

“COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM”

Sorry to let the threads grow so long of late—I’ve been out weeding again, if you know what I mean.

So partly to open up another thread to discuss the many ways in which our government kills Americans and/or journalists, and partly because we’ve been talking about whether the Hutaree militia organizing 40 miles from my house to the west, or whether the Imam gunned down by the FBI 30 miles in the other direction, were terrorists, I wanted to point to a Mark Hosenball post on the jargon replacing “GWOT”:

Not long after President Obama took office, he unofficially put an end to a favorite phrase of his predecessor: the “global war on terror.” True, George W. Bush used it so much that GWOT, as it became known in Washington, had largely lost its impact. But it got the job done—and Obama had yet to find a tough, pithy replacement. Until now.

In a speech today before a conference on post-9/11 intelligence-reform efforts, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair didn’t once utter the words “global war on terror.” But at least twice he talked about the administration’s efforts at “countering violent extremism.”

[snip]

CVE has been slowly catching on among the Obama crowd. Daniel Benjamin, the State Department’s top counterterrorism adviser, used it in **testimony** he gave to the Senate Armed Services Committee last month. As Benjamin explained it, “The primary goal of countering violent extremism is to stop those most at risk of radicalization from becoming

terrorists. Its tools are noncoercive and include social programs, counter-ideology initiatives, and working with civil society to delegitimize the Al Qaeda narrative and, where possible, provide positive alternative narratives." He added, "We are working hard to develop a variety of CVE programs."

Hosenball also quotes John Brennan acknowledging that terrorism is a tactic.

It seems we're replacing the word "terrorist," then, with "extremist." Preferable, in my mind, to be sure. But how will the term be used in the United States where we've got nutcases threatening members of Congress because they don't like democratic votes? And will the fight against extremists merit special tactics in return, like the targeting of Americans with no due process?