Breaking the Cycle: Treating Radical Fundamentalism like a Medical Problem

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Abstract

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The West is in a rut after fighting radical Islamic fundamental terrorists since 2001. We use medical analogical thinking to reset an approach to this complex, challenging problem. The West has been fighting the symptoms, avoiding the root causes. By asking "what?" questions, instead of "who?" questions, we can shift the West's approach from a mostly military interventionist strategy to adopt the medical analogy of "gateway drugs." The paradox of the root cause analysis is that America is a guarantor of religious freedom yet it is an extreme form of religious fundamentalism that is the threat. A counter narrative is needed that targets fundamentalists who have not yet turned to violent extremism. To do this, the West's security apparatuses need to collaborate with social scientists and other experts to develop such counter narratives. The successes of Human Terrain Teams and the Minerva Research Initiative can serve as exemplars to create such strategic narratives.

Breaking the Cycle: Treating Radical Fundamentalism like a Medical Problem

The United States government is stuck in a conceptual rut in how it thinks about mitigating foreign terrorist threats. After more than 10 years of fighting we still lack a clear path to success. This fog coupled with the mutation of al-Qa'ida into what is now the Islamic State should inspire us to finally question if we are fighting the root cause of the problem or merely a symptom. Is our analytic approach behind the increasing brutality, resiliency and continuous nature of radical Islamic fundamentalism too myopic? Clausewitz advises us that the first responsibility of political and military leadership, before deciding on war, is to determine "the kind of war on which they are embarking."[1] President Obama echoes this point in his 2011 counterterrorism strategy when he states "we must define with precision and clarity who we are fighting…."[2] Within this spirit, if we open the aperture and approach this question from a wider perspective will we identify something missing from our conception of the threat faced by the United States in its *Global War on Terror*?

The radical Islamic fundamentalist threat we currently face builds upon a global movement grounded in the religious ideology of Salafism. Salafism represents a sect within Sunni Islam, comprehended or understood by few in Western society. Salafists consider the declaration of war issued by Osama bin Laden and others in February of 1998 as ongoing to this day.[3] It is the continuation of their view of conflict, with its religious undercurrent, that will continue to affect the character of war into the twenty-first century. What approach do the United States and its allies need to adopt to stop this cancerous growth?

Is there a framework that exists anywhere that might facilitate how we might want to rethink our approach? It is quite possible the United States can learn from the

medical profession's approach to combating terminal illness through a whole body approach coupled with behavioral changes, or as an alternative to, technologically supported intervention. Using medicine as an analogy for other national security domains is not new. Scholars have previously studied best practices in medical diagnosis and applied those lessons to intelligence analytics. In their 2005 study Marrin and Clemente concluded that the "examination of the analogy between intelligence and medicine indicates it's possible use in acquiring greater insight into intelligence processes, as well as serving as a source of models for improving analytical processes."[4]

It has been long thought that technological and material advances can improve medical treatment and lead to cures in some terminal illnesses. Long term medical studies led by Dr. Dean Ornish are challenging long held views and conventional wisdom in the medical field. The results of his studies are starting to change minds within the medical community. Practices commonly viewed as effective have turned out to not prolong the life of those diagnosed.[5] Scientists identified two possible reasons why not: first, the invasive options supported by technology treated a symptom not the root cause of the problem; and second, behavioral changes by the patient had the largest effect in recovering from the illness and preventing a reoccurrence. The question we seek to analyze is whether the lessons learned from medicine can be applied to defeating the problem we currently face in radical fundamentalism, and, more generally, to look to a more preventative longer term approach.

Reactive vs. Preventative Medicine

A little over 25 years ago Dr. Dean Ornish began clinical research studies to determine if comprehensive lifestyle changes could reverse the onset and progression

of heart disease without drug intervention or surgery.[6] His work has led to a number of conclusions about coronary artery disease and its treatment, making him now a recognized proponent of non-invasive treatment and prevention options for heart disease and cancer. Ornish's undergraduate studies in humanities provided him the opportunity to appreciate how multiple disciplines can help come to new conclusions. He concluded "extreme positions often had something in common, whether in politics or in science."[7] This led Ornish to try and find the answer to a series of fundamental questions in his medical research methodology; what is the true root cause of the problem, what is going on that is creating this problem, what additional underlying issues exist that are exacerbating the problem, and, most importantly, what is behind these underlying issues?[8] In the case of a patient having a heart attack due to coronary atherosclerosis (the constricting of an artery) and/or platelet aggregation, the root cause of the attack wasn't the arterial blockage; in most cases it was a combination of factors such as a high-fat diet, chronic emotional stress or hypertension.

Ornish observed that once patients received a surgical intervention they, like many doctors, felt like they were cured and the problem solved. In response patients would return to the habits and underlying lifestyle factors that led to the crisis in the first place; poor dietary habits, failure to better manage stress, refusal to exercise and continued use of tobacco and alcohol. As a result the patient would return for repeated intervention due to new blockages. The doctors in turn would conduct the same procedure in effect bypassing the bypass and continue the cycle of focusing treatment on the symptom. This practice of repeating invasive surgical intervention without recognizing the pattern and changing the treatment strategy led Ornish to conclude that

the medical practitioners were involved in an incomplete approach. In retrospect, the surgical intervention strategy only dealt with addressing the symptom not the treatment of the underlying cause; the patient left the hospital with no remarkable change in behavior, thus almost guaranteeing a requirement for future intervention and continuation of the cycle.[9]

Ornish completed a research study called the Lifestyle Heart Trial expecting that his research would lead to changes in medical practice. What he found was altogether different.[10] He learned that although the results of his study were accepted for the validity of the science and its data, when he approached insurance companies to assist in funding they baulked because, "we don't pay for diet and lifestyle because that's prevention."[11] This progression of technological intervention over time resulted in a reluctance to adjust strategy and created an interesting paradox: as the technology advanced medical capability to more effectively intervene to save lives, patients personal behavior grew progressively worse, in the belief that medical technology would make up for their unchanged attitudes about preventative care. The growth in intervention tools reinforced the medical and insurance communities to maintain a strategy of treatment (less effort, short term, more costly option, more measurable, more observable results) rather than adopt a strategy of prevention (more effort, long term, less costly option, harder to see results in the short term). This reaction motivated Dr. Ornish to complete a three year study to illustrate that patients receiving surgical intervention coupled with a follow-on prevention method could avoid further surgical intervention for three years or more.[12] This study resulted in insurance companies realizing an almost $30,000 savings per patient, finally recognizing that although

prevention costs money in the near term it saves more money in the long term.[13] It is not that drug or surgical intervention is unjustified or inappropriate, they are just incomplete without further analysis of the patient and prudent steps to ensure the true cause of the problem leading to the event or illness was identified and addressed.[14]

This medical analogy helps illuminate a key point. If the true root cause of a problem is not correctly identified, it is not correctly treated, resulting in the persistence of the problem. Sometimes, treatment requires attitudinal and behavior changes to address the root cause of the disease in order to prevent future episodes in concert with medical intervention to treat the immediate issue; a multifaceted approach is used against a multifaceted problem. This key point helps draw a parallel with our current strategy in the fight against the rise of religious radicalism. Since the beginning of the *Global War on Terror* in 2001, the approach of the United States and its allies has relied on the use of military intervention. The targeting of individuals and the dismantling of organizations has taken primacy over identifying and targeting the root causes and ideologies that support the fundamentalist mindset. This approach was founded in the conventional wisdom that military action can change behavior but not attitudes. After more than a decade of this approach it is becoming obvious that this conventional wisdom is incomplete and has since led us into an endless cycle of military intervention.

Lessons of Medical Science Applied to Strategy:

We may now consider how using such a medical perspective can be analogous to the national security arena. In the Middle East, "there is no single cause that explains the social eruptions that have shaken the Arab political system…. In the social sciences, neatly delineated single causes, though appealing, rarely capture society's nuances and complexities. Analysts focus on either political variables or economic vulnerabilities as

5

the drivers behind the uprisings. Focusing on one without the other is a simplification of a more complex reality."[15] Social uprisings, terrorism, radicalization, and religious fundamentalism are all multi-faceted problems having multi-faced root causes. Applying the logic of the medical analogy, a long term approach is required.

President Obama's 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism focuses on defeating terrorist organizations, mainly Al-Qa'ida. In it, President Obama stipulates that "the paramount terrorist threat we have faced—al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents—has also continued to evolve, often in response to the successes of the United States and its partners around the world."[16] In addition, "this National Strategy for Counterterrorism maintains our focus on pressuring al-Qa'ida's core," and that "the relevance of al-Qa'ida and its ideology has been further diminished."[17] But, was the American strategy to focus on an organization, in this case al-Qa'ida, based on the root cause of the problem or merely a symptom of a greater underlying problem we failed to properly diagnose and treat?

The President states in his cover letter to the 2011 strategy that, "…we must define with precision and clarity who we are fighting."[18] If who we were fighting was the correct diagnosis should we have since witnessed the metastases of the problem? If the original question was rooted in the 'what', instead of the 'who' we are fighting, may we have experienced a different present? Asking a 'who' question means the problem is an individual or an organization leading us to view the problem of terrorism as a simple matter of identification, targeting, and elimination; remove the leader or destroy the organization and the problem is solved. This has been a prevailing strategy in American counternarcotics efforts over the past two decades; however, when one trafficker is

taken out, another steps up.[19] The underlying motivation is money in the case of narcotics trafficking.

However, asking a 'what' question requires a consideration of the multi-faceted aspect of the problem. What, if any, are the motivations and religious underpinnings of the group? A 'what' question helps get at the nature of the enemy and their core motivations. As to the nature, the enemy is a fighter motivated by a religious obligation based on an interpretation of religious teachings. Their core beliefs include the establishment, protection and expansion of a religious state, in this case the Caliphate. Answering the 'what' question for the Islamic State results in the depiction of a movement not motivated by business—criminal and financial gain—but an obligation of faith. This simple question of "what" then reshapes the problem itself from one amenable to targeting organizations to one requiring how to manage a threatening ideology.

However, the United States policy side-steps this reality: "We are not at war with Islam."[20] Maybe the United States and its partners are not at war with Islam from our perspective. However, is it plausible that a group of religious fundamentalists that follow their own interpretation of the Quran believe they are at war with us? Is it equally plausible that radical Islamic fundamentalists also believe that anyone else, other Muslims included, who disagree with their interpretation are also an apostate, and as such, their killing is not only justified but required by the true follower of the faith? Combating such a fundamentalist perspective requires a multifaceted approach, because degrading or destroying an organization is not enough if the underlying religious ideology persists. In some respects, attacking the organization through military

means in order to destroy it actuality creates the opposite effect. By striking through military action the underlying rhetoric of the enemy's ideological message is reinforced; that the Muslim apostates in allegiance with the non-Muslim crusaders are committed to destroying the true faith and its followers. The United States as well as a majority of the world follows the Westphalian model of international relations which establishes that the state is prime, and as such, uses this lens to analyze international issues. What if the threat we face does not follow this accepted model of internationally accepted wisdom and instead approaches the world through a lens dramatically different than our own?

A Quranic Theory

An alternative lens comes from *The Quranic Concept of War* by Brigadier General S.K. Malik.[21] One of Malik's conclusions is that organizations like the Islamic State and al-Qa'ida may not necessarily recognize the current international system or the conventional wisdom that the West follows to justify war. Western military philosophy and strategy is heavily influenced by Clausewitz and Jomini. Students of their theories understand that world events influenced their theoretical foundations. Both men served and developed their theories during the Napoleonic age, which was a time rooted in the Westphalian model of international relations and when it was presumed modern warfare would predominantly be waged between state actors. Is coming to grips with a non-state actor founded on religious doctrines without regard to the Westphalian concept incongruent with how the West defines war; is this part of the problem we are failing to recognize?

The Quranic Concept of War ties war and all its parts directly to the tenets of the Quran. The Quran does not interpret war through national interests, but strives for

universal peace and justice.[22] This is probably the most striking difference between the Western and Islamic theories of why states go to war.

First, to the nature and dimension of war; like the West, Quranic theory views war as a battle of wills between people. However, unlike the West, Malik's believes war is a battle of wills between people centered on religion, not national values or interests. Similarly, the Islamic State considers such things as nationalism, patriotism, Ba'thism and Communism and other forms of secular rule as "flagrant unbelief, nullifying Islam."[23]

Malik's interpretation of how battle of wills can be waged and what constitutes ethical boundaries marks a second significant difference between theories and societies. In his discussions of the causes, objectives, ethics, and strategy of war there is more deviation from the West. Malik conducts an analysis of Western theorists, Geoffrey Blainey and Quincy Wright, on the causes of war and describes three identifiable Western trends: first, there is a lack in uniformity of why states go to war; second, the causes of war change in line with changes in a nation's society to realize or further a national interest, and last, there is a lack of international standard or governing body to determine if the cause of war is just.[24] Because each nation acts on behalf of its own self interest or within its own value system, no standard exists to justify the cause of war.[25] Malik explains that Islam has only one cause and that one cause applies to all Muslims. The cause is Allah's and it is a, "call for the deliverance of the weak, the ill-treated, and the persecuted from the forces of tyranny and oppression."[26] The theme of this message and cause for war to end the policies that continue to kill and humiliate Muslims is used specifically in Bin Laden's 1998 declaration of war.[27] This justification is

echoed in the rhetoric from the Islamic State through their periodical, "Dabiq: The Return of Khilafah."[28]

A third difference revolves around why wars are fought. In discussing the object of war Malik reviews Clausewitz and concludes that one of the overriding concepts in the West is the object of national interest, noting that this definition results in a continuous cycle of war not peace.[29] Malik contends that the prosecution of a war is to achieve three things. The first and second, peace and justice are consistent with the West's modern justification of war. The third, faith, is the current chasm that exists between the two. There is no equivalent concept of faith in the West. The followers of the Quranic theory bind themselves to religion, its protection and expansion, as the only justification. Western powers have not conducted a religiously based "global" conflict against Islam in over one thousand years. It is currently almost beyond comprehension in today's American society, which has long championed freedom of religion and its expression, that anyone would initiate a war over a religious ideology. This adds to the inability of some to fully comprehend the true character of the threat and may lead some to assume that followers of the organizations like al-Qaida or the Islamic State to be irrational actors and conclude the *only* solution is the use of force.

Quranic theory points to two consequences for those who do not follow it. First, there will be no mercy until they have capitulated unconditionally. Any protections provided by the Geneva Conventions do not apply. Second, Muslim leaders in Muslim lands who follow any model of governance other than the one defined by the Quran are apostates and as such are obliged to be killed by the true follower of the faith. The Islamic State believes fighting and unseating those they consider to be apostate rulers

10

are more important than fighting outside forces regardless if they possess Islamic or Arabic names.[30]

Jihad entails the application of power whereas military strategy entails the application of force.[31] Jihad is "waged on all fronts" and its objective is reaching the desired end state, the establishment, protection and expansion of an Islamic State.[32] He concludes his chapter on strategy with this; "Terror is not a means of imposing decision upon the enemy; it is *the decision* we wish to impose upon him."[33] In Islamic theory, war can only ever be defined as total war. We can see the practical application of this asymmetry: it is total war theory by the Islamic State but something far less than total war within the context of the Western world.

The United States may have declared a war on terror 2001 in the limited sense, but the leaders of what we define as Islamic fundamentalist and terror groups, Bin Laden and others declared war on us in 1998 in the total sense. Some think we missed the mark by declaring war on a tactic. In reality we missed the mark by not clearly defining the character of war. In his address to the nation on 10 September 2014, President Obama articulated the defined end state of the current counterterrorism strategy as "degrade and ultimately destroy ISIS."[34] During this speech he communicated two themes. The first was direct, his strategy against ISIS. The second was indirect, that the United States will use a global strategy of containment to prevent further growth in Islamic fundamentalism. It is unclear if American citizenry comprehended the subtlety of containment in the second part of the address. Is the Western leader's inability to clearly conceptualize and articulate this problem to the

American population—a problem with its underlying religious current—an indicator of the failure to understand the character of this war?

In a Western society, obliged to follow the fundamental principle of separation of church and state first identified by the American Declaration of Independence and reinforced by the United States Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion, is it palatable for an elected Western leader to candidly explain the religious undertones, motivations and ethical boundaries of our adversary due to the fear of undermining one of the prime directives within the United States Constitution? This is indeed the crux of the multi-faceted, wicked nature of the problem: the West cannot guarantee freedom of religion without contradicting itself if it declares war on religion. By opening the aperture and looking through the Islamic lens we can clearly identify a gap in our understanding, our approach and how we communicate the problems and root causes of terrorism, radicalization, and Islamic fundamentalism.

Finding a Solution from a Catch-22 Problem

Is it possible for the United States to change its approach to a complex problem? The United States Army through the assistance of cultural anthropologist Montgomery McFate and her initiative to introduce "humanities types," in the form of Human Terrain Teams, did just that.[35] After the initial invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan the follow-on efforts to establish security, stability and local governments seen as legitimate in the eyes of the local residents, Soldiers on the ground were in a quandary to determine why their efforts were not as effective as they presumed they would be prior to execution.. This failure in progress was a result of the Soldier's approaching the solution to problems in their battle-space from a Western lens. It took the introduction and

12

integration of cultural anthropologists from McFate's team to assist the leaders and

Soldiers on the ground and in the villages in approaching the problem from a local lens.

Enamored by this concept, one American brigade in Afghanistan reduced its

combat patrols by over 60% and focused their efforts on how better to identify and

understand the underlying root causes that fed the anti-American sentiment and

continuous violence. This behavioral change in American forces created an attitudinal

change in the locals. By reducing combat patrols focused on eliminating insurgents,

American forces concentrated their efforts on local grievances, tribal feuds, and

increasing economic opportunities, in and with, the support of the local government and

its officials. This change in American behavior challenged the insurgent rhetoric of how

American forces acted towards Muslims and reduced both, the maneuver space for the

insurgents to recruit new members, and local support of their activities against the

Soldiers and the local government—in other words, it changed foreign attitudes.[36]

Some of America's failures are the result of "flawed assumptions about who

[other] people are."[37] Transitioning from the tactical to strategic level McFate carries this

thought further, "if the President is going to make better decisions, he needs better

insight into how other cultures work."[38] Secretary Gates spoke of the benefits of such

teams when he noted that the introduction of McFate's teams were "leading to

alternative thinking," and that programs like it are "key to long term success, but they

are not always intuitive in a military establishment that has long put a premium on

firepower and technology."[39] Critics abound within the social science community on the

integration of such personnel but the practice is not new. The concept of integrating

social science academics was employed by British Empire in the 19th century to better

understand their subjects.[40] The United States employed them before Iraq and Afghanistan in World War II, in the 1960's and '70's in South America and South East Asia.[41]

In 2008, Secretary Gates launched the Department of Defense Minerva Research Initiative (MRI), a partnership between the Department and academia to "improve DoD's basic understanding of the social, cultural, behavioral, and political forces that shape regions of the world of strategic importance to the United States."[42] MRI's primary function is to identify and publish specific Department of Defense topics of interest, predominantly within the social sciences, and then fund university-led research teams to focus research efforts to address the department's questions.[43] This concept of bringing defense and academia into a closer working relationship is not new; it is the thesis of Alexander George's 1993 book, *Bridging the Gap.[44]* George's assertion is that although the boundaries "between academia and the policymaking arena is quite permeable," the relationship between the two cultures needs to be reinforced, and if done American statecraft will benefit.[45]

In an address to the Association of American Universities in 2008, Secretary Gates specifically addressed the need for religious and ideological studies, remarking that success in the ongoing conflict with Islamic fundamentalism will hinge upon our understanding of what is happening within Islam itself, not necessarily within a specific country inside a predominantly Islamic region.[46] Going further he notes, "It has been a long time since religious issues have had to be addressed in a strategic context. A research program along these lines could be an important contribution to the intellectual foundation on which we base national strategy in coming years and decades."[47] Who,

other than academics, are better suited for the labor and intellectual rigor required for, and possesses the base knowledge for such an undertaking? As Secretary Gates envisioned, Minerva may help provide the intellectual capital that is required to better develop the nuanced strategy required for such a complex problem, but it will take a dedicated group of specialists to ensure that it is executed effectively.

Not all jihadists are, or start out as, the ultra-militant fighter we have come to know on news clips. There are three primary groups or categories that can be identified as part of this overall problem. First, non-militant groups led by religious leaders advocate a non-violent approach. Second, political groups such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood advocate change as best done through the electoral process within the political structures of existing countries. Third, the militant groups, such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State, believe that the only approach to change is through terrorism and violence. None of these groups can be separated and dealt with separately as we have tried to do in recent years. They may all have differing approaches to achieving their goal, but the one commonality between the three is that they all share the same goal rooted in the same ideology, the reestablishment of the Caliphate.[48]

Leaders like Osama Bin Laden's progression from non-violent religious scholar to participant within the political structure to finally graduating as a violent jihadist fighter can be tracked back through his life.[49] Like Bin Laden, others have progressed through the groups as their frustration grew because they felt they were not being heard or the approach of the system they were currently involved in was ineffective. Whatever final global strategy that is formulated must include a clear sub-strategy that decides how to counter the messaging of all three groups. We cannot continue to focus on the jihadist

problem through hard power without developing an effective soft power approach to counter the message of the other two. Like the medical analogy of softer drugs being the gateway to harder drugs, violent jihadists may often step through non-violent and political approaches before they become violent. We must better understand what causes an individual to self-radicalize over time, like we are now beginning to witness in the United States and other Western non-Muslim countries. Most important is to execute this strategy within the bounds of our own core values through a non-Military approach; "democracy will only defeat extremism by killing it softly; not by mimicking it…"[50] Social scientists more than Soldiers are better equipped to develop an approach such as this. Social scientists are more apt to identify and understand the fractures within societies that require address or that can be exploited.

There is a potential fracture developing within followers of the Salafi sect that the actions of the Islamic State and Al-Baghdadi's announcement as the chosen Caliph may not be as rooted in Islamic law and doctrine as they claim it to be. This disagreement inside the sect may be able to be used to our advantage to help contain the current problem from continuing to spread out of the Middle East and Northern Africa. Brenton Pocius, a convert to Salafism, agrees with the Islamic State's message of how proper Muslims should pray and dress.[51] However, he does not agree with their message and actions to create social upheaval. Pocius and many Salafists like him believe in the Quranic teachings to prevent chaos and discord, especially within the Muslim community. Islamic State actions have forced him to adopt the slogan "Not my khalifa" and to refuse to ally with or acknowledge Al-Baghdadi as the new Caliph.[52] This

fracture, contextualized properly, can allow the space for worldwide followers of the Muslim faith to "make a stand and reclaim Islam from the Islamists…"[53]

Conclusion

The integration of Human Terrain Teams changed the behaviors of soldiers at the tactical level executing a military operation within the bounds of established doctrine that led to an attitudinal change in foreign actors. Let us use this success as a proof of concept for a similar structure at the strategic level. Initiatives like Minerva provide promise in supporting better informed strategies. Better informed strategies will result in better plans and by extension behavior of American personnel. Attitudes of local populations reflect their reaction to how American personnel, military or civilian, behave thus affecting the success or failure of the enemy.

What requires exploration is a system similar to the Human Terrain Teams program outlined above but at the strategic level, in concert with Minerva. Fulltime, dedicated teams would consist of country and regional experts, political scientists, academics, religious scholars and practitioners, cultural anthropologists, social scientists, sociologists, social media experts, public relations professionals, intelligence analysts, economists, information technology professionals, among others, including interagency participation. The purpose of these teams is to be a part of the process at inception to assist in planning and war gaming to protect American and coalition partners from executing an action that produces unintended consequences due to cultural or social ignorance. Preceding any intervention or after it has begun the teams role is to identify indicators for sparks, information cascades, and triggers.[54] To be successful the team needs the opportunity to conduct free flow divergent thinking first to clearly explore all options and pitfalls before any convergent thought process is initiated.

17

This step is critical to protect against any academic or institutional bias. The diversity of the team is its strength. Diversity will protect against any specialist looking at the problem from the lens of their own specialty. The permanent function of the team allows for constant analysis and early identification allowing for either early intervention or exploitation after an event depending on the interest of the American long term strategy.

One significant lesson observed since the beginning of the *Global War on Terror* is that approaching this multi-faceted problem from a sheer Western lens is a guarantor of limited success at best. These teams when employed must be available to the National Security apparatus to include the Geographic and Functional Combatant Commanders if dedicated teams are not provided to them. It is the inclusion of these academic teams as part of the institutional process at the very beginning that is the behavioral change that is required in our culture. It is what Dr. Ornish brought to the medical community, a background in multiple disciplines that allowed him to identify the commonalities in varied problems. He concluded that alternative approaches to human behavior worked best, "instead of trying to motivate patients out of fear of dying, we emphasize the joy of living."[55]

Likewise, our approach to radicalized Islamic fundamentalism started and has continued to be centered on military intervention. We meet violence with greater violence. We were apparently hoping that if enough terrorists died it would become a deterrent for anyone who followed. What we are learning is that any terrorist that is killed is celebrated as a martyr for the cause, in effect making death for the cause more attractable. This is about offering a better option to the current norm. Motivation through fear usually doesn't work in the long term.[56]

Success is dependent on our ability to adjust our own behavior in approaching this multi-faceted problem; we have proven in the last 14 years that hard power military intervention alone is not the complete answer. Our continued kinetic intervention undermines our message and strengthens that of the enemy. This is potentially one of the initial fault lines that allow insurgent groups and terrorist organizations a foothold. They 'sell' their version that they represent something better than the status quo. A counter narrative is required in concert with continued selective military intervention to allow the populace to make an informed decision and protect against the continued growth of the fundamentalist movement. To build a counter narrative that is effective we must better diagnose the underlying causes of the issue, face it head on, and learn to combat it through engagement in-lieu of fear.

Endnotes

[1] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 88.

[2] Barack Obama, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 2011), cover letter, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf (accessed March 30, 2015).

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