

THE BLOG

The Real Threat Against America

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The American Islamic Leadership Coalition is a gathering of more than 25 organizations and leaders (including [C. Holland Taylor's LibForAll](#)) that is broadly representative of moderate Islam here in the United States. Now the outfit has just released its response to the [Obama administration's national strategy for counterterrorism](#) (NSCT).

While praising some aspects of the administration's strategy, the AILC most significantly notes that the NSCT "focuses narrowly upon al Qaeda as the enemy." Indeed, it is not clear why [the White House continues to identify the terrorist network](#) as the number one threat to U.S. national security.

The administration merits praise for finding and killing Osama bin Laden, but America's experience in the Middle East for almost the last decade has shown that the problem was not bin Laden per se, [but bin Ladenism](#), or mass violence as a political tool. Bin Laden's al Qaeda, and what remains of the group, is part of a larger network of violence in the region that encompasses much more than Sunni jihadists, including Hezbollah (a Shia militia) and Syria (a self-described secular regime).

A nuclear-armed Pakistan is not less of a threat than al Qaeda, which required protection and support of Islamabad's security services and military. Nor is al Qaeda more dangerous than Iran, which has been at war with the U.S. and its allies for more than thirty years and is now building a nuclear bomb.

The administration says that al Qaeda is the major strategic threat because there are certain metrics it can point to, like dead terrorists. But the issue is not merely terrorists; it is also, and more significantly, the states that support and sponsor terror.