were unjust; they might have kept out certain terrorist groups for their own narrow, self-interested reasons, but even as they

²⁹ Interview, U.S. Department of Treasury sanctions expert, August 10, 2014.

³⁰ Lina Khatib, Ellen Lust, “The Transformation of Arab Activism: New Contexts, Domestic Institutions, and Regional Rivalries,” (Project on Middle East Democracy, May 15, 2014); Marwan Muasher, “Political Reform in the Middle East,” *Jordan Times*, October 2, 2013.

appeared to be capable counterterrorism partners, particularly for tactical purposes, they were sowing the seeds at home of future terrorist threats. Today, this problem of authoritarian repression endures in some parts of the region. Simultaneously, there are a number of newly weakened states undergoing transitions – including Tunisia, Yemen, and Iraq. Supporting successful institution-building and fair, equitable, and effective governance in both types of states is a critical priority for counterterrorism across the region.

In the near term, this has practical implications for Congress. As it considers the proposed Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) and defines a method for strengthening partners' capacity for effective counterterrorism, Congress should look for opportunities to fund governance, institution-building, and security sector reform programs that may strengthen the rule of law in the Middle East and North Africa in particular. The bulk of the CTPF funding will rightly focus on improving the capabilities of partner security services to fight terrorism, to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, and to ensure that internal security services can fairly oversee the law enforcement and homeland security requirements necessary to combat the terrorist threat. Some amount of CTPF funding should also be dedicated to the longer-term problem, however.

Building up the capacity of regional security services will not alone solve the problem of why the jihadist groups continue to proliferate and why they are finding adherents. Addressing the deficits in economic and political opportunity in many of the states in the region is an important and complementary counterterrorism objective. U.S. assistance programs, if used wisely, can support the development of stronger, fairer national and local governance structures. While it is true that some such U.S.-funded programs to support governance efforts have been unsuccessful or poorly received across the Middle East and North Africa, Congress can help the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies by setting and holding high standards for both the type of assistance available through the CTPF and the expectations for outcomes. Setting high standards will ensure that U.S. assistance is spent effectively to help regional government institutions deliver the rule of law, economic opportunity, and public goods.