

Presidential Study Group Reports

Rewriting the Narrative: An Integrated Strategy for Counterradicalization

March 2009

Read the final report of the Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism, a bipartisan, blue-ribbon commission of diplomats, legislators, strategists, scholars, and experts.

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES

With the Middle East as a focal point of U.S. foreign policymaking, a complex array of regional issues now compete for the urgent attention of America's leaders. In preparation for the first presidential succession of the twenty-first century, The Washington Institute has assembled three independent Presidential Task Forces. Each is composed of its own bipartisan, blue-ribbon group of experts and practitioners, and each is charged with addressing a discrete issue high on the U.S. Middle East policy agenda.

About This Report

A strong investment in counterradicalization -- with special focus on helping mainstream Muslims provide hopeful and practical alternatives to jihadist ideology -- should be a critical element of the Obama administration's counterterrorism strategy.

Rewriting the Narrative: An Integrated Strategy for Counterradicalization is the final report of the Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism, a bipartisan, blue-ribbon commission of diplomats, legislators, strategists, scholars, and experts. A joint project of two Institute programs -- [Project Fikra](#) and the [Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence](#) -- the task force has devised a comprehensive strategy to counter the growing radicalization of Muslim populations, particularly youth, worldwide.

Its report provides analysis and recommendations on a spectrum of discrete policy issues -- democracy promotion, political reform, public diplomacy, strategic communications, and counterradicalization -- offering an integrated approach to stanching the spread of Islamist extremism. The extensive recommendations suggest an array of policy instruments, from creating a counterradicalization forum that draws on "best practices" of friends and partners in Europe and the Middle East, to infusing with renewed mission, urgency, and creativity U.S. international broadcasting toward Arab and Muslim societies.

Rewriting the Narrative is endorsed by a distinguished group of policy practitioners: U.S. congressional representatives Jane Harman (D-CA), Sue Myrick (R-NC), and Adam Smith (D-WA); former 9/11 commissioner Timothy J. Roemer; former U.S. ambassador to Morocco Marc Ginsberg; former deputy assistant to the president for homeland security Frank J. Cilluffo; the presidents of the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute Kenneth Wollack and Lorne W. Craner, respectively; prominent scholars Bruce Hoffman and Mohammed M. Hafez; former Kennedy School dean and Clinton administration official Joseph S. Nye, Jr.; former Bush administration officials Randa Fahmy Hudome and M. C. Andrews; president of the Henry L. Stimson Center Ellen Laipson; Freedom House executive director Jennifer Windsor; Hudson Institute vice president S. Enders Wimbush; president of the Progressive Policy Institute Will Marshall; Johns Hopkins SAIS adjunct professor Joshua Muravchik; and Washington Institute executive director [Robert Satloff](#).

[J. Scott Carpenter](#), [Michael Jacobson](#), and [Matthew Levitt](#) of The Washington Institute convened the task force.