Engagement at a Crossroads: The US Experience Since 9/11

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PART ONE: Introduction

PART TWO: The Evolution of US Government Engagement with the American Muslim Community since 9/11

PART THREE: New Strategy, New Focus?
Part I:
INTRODUCTION
Community Engagement:
The Need for a Reboot

Emerging trends since 2009:

- A growing (and inaccurate) perception of a dramatic increase in Homegrown Radicalization among American Muslims
- Increasingly negative public perception of the American Muslim Community
- American Muslims and Islam in America increasingly a target of bitter ideological rhetoric
  - Increasing tolerance of anti-Muslim rhetoric in public discourse
- A once vibrant program of US Government-Muslim Community engagement is being undermined by mutual suspicion
Changing Public Perception of American Muslims

Views about Islam and American Muslims

- General public
- Democrats
- Independents
- Republicans
- Tea Party

American Muslims want to establish Shari'a law
- 30% (General public)
- 22% (Democrats)
- 29% (Independents)
- 45% (Republicans)
- 54% (Tea Party)

Muslims NOT important part of U.S. religious community
- 43% (General public)
- 35% (Democrats)
- 41% (Independents)
- 54% (Republicans)
- 57% (Tea Party)

Islam at odds with American values
- 47% (General public)
- 40% (Democrats)
- 44% (Independents)
- 63% (Republicans)
- 66% (Tea Party)

Source: Public Religion Research Institute, Pluralism, Immigration, Civic Integration Survey, August 2011 (N=2,450)
Perceived amount of support for extremism among Muslims living in the U.S.

**U.S. MUSLIMS**
- A great deal: 6%
- A fair amount: 15%
- Not too much: 30%
- None at all: 34%
- Don’t know: 15%

**GENERAL PUBLIC**
- A great deal: 15%
- A fair amount: 25%
- Not too much: 33%
- None at all: 12%
- Don’t know: 14%

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Developments in 2011-12

- Anti-Islamic rhetoric in early political campaigns
- Focus shifting to economy in general election campaign
- Concern over “blowback” from Afghanistan, Pakistan drone attacks, other incidents
- Continuing tension over the issue of racial and religious profiling
- Fall out from a series of Associated Press (AP) investigative reports on the activities of the NYPD Intelligence Unit
- Civil liberties concerns related to FBI use of informants
Key Findings from AP reports on NYPD

- NYPD Intelligence Unit operates far outside its AOR and in ways that violate federal civil liberties rules
  - With no local, state, or federal oversight
- CIA involvement blurs lines between foreign and domestic spying
- Use of “rakers” and “mosque crawlers” raises “Probable Cause” concerns
  - Innocent businesses and individuals targeted
- Targeted individuals known to cooperate with local and federal CVE efforts
NYPD Ethnic Mapping

- Mapped mosques, businesses, Muslim student associations, and “potential terrorist hot spots”
  - Businesses with “devout clientele” or that are “popular meeting location for political activities”
  - “Moroccan Initiative” compiled data, photos, reports on Moroccan owned businesses and others that hired Moroccans, Moroccan cab drivers

- Focus on 28 ethnic groups, nearly all Muslim, considered “ancestries of interest”
  - Included “American Black Muslim”

- Tracked and “red flagged” legal name changes to or from “Arabic-sounding names”
Outcomes of NYPD Intelligence Activities

- NYPD claims it has disrupted 14 attacks
  - Most thwarted in cooperation with FBI
  - Some through conventional intelligence
- Mapping activities have had less conclusive outcomes
- Use of police informants has made some Muslims less likely to cooperate with police for fear of “entrapment”
- FBI and NYPD often work at cross-purposes, especially when NYPD operates outside its jurisdiction
Federal Reactions to NYPD Intelligence Unit

- FBI: activities targeting FBI outreach partners has undermined trust
- Congress: CIA has no authority to participate in domestic spying
- CIA has pulled its embedded officer after an internal probe in January 2012 concluded the transfer had not been properly approved
- White House, DHS, and Justice Department Civil Rights office have all avoided comment
  - Justice announced a “review” in February 2012
- White House Counterterrorism advisor John Brennan characterized NYPD effort as “heroic”
Homegrown Radicalization: The Bottom Line

Figure 5
Muslim-American Terrorism Suspects and Perpetrators Since 9/11 Support for Terrorism, By Year

Part II:

THE EVOLUTION OF US GOVERNMENT - AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SINCE 9/11
Evolution of Community Engagement Since 9/11


- Bush administration is outspoken in drawing the distinction between Islam and terrorism
- American Muslim Community seen as valuable partners in GWOT rather than a potential threat
- Community engagement focused on mediating grievances stemming from increased security;
- And mobilizing Muslim community in Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication
Since 9/11


- American Muslim civil society becomes active partner in Public Diplomacy, Strategic Communication, and nation-building in Iraq
- US Government-Muslim Community relations seen as a role model for other Muslim Communities in the West
  - Strong identification with US civic values
  - High achieving
  - Mature body of legal and religious doctrine on living in the West
Evolution of Community Engagement Since 9/11

2007: The Shift Begins


- US officials still do not express increased concern regarding possible radicalization of American Muslims.
Evolution of Community Engagement Since 9/11

2009: The Perfect Storm

- New Obama administration shifts focus toward repairing relations with international Muslim Communities
- Sharp spike in terrorism and terrorism-related activities by American Muslims (but still tiny numbers: to 47 from 2 in ‘08)
  - Somali-American youth traveling to fight with Al-Shabab
  - Pakistani youth traveling to Pakistan for terrorist training or to fight with the Taliban in Afghanistan
- Fort Hood Shootings: Nidal Hassan, American-born US Army officer kills 13, injures 29
- Christmas Day “underwear bomber” incident raises concerns over counter-terrorism intelligence
Evolution of Community Engagement Since 9/11

Strategic and Operational paradigm shifts:

- Strategic shift away from AQAN-focused GWOT toward countering franchised, decentralized terrorism and self-radicalization
- NYPD study on Radicalization in the West (2007) triggers new emphasis on domestic intelligence collection and “preventive” policing
  - Increased FBI use of sting operations and paid informants
  - Undermined Muslim community trust
  - Securitized relationship between Muslim communities and federal law enforcement
- Local law enforcement slow to embrace new approach; leads to disconnect between local and federal engagement efforts
Part 3:

NEW STRATEGY, NEW FOCUS?
A New US Strategy for Community Engagement

Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States (August 2011)

- Three Pillars of the new strategy
  1. Enhance federal engagement with and support of local communities that might be targeted by violent extremists
     - Not limited to Muslim communities, but AQ/AN main threat now
  2. Build government and local law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism
  3. Counter violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf
The New Strategy: What It Can Accomplish

- Refocus: Key phrase is “Local Partnerships”
- Rebuild trust by balancing intelligence collection needs with establishing stakeholder partnerships
- Foster better interfaith, intergroup understanding through education and political courage
  - Challenge Islamophobic rhetoric in public and policy debates
    - American Muslims aren’t more radical; Islamophobes are
- Balance the need to prevent violent extremism with American civil rights and civil liberties
- Encourage rigorous research and analysis into the radicalization process and its effects on American Muslim communities
Implementing the New Strategy


- The blueprint for how to build domestic community resilience against violent extremism
  - Started with National Counter Terrorism Center comprehensive baseline of activities across the USG
  - Explains core objectives
  - Aligns agency and department activities with core objectives
  - Identifies steps to address gaps and expand efforts
  - Outlines current and planned activities to counter violent extremism
  - Assigns Federal Government leads and partners for actions and activities to ensure whole-of-government coordination

- Ensure deliberative and calibrated approaches that give careful consideration to the rule of law, civil rights, and civil liberties
Questions and Comments:

THANK YOU!