



BUILDING MODERATE MUSLIM NETWORKS*

Preface*

The struggle underway throughout much of the Muslim world is essentially a war of ideas. Its outcome will determine the future direction of the Muslim world and whether the threat of jihadist terrorism continues, with some Muslim societies falling back even further into patterns of intolerance and violence. It profoundly affects the security of the West. While radical Islamists are a minority almost everywhere, in many areas they hold the advantage. To a large extent, this is because they have developed extensive networks spanning the Muslim world and sometimes reaching beyond it, to Muslim communities in North America and Europe. Moderate and liberal Muslims, although a majority in most Muslim countries and communities, have not created similar networks. Moderate Muslim networks and institutions would provide a platform to amplify the message of moderate as well as some measure of protection from violence and intimidation.

Moderates, however, do not have the resources to create these networks themselves; they may require an external catalyst. With considerable experience dating back to the U.S. efforts during the Cold War to foster networks of people committed to free and

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* Angel M. Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Lowell H. Schwartz, and Peter Sickle, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2007), pp. iii–iv.