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COMBATING HOMEGROWN TERRORISM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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COMBATING HOMEGROWN TERRORISM

Thursday, July 27, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:42 p.m., in Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ron DeSantis [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives DeSantis, Russell, Gosar, Hice, Comer, Lynch, Welch, Demings, and DeSaulnier.

Mr. DESANTIS. The Subcommittee on National Security will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

In the words of DHS Secretary John Kelly, the United States is experiencing a, quote, "unprecedented spike in homegrown terrorism." Currently, the FBI has open terrorism investigations in all 50 States. As of June 2017, the U.S. Government has charged 128 individuals with offenses related to the Islamic State over the last three years. Radical Islamic extremism is the primary driver of this problem and deserves the government's immediate attention.

In recent years, the Federal Government has sought to combat this problem under the guise of a program called Countering Violent Extremism, or CVE. Three cities were used to conduct pilot programs: Los Angeles, Boston, and Minneapolis. Minneapolis is a particularly troublesome area, as it is a major center of Islamic terrorist activity. The region is home to the largest concentration of Somali refugees and has been the epicenter for domestic radicalization.

From 2007 to 2015, over 20 Somali-Americans are known to have left Minnesota to join the al-Shabaab terrorist organization in Somalia. Over the last three years, Federal prosecutors have charged 13 individuals from Minnesota for connections to the Islamic State. Minnesota is second only to New York, which has four times as many residents, in number of ISIS terrorists charged. The terrorist problem in Minnesota led former U.S. Senator Norm Coleman to warn that the State is in danger of becoming, quote, "the land of 10,000 terrorists."

Now, as the chairman of this subcommittee, I visited Minneapolis last December to meet with Federal and local law enforcement officials and community groups who were involved in the Countering Violent Extremism program. The area is obviously a ground zero for recruitment.

Now, I invited Richard Thornton, the FBI's special agent in charge of the Minneapolis Division, to testify today about the problems our country is facing in that part of the country, but he is not here. Instead, the Bureau has sent Assistant Director Kerry Sleeper from headquarters with the expectation he can speak to Thornton's specific experience and interactions in Minneapolis. I look forward to hearing specifics about FBI's efforts in Minneapolis so the committee can evaluate the effectiveness of this CVE approach.

Our law enforcement and intelligence community have their hands full with preventing radicalization and interdicting terrorists before they commit acts in the name of their ideology. The Department of Homeland Security leads the government's Countering Violent Extremism efforts. CVE refers to "proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence."

Currently, the Department still follows the Obama-era policies related to CVE. And guidance developed during the Obama administration specifically limits any intelligence or law enforcement investigative activity through CVE. By leaving this information on the table, CVE efforts are potentially missing opportunities to identify and disrupt terrorist plots. Obama-era guidance also fails to properly identify the threat of radical Islamic ideology. The nearly 4,000-word October 2016 CVE strategy does not even mention radical Islamic terrorism at all. The Obama administration's strategy also relied heavily on non-governmental organizations with vague and immeasurable goals.

One week before President Trump's inauguration, former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson announced the grant recipients of $10 million appropriated by Congress for CVE efforts. The selections reflect a preference for working through community-based organizations, some with questionable programs and immeasurable goals. For example, the Obama administration selected for funding an organization who suggested countering violent extremism through, quote, "collaborative songwriting, multimedia, and performance." Another suggested hiring college students to make video games. This was not a serious attempt to stop the flow of foreign fighters to ISIS.

After President Trump took office, DHS froze the $10 million in grants, reviewed the organizations, and announced they were removing 11 Obama-era grant recipients but adding six new ones. A committee review of the organizations indicates a preference for law enforcement organizations over community-based organizations.

Now, despite this step, some of the law enforcement organizations designated for funding have questionable agendas. For example, the city of Houston's application relied on so-called community experts with vocally partisan and anti-Israel agendas. The city of Denver submitted an application that prioritized an agenda unrelated to CVE, suggesting working through organizations such as Black Lives Matter.

The Committee requested the applications of all grant recipients to determine what taxpayer dollars were funding, but DHS has still not produced these applications. The committee requested a

briefing on the rationale for the selection of the grant recipients, but DHS refused.

Today, the subcommittee seeks to understand what this administration's policy is for countering violent extremism. According to DHS, this policy is currently under review, and DHS has declined to share any details about this process, including when this review is supposed to be complete and which organizations are participating. For Congress' immediate purposes, we must determine what is driving DHS's agenda: the assumptions of the Obama era about countering this threat or the President's pledge to put political correctness aside and defeat the Islamic State at home and abroad.

We will question witnesses on whether the FBI and DHS are properly vetting organizations and individuals who participate in the program. We will also hear from non-governmental witnesses on the role of the private sector in CVE efforts and the scope of violent extremism problem facing the United States.

I thank the witnesses for their attendance and look forward to their testimony.

Mr. DESANTIS. And I now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Lynch, for his opening statement.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to, in advance, thank the witnesses for their willingness to help this committee with its work.

I would like to thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman, to reexamine our efforts to address violent extremism and terrorist radicalization. I would also like to again thank the witnesses here involved, DHS and FBI especially. I know that there was some back and forth about getting witnesses to come forward. I am glad that we were able to resolve that.

The recapture of the city of Mosul by Iraqi forces earlier this month marked a significant development in the U.S.-led global coalition effort to degrade and destroy ISIS. The loss of Iraq's second-largest city, coupled with ongoing advances by coalition-backed Syrian rebels in the self-declared ISIS capital of Raqqa in eastern Syria are the most recent indicators of the continuing loss of geographic territory by the terrorist organization.

According to global data monitoring company IHS Market, ISIS currently controls an estimated 14,000 square miles, an area roughly the size of Maryland. That is a 60 percent decrease from January of 2015. The terrorist group has also experienced a corresponding loss in annual revenue by about 50 percent.

However, battlefield losses on the ground in Iraq and Syria do not signify the complete degradation or destruction of ISIS, as recently underscored by Lieutenant General Mike Nagata at the National Counterterrorism Center. ISIS' ability to absorb this damage and continue to direct, enable, or inspire terrorist attacks worldwide indicate that, and I quote, "We do not fully appreciate the scale or strength of this phenomenon," close quote.

In the midst of the coalition-backed defense in Raqqa, the New York Times reports that top ISIS operatives have already relocated to the town of Mayadin, Syria, about 100 miles away, along with the recruitment, financing, propaganda, and external operations

functions necessary to facilitate and motivate attacks here in the West.

Regrettably, we have already witnessed the devastation caused by ISIS-inspired ideology and the influence of extremist social media content here at home with the 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, that resulted in 14 deaths, and the 2016 terrorist attacks in Orlando, Florida, that killed 49 people. The program on Extremism at the George Washington University has identified at least 16 successful attacks perpetrated in the United States alone since ISIS announced the so-called caliphate in 2014. The majority of the attackers, including Orlando shooter Omar Mateen, openly pledged their allegiance to ISIS.

In light of the continuing national security threat posed by terrorist-related attacks, we must work on a bipartisan basis to conduct robust oversight of Federal efforts to combat violent extremism and maximize our ability to mitigate the threat of radicalization based on fact.

As highlighted by the Independent Government Accounting Office just this month in its report on "Countering ISIS and its effect," and I again quote, "The Federal Government does not have a cohesive strategy or process for assessing the countering violent extremism effort," close quote. Moreover, programs designed to counter violent extremism at the Federal level have lacked a clear mission and objective, receiving insecure or inadequate funding and have failed to reflect meaningful and collaborative Muslim community engagement and input.

In 2014, the Obama administration announced the establishment of key pilot programs in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and my own city of Boston designed by the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Counterterrorism Center to counter violent extremism and stop radicalization through community-based outreach and education. The greater Boston region was selected as a pilot area as a result of a preexisting collaboration between law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, and local communities, including the Muslim community. In fact, President Obama recognized Boston as one of the 10 cities where local elected officials, law enforcement, faith organizations, youth groups, and others have already worked together to achieve marked improvement in community policing.

In the New England area, local Muslim community leaders and organizations occupy a strategic role to prevent online radicalization and other forms of terrorist recruitment and promote community engagement. The Islamic Center of New England, which is in my district in the city of Quincy, has sought to develop a faith-based curriculum for young people that educates them on the prevalence of misinformation on the internet and particularly social media, while reinforcing positive Islamic values.

In addition, Imam Khalid Nasr of the Quincy Mosque has sought to increase community outreach and interaction through open houses designed to afford all members of the community the opportunity to visit the mosque and meet with their Muslim neighbors, especially during Muslim holidays.

Since the inception of the regional pilot program, the Federal Countering Violent Extremism program has expanded to include a

grant program authorized by Congress to assist States, localities, and nonprofit organizations in preventing terrorist recruitment and radicalization. As announced by Secretary of Homeland Security General John Kelly in June of 2017, the agency awarded 26 grants totaling $10 million to organizations dedicated to securing our communities and preventing terrorism—the list of grants, including an approximate $485,000 to the Boston Police Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works with the Boston Police to implement innovative youth outreach programs. Unfortunately, the current administration has frozen this $10 million in funding in its fiscal year 2018 budget, proposing zeroing out the $50 million for Countering Violent Extremism program altogether.

Rather than weakening our effort to combat violent extremism, we have to work together to identify what works and what additional steps we must take to improve collaboration and cultivate a solid relationship of mutual respect and deeper understanding between law enforcement and local communities based on a shared commitment, and that includes the Muslim communities—that is based on a shared commitment to preventing radicalization and recruitment.

To this end, I look forward to today's hearing, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

I will hold the record open for five legislative days for any members who would like to submit a written statement.

We will now recognize our panel of witnesses.

I am pleased to welcome Mr. Kerry Sleeper, assistant director, Office of Partner Engagement, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Mr. George Selim, director of the Office of Community Partnerships, Department of Homeland Security; Ms. Raheel Raza, president of Muslims Facing Tomorrow; Mr. Adnan Kifayat, director, Global Security Ventures, Gen Next Foundation; and Mr. Seamus Hughes, deputy director of the Program on Extremism from the George Washington University.

Welcome to you all.

Pursuant to committee rules, all witnesses will be sworn in before they testify, so if you can please rise and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay. Thank you. Please be seated. All witnesses answered in the affirmative.

In order to allow time for discussion, please limit your testimony to five minutes. Your entire written statement will be made part of the record.

And with that, Mr. Sleeper, you are up for five minutes.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF KERRY SLEEPER

Mr. SLEEPER. Good afternoon, Chairman DeSantis, Ranking Member Lynch, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the threat of homegrown violent extremism. My name is Kerry Sleeper. I'm as-

sistant director with the FBI in charge of our Office of Partner Engagement.

The FBI utilizes a comprehensive violence reduction strategy, which focuses on all pathways to violence but is not limited to this sole focus of homegrown violent extremism. Our violence reduction strategy is primarily composed of prevention and intervention lines of effort.

In the area of prevention, the FBI has a long history of engagement in outreach and education initiatives and continues this effort as we identify and adapt to current trends and threats. In collaboration with our State and local partners, the FBI has historically been very successful in outreach programs designed to reach certain communities who are at a greater risk for radicalization. For example, FBI Minneapolis served as a pilot program for the Bureau immediately after 9/11 when their executive management regularly hosted focus group meetings with specific audiences such as Somali elders in order to address their concerns and needs.

Some of our popular outreach programs that have a positive impact on our community relationships are the Campus Liaison Initiative, the Private Sector Liaison, the Correction Initiative, the FBI Citizens Academy, and the Junior G Man program. These efforts are managed by our division outreach coordinators in conjunction with our JTTFs and local partners.

Additionally, the vision outreach coordinators assess the needs of their individual community groups and develop specific programming tailed to integrated community and law enforcement goals to mitigate local risk factors for violence.

The FBI also focuses on education for different catalysts for radicalization designed to help the public increase an awareness of that radicalization. These public—these products are widely disseminated to the law enforcement and community partners for further engagement with the public and demand continues to increase for additional products.

The FBI created a website "Don't be a puppet; pull back the curtain on violent extremism" specifically designed for the public and for use by educators and community leaders and organizations for school-age children. Visits to this website average nearly 7,400 visits a month.

Also, in reaching out to communities, the FBI has produced other media-based products, including preventing violent extremism in school, recognizing pathways to violent extremism, campus attacks, targeted violence affecting institutions of higher education, and workplace violence issues and response. We have also produced and distributed documentaries A Revolutionary Act, Redemption, and Active Shooter: Managing the Mass Casualty Threat.

I left with the members to be distributed a copy of A Revolutionary Act. This was a video that we created for State and local law enforcement. It documented the murder of two Las Vegas Metro PD officers by domestic terrorists two years ago. The reception by the State and local law enforcement community has been very, very strong. It's an example of the type of work we do for the law enforcement agencies to then engage with their communities and have discussions.

In our intervention area, the FBI is closely coordinating with our State and local partners to best meet the needs of their communities. The FBI's Office of Partner Engagement identified as a best practice used by police departments, the crisis intervention teams, and their partner multidisciplinary teams composed of community mental health and social welfare providers.

The FBI's Office of Partner Engagement is currently initiating closer coordination with police department crisis intervention teams in order to develop a coordinated strategy to identify potential individuals appropriate for intervention.

The FBI also conducted a pilot program to assess the viability of off-ramping. The idea behind off-ramping subjects is to take them off the path of violence before they commit a crime. This process must be completed with the utmost attention to detail, sensitivity to law enforcement and community partners, and a forward-leaning approach. The FBI's pilot program indicated the best results would be achieved by close collaboration with our State and local law enforcement and government partners. The FBI continues to work with these partners to form a cohesive and beneficial plan to implement off-ramping efforts and to better serve our communities.

In conclusion, I am pleased to be here today to talk to you about the FBI's work with our State and local partners in combating homegrown violent extremism. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Kerry Sleeper follows:]

Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

KERRY SLEEPER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PARTNER ENGAGEMENT
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FOR A HEARING ENTITLED
"COMBATTING HOMEGROWN TERRORISM"

PRESENTED

JULY 27, 2017

Statement of
Kerry Sleeper
Assistant Director
Office of Partner Engagement
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Before the
Subcommittee on National Security
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives

At a Hearing Entitled
"Combatting Homegrown Terrorism"

July 27, 2017

Good afternoon Chairman DeSantis, Ranking Member Lynch, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the threat of Homegrown Violent Extremism.

The FBI utilizes a comprehensive Violence Reduction Strategy, which focuses on all pathways to violence but is not limited to the sole focus of Homegrown Violent Extremism. Our Violence Reduction strategy is primarily composed of prevention and intervention lines of effort.

In the area of prevention, the FBI has a long history of engagement in outreach and education initiatives, and continues this effort as we identify and adapt to current trends.

In collaboration with our State and local partners, the FBI has historically been very successful in outreach programs designed to reach certain communities who are at greater risk for radicalization. For example, FBI Minneapolis served as a pilot program for the Bureau immediately after 9/11/2001 when their Executive Management regularly hosted focus group meetings with specific audiences, such as the Somali elders, in order to address their concerns and needs.

Some of our popular outreach programs that have had a positive impact on the community are the Campus Liaison Initiative, the Private Sector Liaison, the Corrections Initiative, the FBI Citizens Academy, and the Junior G-Man Program. These efforts are managed by our Division Outreach Coordinators, in conjunction with the JTTF and local partners. Additionally, the Division Outreach Coordinators assess the needs of their individual community groups and develop specific programming tailored to integrate community and law enforcement goals to mitigate local risk factors for violence.

The FBI also focuses on education for different catalysts for radicalization designed to help the public increase awareness of radicalization. These products are widely disseminated to the law enforcement and community partners for further engagement with the public, and demand continues to increase for additional products. The FBI has a website, "Don't Be a Puppet – Pull Back the Curtain on Violent Extremism" specifically designed for the public, and for use by educators and community leaders and organizations for school age children. Visits to the site average nearly 7,400 a month. Also in reaching out to communities, the FBI has produced other media-based products, including "Preventing Violent Extremism in Schools", "Recognizing Pathways to Violent Extremism", "Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education" and "Workplace Violence – Issues and Response". We have also produced and distributed documentaries "A Revolutionary Act", "Redemption", and "Active Shooter – Managing the Mass Casualty Threat".

In our area of intervention, the FBI is closely coordinating with our State and local partners to best meet the needs of communities.. The FBI's Office of Partner Engagement identified a best practice used by police departments, the Crisis Intervention Teams ("CITs") and their partner Multi-Discipline Teams ("MDTs"), composed of community mental health and social welfare providers. The FBI's Office of Partner Engagement is currently initiating closer coordination with Police Department Crisis Intervention Teams in order to develop a coordinated strategy to identify potential individuals appropriate for intervention. The FBI also conducted a pilot program to assess the viability of "off-ramping". The idea behind "off-ramping" subjects is to take them off the path to violence before they commit a crime. This process must be completed with the utmost attention to detail, sensitivity to law enforcement and community partners, and a forward-leaning approach. The FBI's pilot program indicated the best results would be achieved by close collaboration with our State and local law enforcement and government partners.. The FBI continues to work with these partners to form a cohesive and beneficial plan to implement "off-ramping" efforts and better serve our communities.

In conclusion, I am pleased to be here today to talk to you about the FBI's work with our State and local partners in combatting homegrown extremism. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Mr. Selim, you are up for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE SELIM

Mr. SELIM. Good afternoon, Chairman DeSantis, Ranking Member Lynch, other members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is George Selim, and I lead the Office for Community Partnerships at the Department of Homeland Security, and I also serve as the director of the Interagency Countering Violent Extremism Task Force, which is tasked to manage the synchronization and integration of a whole-of-government effort to empower local partners to prevent violent extremism here in the United States.

I have built on my nearly 12 years of homeland security-related work experience in the executive branch, including the Department of Justice, most recently DHS headquarters, as well as the National Security Council to further the Department's and the Interagency's key priorities on fostering relationships, promoting trust, and finding innovative ways to expand the toolbox for both law enforcement officials and civil leaders to prevent and intervene in the process of radicalization.

Terrorism prevention programs complement traditional counterterrorism investigative and prosecutorial processes. Prevention focuses on disrupting the beliefs of violent extremists and their will to act on those beliefs through criminal or other violent actions. Community-driven prevention programs are designed to mitigate recruitment and interdict individuals radicalizing to violence earlier in the process, and that way, thus contributing to our collective homeland security.

Historically, my office, the Office of Community Partnerships, has pursued a number of activities to advance the terrorism prevention mission. We educate our communities, working with departments and agencies to provide community awareness briefings that demonstrably increase the understanding of how terrorist groups recruit and radicalize and thus incite to violence.

We have engaged with community stakeholders around the United States to open doors to dialogue and build trust. My office has deployed field staff to more than a dozen cities nationwide to bolster engagement with and between governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, not the least of which are our State and local law enforcement partners, as well as community and civic groups.

Additionally, we have engaged young people through the internationally recognized public-private partnership titled the Peer-to-Peer Challenging Extremism Competition, which was featured last week in the New York Times, which its aim is to challenge teams of students from colleges and universities both across the United States and abroad to develop and implement social media programs targeting the narratives and online recruiters of violent extremism.

In 2015, the Department of Homeland Security worked with Congress to secure a first-of-its-kind funding for the CVE grant program, which the chairman referred to earlier, that supports communities seeking to do more to combat the ongoing threat of terrorism here in the homeland. Six months later, the Department of

Homeland Security released our Notice of Funding Opportunity for this grant program. The application period closed last September, and almost 200 applications received were reviewed by a combination of experts to evaluate the strengths and merits of each individual application.

After a leadership review panel reviewed the scoring results in the five focus areas and ensured important programmatic soundness was met such as the optimized use of funds to avoid duplication and other similar projects. After a deliberate process, then-Secretary Johnson made a determination on funding options presented to him and publicly announced grants on January 13 of 2017. My office anticipated approximately 30 days later from the announcement to make the formal award offers and allow time to finalize many of the administrative tasks associated with the grants.

After the inauguration of President Trump on January 20, the new DHS leadership asked to put a pause on the program, reviewing the entire effort, alongside numerous other efforts at the Department of Homeland Security. What I can tell you today is that the review was comprehensive. New DHS leadership imagined—examined the goals of the program, the processes, and how the grant program would measure its own efficacy.

As a result of the review, and consistent with the authorizes granted to the Secretary and as outlined in the Notice of Funding, the Department considered three additional factors among the pool of applicants, including the applicant or proposal's level of engagement with law enforcement and the community, the proposal's likelihood for it to be highly effective, and the proposal's level of resource dedication or long-term sustainability. In the end, the application of these factors resulted in some changes in the list of intended awardees.

Moving forward, the 26 projects funded by the Countering Violent Extremism grant program are designed to establish a solid foundation for prevention of terrorism in our American communities. The grants support a full range of terrorism prevention activities, including awareness campaigns, engagement, trust-building, intervention efforts, and direct opposition of terrorism narratives these days. The awards span communities across the country and focus on all forms of violent extremism.

In conclusion, our team recognizes that now comes the hard part. We are working with all 26 project teams to ensure that the awardees detail their progress towards their goals through ongoing and rigorous monitoring. In doing so, my office will identify promising practices and tools to keep extremists from luring more impressionable people towards terrorism. We will add to the dataset on existing terrorism prevention programs, and we will share the result from these grants publicly so that other communities and the public and you, the committee, can learn firsthand what works and what does not in the field of terrorism prevention. We are grateful for bipartisan support from Congress on this program to date and look forward to keeping you informed on our progress and ensure that it lives up to the Congress' standards.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of George Selim follows:]

U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Security of the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
"Combating Homegrown Terrorism"
July 27, 2017
Remarks by George Selim, Director, DHS Office for Community Partnerships

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is George Selim, and I lead the Office for Community Partnerships (OCP) for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). We are focused on terrorism prevention efforts, also known as countering violent extremism (CVE).

In my ten-plus years of working in the terrorism prevention space in the Executive Branch – including at the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Security Council staff – I have seen how important our communities are to accomplishing this mission. I have personally worked with civic leaders and local agencies and citizens who have raised concerns about individuals in their neighborhoods – tips and insights we may not have received otherwise – and with many patriotic community leaders who have sought to stand up and be part of the solution in countering terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence in their communities. I have worked with leaders from a variety of localities across the United States, such as Chicago, Illinois; Dearborn, Michigan; and Columbus, Ohio, as well as many other cities, and I have engaged with a range of international stakeholders, such as from Somalia, Jordan, and Indonesia – and the most common question I get from local leaders no matter from where they originate is, "How can I help?"

Terrorism prevention efforts complement traditional counterterrorism investigative and prosecutorial processes, focusing on the disruption of the beliefs of violent extremists (e.g., violent ideology) and their will to act on those beliefs by taking criminal or violent actions (i.e., mobilization). Community-based training and engagement programs can be used to mitigate recruitment and interdict individuals radicalizing to violence earlier in the process – in that way contributing to the safety of the homeland. It must be a priority to reduce recruiters' ability to influence vulnerable individuals, and we must work to increase the likelihood that communities are inhospitable to terrorist recruitment.

Historically, OCP has pursued a number of activities to advance the terrorism prevention mission. We have engaged with stakeholders around the United States to open the doors to dialogue and build trust. We work with other departments and agencies to provide Community Awareness Briefings that demonstrably increase the understanding of how terrorist groups recruit and inspire violence. My office has deployed field staff to more than a dozen cities nationwide to bolster engagement with and between governmental organizations, not least of which are state and local law enforcement agencies, as well as community and civic organizations. Additionally, we have engaged young people through the internationally recognized public-private partnership titled, "Peer to Peer: Countering Extremism." "Peer to Peer," featured in last week's *New York*

Times,[1] challenges teams of students from colleges and universities to develop and implement social media programs targeting the narratives and online recruiters of violent extremism.

In 2015, DHS worked with Congress to secure first-of-its kind funding for a CVE Grant Program (CVEGP) that supports communities seeking to do more to combat the ongoing threat of terrorism. My office developed the CVEGP following the FY2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill, signed in December 2015. We became the program office for administering this funding in conjunction with FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate (GPD). OCP reviewed other grant programs both within and outside DHS for best practices to emulate in creating the CVEGP. We consulted closely with FEMA, DHS Financial Assistance Program Office (FAPO), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Congress to ensure the program adhered to programmatic standards and met Congressional intent. DHS released the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the CVEGP on July 6, 2016, less than six months from the original appropriation. DHS is not aware of any other grant program that has more expeditiously opened the application period for a new grant program, and indeed the program has been recognized for its quality, leading other grant programs to consult my office for best practices.

The application period closed on September 6, 2016. Of the 212 complete applications we received by the deadline, my office deemed 197 applications as eligible to proceed for consideration.[2] The 197 applications requested more than $100 million in funds and represented 42 states, territories and the District of Columbia, across five focus areas.[3] Each individual application received a review and scoring by a panel comprised of four subject matter experts, including an external (i.e. non-federal) expert. The review and scoring process took several weeks. The NOFO instructed the review panel to consider seven criteria to evaluate the strength and merits of each individual application.

Once all the scores were finalized and tabulated into a total score for each application, OCP convened a senior leadership review panel that reviewed the scoring results in each of the five focus areas. The senior leadership review panel also considered optimizing the use of funds, ensuring diversity of applicant type, achieving geographic diversity, avoiding duplication of similar projects, and meeting funding targets by focus area. While preparing a final recommendation memo for consideration by both the Assistant Administrator of FEMA's GPD and my office, FEMA staff with experience working with previous DHS Secretaries on other grant programs recommended that OCP present the Secretary of Homeland Security with several options on how best to allocate the grant funding across the five focus areas. These options were rooted in the recommendations from the senior leadership review.

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[1] Nixon, Ron. "Students Are the Newest U.S. Weapon Against Terrorist Recruitment." *New York Times*. 18 July 2017.

[2] Projects were ruled ineligible if they did not purport to conduct activities eligible under the funding opportunity, such as projects exclusively hosted overseas, or projects that were exclusively research proposals, and projects without a nexus to preventing or intervening into radicalization to violence or recruitment to violent extremism.

[3] The FY 2016 CVE Grant Program organizes eligible activities into five focus areas that current research has shown are likely to be most effective in countering violent extremism: (1) developing resilience, (2) training and engaging with community members, (3) managing intervention activities, (4) challenging the narrative, and (5) building capacity of community-level non-profit organizations active in CVE.

Some procedural delays arose before the Secretary made final selections, including the need to conduct security reviews before final selection. OCP established such a process using DHS resources, including those available from the DHS Intelligence & Analysis (I&A) and Customs and Border Protection's National Targeting Center. The DHS vetted application data of potential grantees against the Terrorist Screening Database and other criminal databases based on information provided in the grant applications. While not legally required, the Acting Chief Privacy Officer also ordered a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) on the security review process. While the PIA provided transparency, it created a delay in providing recommendations to the Secretary. Only applications from non-profit organizations included in recommendations to the Secretary were run through the security review process. Government agencies and institutions of higher education were not included, due to their existing institutional controls that prohibit the misuse of grant funds for the purposes of criminal activity or terrorism.

Ultimately, then-Secretary Johnson made a determination on funding that was a combination of the options presented to him, which was in line with the NOFO and within the Secretary's grant making authority in Section 102(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002.[4] Secretary Johnson publicly announced the selection of intended awardees on January 13, 2017. My office anticipated at least 30 days from the announcement to make all of the formal award offers to allow time for finalizing budgets and other administrative tasks.[5] Within a few days of the start of the Administration, OCP and FEMA were instructed to continue certain administrative tasks associated with the CVEGP process, but not to make final award offers until the new DHS leadership could review the CVEGP. This was consistent with guidance given to other ongoing grant programs.

The review was comprehensive. New DHS leadership examined the goals of the program, the process, and how the grant program would measure its own efficacy. As a result of the review, and consistent with the authorities granted to the Secretary and outlined in the NOFO, the Department considered three additional factors among the applicant pool, including the applicant or proposal's level of engagement with law enforcement in the community, the proposal's likelihood of effectiveness, and the proposal's level of resource dedication or long-term sustainability. In the end, the application of these factors resulted in some changes to the list of intended awardees. In total, 12 applications announced in January were not offered an award, 7 new applications were offered an award, and 7 applications received increased funding amounts from what was announced in January.

Combined, the 26 projects funded in the CVEGP are designed to make our communities more resistant to terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence. The Department looks forward to assessing the projects on an ongoing basis to identify best practices and effective tools

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[4] Specifically, the NOFO states that "[t]he results of the senior leadership review will be presented to the Director, Office for Community Partnerships and the Assistant Administrator, FEMA GPD, who will recommend the selection of recipients for this program to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Final funding determinations will be made by the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the FEMA Administrator. The Secretary retains the discretion to consider other factors and information in addition to those included in the recommendations."

[5] Notice of Funding Opportunity DHS-16-OCP-132-00-01 Page 5 "Anticipated Funding Selection Date:10/30/2016 Anticipated Award Date: No later than December 1, 2016"

to keep extremists from luring more impressionable people toward violence. The grants support a range of activities, including awareness campaigns, engagement and trust-building, intervention efforts, and direct opposition of terrorist narratives. The awardees span communities across the United States and focus on all forms of violent extremism.

In conclusion, our team recognizes that now comes the hard part. We are excited to see these awards move from application to action, to use proven methods that protect law enforcement and the communities they serve, including sustainable methods to provide benefits, well beyond the grants' end dates. As these programs commence next month, my team is working with all 26 project teams to ensure that the awardees detail their progress towards their goals. The robust performance measures incorporated in these grant projects by the terms of their awards will add to the data on existing programs to help us continually assess which projects have the most success and show the most measurable outcomes. We will share the results from these grants publically so that other communities, the public, and Congress can learn first-hand what works and what does not in terms of terrorism prevention.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Ms. Raza, you are up for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF RAHEEL RAZA

Ms. RAZA. [Speaking foreign language.] I begin in the name of God, most beneficial, most merciful.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to deliver this testimony.

My name is Raheel Raza. I'm a practicing Muslim, president of Muslims Facing Tomorrow, founding member of the Muslim Reform Movement, and advisory board member of the Clarion Project. I've engaged in dialogue about these issues in the U.S., at the U.N., and in the Canadian and U.K. Parliaments for over two decades. I have four main recommendations:

1. Shift government focus and efforts to tackle the Islamist ideology.

2. Designate the Muslim Brotherhood as an entity that aids and abets terrorism.

3. Prevent funding of U.S. educational institutions and mosques by foreign extremist sources.

4. Invite voices of reform-minded Muslims to also be heard in these esteemed chambers.

Firstly, there is a serious error at the heart of the countering violent extremism policy. We must confront radicals before they become violent. Before World War II, Nazism was an ideology expressed in Mein Kampf. Before two million Chinese died in the Cultural Revolution, ideas were written down in a Little Red Book. And in 1928, another ideology appeared with the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood, which seeks a totalitarian system of government and forced implementation of Sharia law, the trickling effects of which we don't want to see in the United States.

This ideology fuels ISIS and al-Qaida, subjugates women, executes homosexuals, kills Christians, and inspires some American Muslims to commit acts of terror. The Clarion Project's short film By the Numbers puts numbers to these assertions based on Pew research. Twenty-seven percent or 237 million Muslims believe nonbelievers should be executed, and 26 percent of young American Muslims believe suicide bombings against non-Muslims can be justified. Fortunately, most Muslims don't hold this radical ideology, but hundreds of millions do.

Some claim ideology is not a clear predictor of terrorism. They are dead-wrong. A 2016 study traced the path of 100 violent jihadists. Fifty-one percent of them began their journey in nonviolent Islamist movements. By the time an extremist becomes violent, it's too late. As such, the U.S. must defeat, humiliate, destroy, and discredit this poisonous radical ideology of Islamism stemming from the Wahhabi Salafi ideology, Khomeinism, and the Muslim Brotherhood, which brings me to recommendation number two, designate the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization that aids and abets terrorism.

As I've already explained, the Muslim Brotherhood seeks to establish a worldwide Islamic State and build a new world civilization based on Sharia law. In fact, Russia, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates have all listed the

Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. The U.S. must follow suit.

Next, number three, remove foreign extremist funding from American campuses and mosques. Saudi Arabia is thought to have spent $70–100 billion to disseminate their intolerant version of Islam worldwide. Saudi Arabia gave $20 million to Georgetown and $20 million to Harvard. A Saudi billionaire named as a defendant in a 9/11 lawsuit donated $10 million to establish a Center of Islamic Law and Civilization at Yale. Iran is also complicit in funding Shia mosques, Islamic schools, and organizations. We should not have Iran or Saudi Arabia teaching their version of Islam to our youth.

Final recommendation number four, a seat at the table; listen to martyred Muslims. Mohamed Elibiary helped craft the Countering Violent Extremism, the CVE program, yet he called for the political integration of mainstream Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood. Also, CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, is a radical group which claims to speak for American Muslims. CAIR does not speak for me or most Muslims. CAIR was designated as a terrorist group by the United Arab Emirates, and its L.A. director called the work of this committee a myth.

CAIR's recommendation to the House Committee on Homeland Security was to refuse a legitimizing platform to organizations and individuals they deem "Islamophobic." Let me clarify that anti-Muslim bigotry is real, but that's not a permission slip to call every dissenting voice an Islamophobe. I've raised two sons with Muslim values while keeping them from radical views and will do the same for my four grandchildren. Does educating youth about the dangers of radicalization make one an Islamophobe? Of course not. These labels keep us from critical debate such as the one we are having now and stops the Muslim communities from becoming pluralistic, tolerant, embracing of democracy, freedoms, and liberties, and accepting of all paths and people.

On behalf of Muslims Facing Tomorrow, reform-minded Muslims, and the Clarion Project, thank you for letting our voices be heard.

[Prepared statement of Raheel Raza follows:]

TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

"Combating Homegrown Terrorism"

Written testimony by Raheel Raza – July 27, 2017

What the US Can Do to Counter Threat of Violent Extremism Within Domestic Communities

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of Congress, thank you for the opportunity to deliver testimony before you today. My name is Raheel Raza and I am here on behalf of Muslims Facing Tomorrow and Clarion Project to testify on the vital issue of violent extremism within US domestic communities and what the United States government can do.

Violent extremism poses a clear and present threat to the security of the United States, both domestically and internationally. It does so in a number of different forms. This testimony focuses on extremism domestically, which is the scope of the hearing and from within my own Islamic community, since it is my area of expertise. I fully support the work of others who counter different forms of extremism within their communities. I would also like to condemn those who seek to use the problem of Islamic extremism as an excuse to target all Muslims. Anti-Muslim bigotry is a real and serious problem. It is never an acceptable response to the problem of Islamic extremism. It must be condemned and opposed.

I commend the panel for recognizing that a growing number of Americans are increasingly cognizant of this problem. From 2011 to 2015 the number of Americans who were very concerned about Islamic extremism rose from 36% to 53%.[1]

Therefore you have asked me what can the US do to counter the threat of violent extremism within domestic communities, within the context of the strengths and weaknesses of existing CVE programs. I have four main recommendations, which I humbly submit and will expand on in this testimony.

These are as follows:

- Shift government efforts to tackle the ideology driving extremism. This is a political ideology which seeks to impose the religion of Islam onto others and implement sharia as state law, thereby enabling a proper discussion of the issue without tarring the religion of Islam with the same brush. In this spirit we support the addition of Countering Non-Violent Extremism (CNVE) to the existing structure of Countering Violent Extremism

[1] http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/16/extremism-concerns-growing-in-west-and-predominantly-muslim-countries/

(CVE).

- Designate the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization that aids and abets terrorism.
- Take steps to prevent funding of US educational institutions and mosques by foreign extremist sources.
- Start listening to moderates such as the Muslim Reform Movement. We would be happy to provide a list of recommended figures from across the Muslim community spectrum.

I will address these in turn. Prior to that I will assess as requested the strengths and weaknesses of current CVE programs, as requested.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Countering Violent Extremism Programs

Creating a federal CVE strategy was an excellent decision. The conversation has matured considerably since 2o15 when the initial CVE strategy was unveiled at President Obama's White House Summit,[2] building on the previous work of the previous Prevent Violent Extremism strategy of 2011.[3]

Current US CVE policy has several areas of strength. Domestically and internationally the US has recognized the importance of partnerships and combining government action with supporting civil society organizations which conduct on the ground work.

Connecting 25 local city governments around the world to coordinate on CVE from a law enforcement perspective, as in the Strong Cities Initiative and connecting 30 member states in the Global Counter Terrorism forum to tackle terrorism at a state level are both very encouraging transnational initiatives which showcase the effectiveness of US leadership.[4][5]

It is also to the government's credit that USAID is involved in promoting on the ground development projects in places like Mali, Niger, Pakistan and Somalia to counter-act the "push" factors which drive people to extremism.[6] To ignore other related factors such a poverty and alienation which can help fuel radicalization would be dishonest so it is to the US government's credit that these programs exist. A nuanced strategy which acknowledges how other issues interrelate without whitewashing the ideological element is essential.

It is of course important to ensure that proper oversight of these programs is maintained, since there is an ongoing risk of corruption. For example in May 2016 USAID shut down 14 programs it was funding providing cross-border aid from Turkey in Syria.[7] If development and aid is to be an effective part of CVE transparency and oversight are essential to ensuring that the programs help rather than hinder. This is especially true since opposition to corruption is a recruiting

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[2] https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism

[3] https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/empowering_local_partners.pdf

[4] http://www.gcerf.org/wp-content/uploads/3Dec2015_GCSP-Morocco-USA-Remarks-by-KK1.pdf

[5] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/launch-strong-cities-network-strengthen-community-resilience-against-violent-extremism

[6] https://www.usaid.gov/countering-violent-extremism

[7] https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/statement_05062016_usaid_oig_syria_aid.pdf

tactic for Islamist groups.

Domestically there are some gaps. In a recent case of a Somali-American who was arrested on terror charges and sent to a CVE program in a half-way house, the state did not have a worked out deradicalization program for terror suspects and sent him on an experimental deradicalization program instead. Judge Michael Davis told the defendant Abdullahi Yusuf "I don't have a program, So we are working together to make you well, and if there is a misstep, my only alternative is to send you to prison."[8]

So the first weakness of CVE programs is a lack of having them, or at least a lack of having deradicalization programs. This program, introduced in 2015 on which Yusuf was enrolled, was the first "disengagement and deradicalization" program in the U.S., which is very late considering the length of time this issue has been a problem.

Once the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program in Minnesota has been tested and fine tuned I would want to see such programs in place across the country. Though they are not appropriate in many instances, they need to be set up so that they can be implemented in the cases where they are needed. Further research is also required to ensure that these programs function effectively, perhaps, as the RAND Institute has done, drawing from other academic disciplines since the field of CVE is so new.[9]

As of February 2017, the Director of The Prevention Project: Organizing Against Violent Extremism said "the Bureau of Prisons can be faulted for not doing enough," noting "Despite the growing number of people sent to federal prison for non-violent terrorism charges (over 300 since 9/11, with more than 90 individuals charged with mostly non-violent ISIS-related offenses, and 40 or so to be released in the next two to four years), the United States, unlike many countries in Europe (and increasingly beyond), has yet to put in place tailored plans for their rehabilitation inside jail or reintegration once they are released."[10]

Furthermore, there have been suggestions to change the name of the CVE program to Countering Radical Islamic Extremism.[11] Clarion applauds the correct labeling of the main threat as being radical Islamic extremism, in contrast to previous practice. However, despite our support for correctly identifying Islamic extremism as the principal ideology driving global terrorism, we disagree with the policy to change the name and exclude other ideologies the program of CVE.

We have three objections to such a shift.

1) Neo-nazi, far-left and other non-Islamist extremist groups exist in the United States and they also need to be countered.
2) The growth of such groups makes Islamist extremism worse, because it fuels the grievance narrative used by recruiters.
3) Changing the name and publicly sending the message that the only problem of extremism

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[8] http://www.startribune.com/after-watching-a-cnn-documentary-twin-cities-isis-defendant-finds-himself-back-in-custody/420939083/

[9] https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2120.html

[10] https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/02/16/fixing-cve-in-the-united-states-requires-more-than-just-a-name-change/

[11] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-cut-white-supremacism-countering-violent-extremism-programme-neo-nazi-counter-extremism-a7558796.html

> comes from within the Muslim community sends a very alienating message to the Muslim community and chills community relations. This is negative for social cohesion, as well as being untrue.

Having outlined what I consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the existing program, I will no go on to elucidate my four recommendations that will enable the US government to better counter extremism in the United States.

Naming the problem

Our first recommendation is to stop treating this as exclusively a law enforcement problem and start treating it as an ideological and political problem.

Non-violent Islamists and violent Islamists share the same core political ideology, namely a political understanding of faith that seeks to create a totalitarian, supremacist system of government with a theocratic monarch (caliph) at its head and implement their interpretation of sharia, Islamic law, as state law.[12][13] This ideology, where it takes over, implements horrific human rights abuses totally antithetical to the values of the U.S. Constitution and international standards of human rights. Like any ideological framework Islamism contains a large amount of intellectual diversity resulting in divergent political movements ranging from the Islamic State to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Nevertheless the broad principles remain constant: a fusion of religion and state.

It is vital that we correctly name the ideology. Not doing so creates an atmosphere of confusion which enables people to draw incorrect conclusions, something Quilliam Foundation co-founder Maajid Nawaz has termed the "Voldemort Effect," after the villain of the Harry Potter book series whom the protagonists fear to name, thus increasing fear of Voldemort.[14]

We see the impact of this confusion in the debate surrounding extremism. Some erroneously deduce that there is no such thing as radical Islam and there is thus no problem beyond mental health or the occasional aberrant bout of criminal violence. This hampers the ability of law enforcement and the government to tackle the problem effectively. Others, faced with the undeniable fact of global Islamic terrorism conclude Islam itself is at fault and that my religion is evil.

Confusion only increases anti-Muslim bigotry, which we also must face up to as a real and dangerous problem which damages the fabric of society. According to the most recently available FBI hate crime statistics (for 2015), Muslims made up 21.9% of the 1,402 people targeted in the United States in incidents of anti-religious bias.[15] Yet despite a string of high profile anti-Muslim

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[12] http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/22326292/What_is_Islamism_Totalitarian_Movements_article.pdf
[13] http://www.danielpipes.org/954/distinguishing-between-islam-and-islamism
[14] http://bigthink.com/videos/maajid-nawaz-on-the-voldemort-effect
[15] https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/victims_final

incidents widely reported in the media, perceptions of Muslims are actually improving in America. In a 2014 survey by Pew Research, Americans gave Muslims an average of 40 degree favorability (with 100 as the highest and 0 as the lowest), while a 2017 survey saw Muslims receive a favorability rating of 48.[16] We must of course remain vigilant against the threat of anti-Muslim bigotry.

By correctly labeling the issue as an ideological political issue grounded in an interpretation of religious scripture we will be much better equipped to counter its message and prevent the radicalization of American citizens and terror attacks on American soil. It will also calm the debate and facilitate a more nuanced and practical assessment of the situation instead of framing the discussion as one of being pro or anti Islam. This will hopefully lead to a reduction of complaints that CVE is a "guise for deputizing well-intentioned Muslim leaders to gather intelligence on their constituents that places their civil liberties at risk," as Texas A&M Professor SaharAziz put it.[17]

Islamists have also been able to hijack the discourse surrounding other issues and draw in people who for whatever reason are already predisposed towards either violent criminality or mistrust of the state. Most obviously, this manifests itself in the attempt to "racialize" the struggle against radical Islam and draw a connection between issues of policing and community relations and the war on terror, painting both issues as part of the same broader problem of "white supremacy."[18] Groups like the Nation of Islam peddle this rhetoric, conflating the issue of race in America with Islamist ideology.[19] In the Ferguson riots ISIS tweeted support for the rioters, urging people of color in America to fight the police and convert to Islam in exchange for soldiers from ISIS who would come to wage war on their behalf against police officers.[20]

United States' CVE has to take into account how separate issues are exploited by extremists and move to sever attempts by extremists to capitalize on other areas of discontent.

So far the government has not correctly labelled the ideology. In the Department of Homeland Security's Countering Violent Extremism Guide, on p10, it currently reads "DHS will engage directly with diverse communities to promote these fundamental values and reject the premise that violent extremism is linked to particular ideological perspectives."[21]

Yet on the very next page the guide posits an objective to "Challenge violent extremist messaging that supports ideologically motivated violence." This directly contradicts what was written on the previous page, since it acknowledges that terrorism is at least partly inspired by ideology.

Correctly naming and tackling the ideology will also enable the United States to better address the transnational nature of the threat. Despite being geographically removed from the epicenter of

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[16] http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/27/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/

[17] https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/06/islamophobia-countering-violent-extremism-muslim-leaders

[18] https://islamophobiaisracism.wordpress.com/

[19] https://clarionproject.org/nation-islam/

[20] https://clarionproject.org/islamists-exploit-ferguson-violence-promote-resistance-2/

[21] https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/16_1028_S1_CVE_strategy.pdf

global jihadism,[22] Americans are by no means immune from radicalization, thanks in part to the superb communications technologies, ironically developed primarily by American companies.[23] From mid-2015 to February 2016 alone, Twitter disabled over 125,000 accounts for threatening or promoting terrorist acts.[24] The late editor of the Islamic State's *Dabiq* magazine was formerly a student of computer science at the University of Massachusetts, as attested to in his obituary put out by ISIS in the eighth issue of their propaganda magazine *Rumiyah*.[25]

The Islamic extremist ideology - Islamism- is transnational in nature, in that it is ideologically committed to the overthrow of all governments it views as un-Islamic and their replacement with a global theocratic monarchy termed a caliphate. It is also transnational in form, in that it exploits emerging technologies to spread its message and recruit supporters regardless of borders.

Therefore, to successfully tackle extremism domestically, the government's approach has to go beyond countering violent extremism or CVE and must counter non-violent extremism as well - CNVE - since that is the root cause of the problem. During the cold war the US government expended considerable resources in combating the ideology of communism in order to discredit it, using methods such as Radio Liberty which promoted the ideals of democracy and freedom abroad.[26] Such an approach can be useful today. Unless the ideology itself is discredited, any law-enforcement based approaches focusing on domestic groups of individuals will ultimately treat the symptoms rather than the cause.

Recommendation: Shift focus to fight Islamism on ideological grounds. Creating Countering Non-Violent Extremism (CNVE) initiatives to counter this ideology in addition to existing CVE programs.

Understanding the Muslim Brotherhood Agenda

Our second recommendation is for the United States to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a organization that aids and abets terrorism.

This will empower the U.S. government to crackdown on the networks which enable and empower extremist groups. According to the Immigration and Nationality Act 219 (1)B, the Secretary of State has the power to designate a foreign organization as a terrorist organization if it engages in terrorism or "retains the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or

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[22] We regard the lands ruled by the terrorist group Daesh as being the epicenter of global jihadism at this time, although the footloose nature of the ideology means the epicenter can and does shift.

[23] ISIS communicate using the deep web as well as encrypted messaging apps such as Telegram and Whatsapp. Their ability to communicate has exceeded the ability of tech companies to hinder their communications. https://www.flashpoint-intel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/TechForJihad.pdf

[24] https://blog.twitter.com/2016/an-update-on-our-efforts-to-combat-violent-extremism

[25] https://qb5cc3pam3y2ad0tm1zxuhho-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/rome-magazine-8.pdf

[26] https://pressroom.rferl.org/p/6092.html

terrorism."[27]

Firstly, Muslim Brotherhood affiliates have engaged in terrorism and paramilitary activity around the world, most particularly in Egypt,[28] Gaza[29] and Syria.[30] Muslim Brotherhood affiliated organizations in the United States have been linked to funding Hamas. The U.S. shut down the Holy Land Foundation in 2008 for exactly that.[31] Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, both American allies, have already designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. Egypt urged the U.S. to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as recently as April this year.[32]

In Egypt, a Muslim Brotherhood cell was recently disrupted by the state which had weapons caches on two farms. The arrests took place over four provinces.[33]

The terrorist group Hamas has long been an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood and although it officially broke with the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian newspaper report found that in the announcement of congratulations to new Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, the MB still referred to Hamas as part of the organization.[34]

An April 2016 study by the Centre of Religion and Geopolitics which assessed the trajectories of 100 jihadists from a representative spectrum of backgrounds. Of those analyzed 51% of those analyzed had ties to non-violent Islamist movements while 25% had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood or its affiliates specifically.[35]The data thus shows the connections between nonviolent and violent Islamism.

Although Muslim Brotherhood linked groups in America have not committed acts of terrorism on American soil, the ideology is such that it predisposes people towards violent acts of terrorism and fosters the grievance narrative that radicalization feeds on. Leaders who established the early Muslim Brotherhood linked organizations have direct documented ties to the international Muslim Brotherhood.[36]

Some journalists and self-appointed community leaders have argued that banning the Muslim Brotherhood will negatively impact the Muslim community. This is not the case. It will negatively impact those leaders within the community who are affiliated with the Muslim

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[27]https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-29/0-0-0-5017.html

[28]http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Muslim-Brotherhood-becoming-more-violent-and-radical-expert-tells-Post-403774

[29] https://www.counterextremism.com/content/muslim-brotherhood-palestinian-territories

[30] http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/48370?lang=en

[31]https://clarionproject.org/cair-leader-tweets-support-convicted-terror-financiers/

[32]https://www.algemeiner.com/2017/04/06/egyptians-urge-us-lawmakers-to-designate-muslim-brotherhood-a-terrorist-organization/

[33]https://clarionproject.org/egypt-rounded-up-13-muslim-brotherhood-terrorists/

[34]https://clarionproject.org/muslim-brotherhood-insists-hamas-still-part-movement/

[35] Centre of Religion and Geopolitics is run by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. The report was endorsed by the government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation David Anderson QC. http://www.religionandgeopolitics.org/sites/default/files/Milestones-to-Militancy.pdf

[36]https://www.globalmbresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/20090411_merley.usbrotherhood.pdf

Brotherhood, a supremacist political group. It will benefit the Muslim community since it will restrict the activities of the Brotherhood, thus reducing their influence as well as lessening the spectre of suspicion from other community organizations.

However, we cannot simply ban the expression of all views we do not like. The right to free speech is embedded in the U.S. constitution for a reason and we don't want to set a chilling precedent for those who would critique established power structures. Therefore, we are careful not to erode the constitutional protections of free speech for all Americans.

Recommendation: Designate the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization that aids and abets terrorism and take legal action against those who are members of and finance the group.

Remove Radicalization From American Education

Our third recommendation is to overhaul funding systems to get extremist foreign funding out of American schools, campuses and mosques.

In his inaugural address, President Trump said the United States will "unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism which we will eradicate completely from the face of the earth."[37] Eliminating the ideology driving radical Islamic terrorism is the only way to eradicate it completely from the face of the earth.

Eradicating it from the earth is the only way to ensure that it does not continue to germinate in a U.S. domestic context.

Extremist foreign funding promotes ideas which do not directly promote terrorism but which promulgate regressive attitudes towards women, sexual minorities, non-Muslims and non-Orthodox Muslims. These ideas can lead people to become aligned with more radical positions gradually.

Many individuals and groups that support the Islamist ideology or concepts within the Islamist ideology fluctuate between supporting violence and pursuing more peaceful approaches over time, or share the same overarching ideology as terrorists but don't act. This might be through fear of repercussions, laziness or they doubt terrorism can achieve the goal of establishing a global Islamic caliphate. It is almost impossible to tell exactly when such a person would make the shift from non-violent radicalization to violent radicalization and decide to carry out a terrorist attack. The trajectory is different for each person and many may never make the shift. There is no "conveyer belt" to radicalization and support for non-violent Islamism serves more as "mood music."

Funding of US education imports hateful ideologies into this country. An effective way to tackle this "mood music" is to pull the plug on the money behind it.

It is not just groups like the Muslim Brotherhood which are responsible for radicalization but also

[37] https://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural-address

states, in particular the Gulf States of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. This is one of the rare points of bi-partisan unity where both President Trump and former Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton agreed. He called Saudi Arabia "the world's biggest funders of terrorism" while she called out their support for "radical schools and mosques around the world that have set too many young people on a path towards extremism."[38] In the batch of emails released to Wikileaks, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager John Podesta wrote "We need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to ISIL and other radical Sunni groups in the region."[39] Clinton said "Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."[40]

A senior Saudi official admitted to former U.S. official Zalmay Khalilzad in September 2016 that the Saudis have deliberately funded extremism worldwide. He told Khalilzad "we misled you" and "We did not own up to it after 9/11 because we feared you would abandon or treat us as the enemy. And we were in denial"[41]

Saudi Arabia is thought to have spent between $70 to $100 billion funding their intolerant version of Islam worldwide.[42] These state actors provide the ideological backdrop on which non-state extremist organizations are able to operate.

Saudi Arabia has funded extremism right here in the United States. Through generous grants to Georgetown University they have established the Bridge Initiative, which ostensibly aims to bring East and West together but in reality acts as an organization dedicated to shutting down discussion of the problem of radicalization with accusations of Islamophobia.[43]

Saudi Arabia gave $20 million to Georgetown and $20 million to Harvard.[44] A Saudi billionaire named as a defendant in a 9/11 lawsuit recently donated $10 million to establish a Center of Islamic Law and Civilization.[45][46]

In 2005 Freedom House analyzed some 200 extremists documents connected to Saudi Arabia in American mosques. These documents promoted supremacist attitudes, hatred of Jews and Christians, ultra-conservative gender positions and the murder of those who dare to leave Islam.[47] These books mirror those that are used in Saudi Arabia itself.

In 2012 a group of former and current heads of American publishing houses were so concerned

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[38] https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html
[39] https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-qa-is-saudi-arabia-funding-isis
[40] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-saudi-terrorist-funding
[41] http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/saudi-arabia-terrorism-funding-214241
[42] http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-wenar-saudi-arms-deal-20170522-story.html
[43] http://bridge.georgetown.edu/
[44] http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=1402008
[45] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/omer-aziz/wahhabism-saudi-arabia-an_b_8131838.html
[46] https://clarionproject.org/omer-aziz-why-i-am-offended-saudi-arabias-funding-yale/
[47] https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Saudi%20Publications%20on%20Hate%20Ideology%20Invade%20American%20Mosques.pdf

by the extremism in Saudi textbooks that they called on Saudi Arabia to stop printing the hatred.[48] The US Committee on International Religious Freedom is so worried about Saudi Arabia promoting extremism in 2017 they called on the US government to "Press the Saudi government to denounce publicly the continued use around the world of older versions of Saudi textbooks and other materials that promote hatred and intolerance, and to make every attempt to retrieve, or buy back, previously distributed materials that contain intolerance."[49]

Saudi Arabia may be susceptible to pressure on this score, according to Brookings Institute scholar William McCants. McCants quotes unnamed foreign Muslim diplomats as saying that Saudi Arabia is more inclined to listen to American pressure to curtail its international missionary work than it has been in the past.[50]

We can see how these hateful ideas foster an environment that encourages violent extremism. For example, a report by the UK's Henry Jackson Society found 44% of convicted terrorists were directly linked to proscribed organizations with an additional 28% being demonstrably inspired by the rhetoric of a proscribed terrorist organization.[51] Former radical turned counter-extremism activist Maajid Nawaz commented on the report that "This lone wolves myth needs to be debunked. The vast, overwhelming majority of terrorists are linked to networks that exist within our communities."[52]

Every lone wolf is radicalized somehow, whether online, in a mosque, in prison or in person.

Take the case of Mohammed Merah, who in 2012 murdered seven people in a series of attacks over nine days in France. Originally he was described by Bernard Squarcini, head of French Intelligence, as a "lone wolf" but was later shown to have travelled to Pakistan and briefly trained there with a jihadi group linked to al-Qaeda. Later on the French Interior Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve described Merah a "lone wolf" as a mistake.[53]

These networks are incubated in a hostile environment created by importing the supremacist ideology of hate as taught by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

They were instrumental in 9/11. When 28 pages of the 9/11 commission report, which had previously been hidden from the public were finally revealed, they show worrying links between Saudi Arabia and the 9.11 hijackers, fifteen of whom were Saudi citizens. Although there was no definitive link proven, numerous reports from FBI agents say that two people who may have been in contact with the hijackers may have been Saudi intelligence agents, among other troubling connections.[54] Additionally these 28 pages were suppressed for years rather than reveal connections to Saudi Arabia.

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[48] http://www.thedailybeast.com/saudi-textbooks-incite-hate-say-leaders-in-american-publishing
[49] http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/SaudiArabia.2017.pdf
[50] https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/05/10/trump-should-push-the-saudis-to-scale-back-proselytizing-they-may-be-more-responsive-than-you-think/
[51] http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Islamist-Terrorism-Infographic.pdf
[52] http://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/maajid-nawaz/maajid-on-whats-really-causing-radicalisation/
[53] https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/mar/30/myth-lone-wolf-terrorist
[54] http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/287947-congress-publishes-redacted-28-pages-from-9-11-report

At the current time, British Prime Minister Theresa May is under fire for her refusal to publish a government report into foreign funding of extremism, which is thought to focus on Saudi Arabia. [55] The Home Office said it may never be published, terming its contents "very sensitive." She is being accused of selling out British security and values in exchange for financial gain in the light of recent British arms sales to Saudi Arabia.[56][57]

The United States must not similarly put its national security at risk purely to avoid risking ruffling the feathers of a foreign power which is funding the importation of a dangerous, totalitarian, political ideology into our borders.

If the ideology is being imported from abroad, the United States should not use federal funds to support institutions which promulgate hatred within this country. Many institutions which receive funding from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to teach "Islamic Civilization" also receive money from the federal government as regulated under Title IX.

According to the US Justice Department, "The principal objective of Title IX is to avoid the use of federal money to support sex discrimination in education programs."[58] How can this objective be upheld while supporting institutions which are in part funded by the only country in the world that operates a system of legalized gender apartheid? What message does this send to female students studying in colleges partially funded by the House of Saud?

I call upon this august body not to allow the misuse of congressionally allocated funds to support institutions that take money from theocratic governments. President of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies Clifford May explained that "Departments on Middle Eastern studies tend to be dominated by professors tuned to the concerns of Arab and Muslim rulers. It's very difficult for scholars who don't follow this line to get jobs and tenure on college campuses."[59] We look to these iconic universities to prepare a next generation of leaders who will be attuned to the complexities of the world and America's place in it in a way that supports human rights values. How can we do so if those who are educating them about the Middle East and bought and paid for by some of the most repressive and extreme regimes in the world?

Recommendation: An overhaul of federal funding systems to ensure money from theocratic states such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Qatar is not allowed into the United States to promote extremist ideas.

Include the Voices of Moderate Muslims

Our fourth and final recommendation is for the government to liaise with the appropriate parties

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[55] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/05/theresa-may-urged-not-to-suppress-report-into-funding-of-jihadi-groups

[56] http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-saudi-arabia-theresa-may-allies-liam-fox-trades-deals-europe-beware-a7664741.html

[57] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/05/most-britons-believe-selling-arms-to-saudis-is-unacceptable

[58] https://www.justice.gov/crt/overview-title-ix-education-amendments-1972-20-usc-1681-et-seq

[59] http://www.meforum.org/6205/foreign-muslim-funding-western-universities

when addressing this issue.

A diverse sets of sources is the bedrock of effective policy. I call upon Congress to empower those Muslims who are leading the fight against radical Islam to have a seat at the table. By contrast, Mohammed Elibiary, a former DHS agent helped draft CVE guidelines that advised not working with reformist Muslims on the grounds of considering us an "interest group" that will be biased, not considering the biased nature of Muslim Brotherhood connections.[60]Elibiary is openly pro Muslim Brotherhood and was mentored by Shukri Abu Baker, who is now in prison for funding Hamas as a result of the Holy Land Foundation Trial.[61] In a 2013 interview with Professor Ryan Mauro of the Clarion Project, Elibiary said "Our government needs to deepen our strategic engagement with MB."[62]

Yet despite the manifest extremist connections, individuals like Elibiary were able to gain access to the higher echelons of power and shape policy in a way that actively covered for extremists.

This influence has helped to tar many reformists and counter-Islamists as bigots when in fact what they are doing is taking on the extremist ideology supported by groups like the Muslim Brotherhood.

As recently as May 4, the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Egyptian Americans For Freedom And Justice lobbied on Capitol Hill to oppose the delegation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. The assembled company included Ayat Oraby who has said she finds the killing of Egyptian soldiers by terrorists "funny." Last year she released a shockingly bigoted anti-Copt rant in which she said "The **Crescent** Must Always Be on Top of the **Cross**."[63]

Other groups have opposed the implementation of CVE altogether. The United States Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), an umbrella organization of many different Muslim organizations, issued a statement in 2015 which concluded (among other things) that "Given the low-level of confidence in government-led CVE, the USCMO believes it is best to identify and support community-driven best practices."[64]

The Muslim Brotherhood-linked Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) was invited to the White House 20 times between 2008 and 2012.[65] Not only that, but according to a 2011 Gallup poll, only 12% of American men and 11% of American women feel that CAIR represents them.[66]

According to its website, "CAIR believes that government led-CVE is not an effective use of public resources." Instead, CAIR argues "The Department of Justice should issue guidelines, similar to Good Samaritan laws, to protect those who act in good faith to prevent violent extremism by engaging with those considering it in order to dissuade them," effectively subcontracting CVE work to self-styled Muslim community organizations.

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[60]https://clarionproject.org/us-govt-radical-muslims-approved-moderates-shunned/

[61]https://clarionproject.org/brotherhood-promoter-resigns-dhs-focus-gop-party/

[62]https://clarionproject.org/disturbing-facts-about-senior-homeland-security-adviser/

[63]https://www.memri.org/tv/ny-based-egyptian-american-activist-ayat-oraby-calls-economic-boycott-copts-crescent-must-always

[64]http://www.shuracouncil.org/Shura/USCMO_On_CVE_Statement.pdf

[65]https://www.investigativeproject.org/3777/a-red-carpet-for-radicals-at-the-white-house#

[66]https://www.commentarymagazine.com/culture-civilization/religion/islam/poll-american-muslims-cair/

CAIR has submitted testimony to congress many times, including in 2015 on the issue of "the constitutional and counter-terrorism implications of targeted killing."[67] Whilst it is important that the state acts within the bounds of morality and law when carrying out targeted assassinations of terrorists abroad, we question the wisdom of relying for testimony on an organization with whom the FBI refuses to work because of evidence linking them to Hamas.[68]

Other organizations such as the ACLU have pushed communities to reject all CVE initiatives.[69]

Clarion Project and the Muslim Reform movement have a lot more faith in the United States government than in CAIR and want to see robust and effective CVE and CNVE programs run by the government.

Clarion Project has, behind the scenes, been educating law enforcement for years on the threat of radical Islam and how to correctly identify it. These kinds of training sessions are essential if staffers working at government agencies are to have the proper tools to be able to identify and counter extremism when they encounter it.

Clarion believes this type of training should be expanded to include sector-appropriate CVE and CVNE training for nurses, teachers, city hall staff, social workers and other public sector employees who are in positions where they work with the public and will be interacting with individuals at risk of radicalization. We firmly believe that prevention is better than cure. When on the ground staff are sufficiently trained to respond appropriately, problems can be dealt with before they fester and without necessarily involving the resources of law enforcement.

Your invitation to me to speak to you today is clear evidence that the United States government is clearly interested in turning over a new chapter in its countering extremism policy and has already begun to implement this recommendation of speaking with the right people on this issue.

If the United States wishes to be serious about countering extremism the government would do well to listen to a wide variety of voices who represent the true spectrum of Muslim thought rather than a narrow coterie of conservative activists.

Recommendation: Ensure that a diverse spectrum of Muslim figures, including academics, activists and theologians, are invited to give evidence and to advise on the policy formation process, rather than leaving the field to self-styled community representatives, many of whom have links to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Identify Potential Strategic Improvements

To conclude, we have four key policy proposals.

- Clearly and accurately name the ideology as a political ideology which seeks to impose the religion of Islam onto others and implement sharia as state law, thereby enabling a

[67] https://www.cair.com/government-affairs/11869-drone-wars-the-constitutional-and-counterterrorism-implications-of-targeted-killing.html
[68] https://www.investigativeproject.org/3777/a-red-carpet-for-radicals-at-the-white-house#
[69] https://aclum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/cve-flyer.pdf

proper discussion of the issue without tarring the religion of Islam with the same brush. We believe this necessitates the inclusion of Countering Non-Violent Extremism (CNVE) in addition to the government's existing policies of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

- Designate the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization that aids and abets terrorism.
- Take steps to prevent funding of U.S. educational institutions and mosques by foreign extremist sources.
- Start listening to moderates such as the Muslim Reform Movement and we would be happy to provide a list of recommended figures from across the Muslim community spectrum.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

I now recognize Mr. Adnan Kifayat for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF ADNAN KIFAYAT

Mr. KIFAYAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of Gen Next. My name is Adnan Kifayat. I'm the head of global security for Gen Next Ventures.

Gen Next Foundation leverages a venture philanthropy model to help private sector individuals use their talents, knowledge, and resources to solve big challenges, and countering violent extremism in the homeland is one of our core areas of focus.

I come here before you as a private citizen, but before I became a private citizen again, I served in government in a number of roles at the Treasury Department, the State Department, and the White House for both Democratic and Republican administrations. I first became involved in countering violent extremism work when I was at the National Security Council under President Bush. Back then, we used to call it the "War of Ideas."It is now commonly referred to as countering violent extremism, but we must always recognize that in the 15 years since 9/11, we have learned a great deal about the enemy, about what the enemy uses, and how the enemy radicalizes, recruits, and activates would-be terrorists.

When I served in government, I had always hoped and sometimes daydreamt that there would be outside entities in the private sector that were keeping pace with the threat that we're finding real-world solutions to this menace. These entities could do what government alone was not equipped to do. They could innovate, they could keep pace with the internet, they could use new and sophisticated technologies, and they could take risks that sometimes government is unable to take.

Today, there are small but committed groups of people, including Gen Next, who are finding ways to rally American ingenuity and creativity to counter homegrown terrorism. There are strong and powerful growing voices in the private sector that are echoing across our country, and I urge you to listen to those voices and the solutions that they are finding.

Five years ago, Gen Next Foundation, Google Ideas, and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue launched the first-ever global network of former extremists called the Against Violent Extremism network. AVE, which now numbers 470 members, uses the voices of former extremists both online and offline to dissuade youth all over the world from being radicalized and recruited by groups like ISIS and al-Qaida. Almost 1,000 online interventions have taken place and hundreds of deradicalizations through person-to-person engagement have occurred.

Since our initial investment, multinational corporations, international institutions, and foundations have all helped scale AVE's footprint because it works. Last year, Gen Next helped launch the first-even online effort to redirect at-risk youth searching for in that terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaida put out there towards content that is nonviolent and non-extremist. By using marketing and advertising techniques, our partnership with Google Jigsaw, and experts at Moonshot CVE, known as the Redirect Method, is

leveling the playing field online and challenging the narrative of the terrorists.

There are many other examples of the private sector organizing, Mr. Chairman. I have submitted those in the written testimony for additional study. Last year, I co-chaired the Department of Homeland Security's Advisory Subcommittee report on countering violent extremism, which had strong bipartisan support. It detailed a national blueprint for partnering with city leaders, mayors, local leaders, as well as the private sector.

In today's complex maze of networks, we can't just pay lip service to partnering with people outside of Washington. We have to find concrete ways to do so. Some of these efforts will require resources like money, talent, and access to technology or just convening. While Gen Next Foundation serves as a convener and incubator of new solutions in the private sector, this space is by no means saturated. As an example, the government has done with the defense and intelligence communities through organizations like the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, DARPA, and In-Q–Tel to bridge the divide between public and private sectors, provide risk capital, eliminate some unnecessary and slow processes, develop key performance indicators and measurements that work, and potentially reduce some of the fierce politicization of this issue so that we can get to finding solutions.

We know today that to be lured by Islamist or jihadist ideologist, one can be rich or poor, boy or girl, religiously observant or not. The threat is varied, and we have to find varied solutions to this threat.

The examples I've shared with you, AVE and Redirect are just two examples. We must work together and welcome innovation and risk-taking in the private sector if we are to truly find solutions to counter homegrown extremism that leads to terrorism.

Mr. Chairman and ranking member and members of the subcommittee, today, we must fight the War of Ideas radically different than we did 15 years ago. There are solutions out there today, and there are solutions waiting to be found. Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Adnan Kifayat follows:]

U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Security of the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
"Combating Homegrown Terrorism"
July 27, 2017
Remarks by Adnan Kifayat
Head of Global Security Ventures, Gen Next Foundation

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee on National Security, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you on "Combating Homegrown Terrorism." My name is Adnan Kifayat and I am honored to be here on behalf of the Gen Next Foundation, a community of private sector leaders who are passionate about finding solutions to some of the greatest challenges our country faces today.

In the tradition of John D. Rockefeller, III, the Gen Next Foundation leverages a venture philanthropy model to help private sector individuals use their talents, knowledge, and resources to solve big challenges. Countering violent extremism in the homeland is one of our core areas of focus.

I come here before you today as a private citizen. Before I became, again, a private citizen, I served in a number of senior roles, under both Republican and Democratic Administrations, for four secretaries of state, and five secretaries of the treasury.

I first became involved in countering violent extremism while coordinating counter terrorism policy at the National Security Council in 2007. Back then, it was known as the "war of ideas" — a battle of narratives. Since then, as we have learned more about the enemy, the "war of ideas" has evolved into what is commonly referred to as "countering violent extremism." Indeed, there has been an evolution in our understanding of the tactics terrorist organizations use to radicalize, recruit, and activate would-be terrorists. As our enemy evolves and grows more sophisticated, we must find ways to cull the private sector for the best solutions, and ensure that we stay several steps ahead of those who would do us harm.

When I had the honor of serving at the White House for President Bush — and later at the State Department under Secretaries Rice, Clinton and Kerry — I had always hoped that there were nimble and innovative private sector entities out there to evolve with the threat, finding real-world solutions to this menace. These entities could do what government alone is not equipped to do. What we lacked in funding at the federal level, we made up for with an abundance of faith in the power of the private sector.

Today, there are small but committed groups of people, including Gen Next, who are finding ways to rally American ingenuity to counter homegrown terrorism.

From big companies to small start-ups, we all realize that violent extremism is dangerous and destructive — we must also realize that it's everyone's responsibility to confront it. There are strong, powerful and growing voices in the private sector that are echoing across our country, and we must listen to what they are saying.

Five years ago, the Gen Next Foundation, Google Ideas and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) launched the Against Violent Extremism Network (AVE). AVE was the first global network of former extremists who provide their powerful and authentic voices to the world — both online and offline — to dissuade youth all over the world from being radicalized and recruited by groups like ISIS and Al Qaida (AQ). Today there are 470 members in that network. Almost a thousand online interventions have taken place and hundreds of deradicalizations, through person-to-person engagement, have occurred. For example, a member of AVE successfully helped prevent a young girl in Washington state, a Sunday school teacher named Alex, from getting on a plane to become an ISIS bride. Governments across the globe have adopted the model of utilizing former extremists and survivors of terrorism. Since our initial investment, multinational corporations, international institutions and foundations have all taken note and expanded AVE's footprint — because it works.

Last year, Gen Next helped launched the first online effort to redirect at-risk youth, searching for information about terrorist groups like ISIS and AQ, toward content that is nonviolent and non-extremist. By using marketing and advertising techniques, our partnership with Google Jigsaw and experts at MoonshotCVE, known as the Redirect Method, is leveling the playing field online. We are plugging the hole in the communications gap and standing up to violent extremist content. This venture was inspired by national security and entirely driven, tested and launched by the private sector: technologists, engineers, subject matter experts and venture philanthropists finding a solution.

There are other examples of the private sector organizing itself in this space. From passionate filmmakers, writers and producers in Hollywood, to world-class talent in our universities and research institutions, to business and community leaders who are positive role models — many private sector leaders want to find antidotes to homegrown terrorism. When Government finds ways to support and encourage more of these efforts, everyone wins — except for the violent extremists, of course.

For example, a peer-to-peer effort, the Global Digital Challenge, is leveraging university students to develop anti-extremist campaigns and tools across the globe. Lessons learned from deradicalizing neo-Nazis in Europe are being used to deradicalize Jihadists. Cartoons like Average Mohamed and Abdullah-X are reaching at-risk audiences with positive messages in Minneapolis, London and beyond. Technology used to remove child pornography from the internet is being adapted to detect and remove the worst of online terrorist content. Simply put, there are many promising examples of the private sector using technology and creativity to fight

homegrown terrorism that we should encourage and strengthen. Inaction is simply not an option and we can't say there aren't examples out there.

We must do everything we can to encourage the development of these campaigns, tools and platforms that will challenge and defeat violent extremism now and far into the future because the threat is continually evolving: After AQ there was ISIS, and after ISIS we will be met with its more insidious offspring. Despite our advances on the battlefield, the war of hateful ideology will long persist.

Last year, I co-chaired the Department of Homeland Security's Advisory Sub Committee Report on Countering Violent Extremism — which had strong bipartisan support. It detailed a national blueprint for partnership and action across all 50 states. It called on mayors and city leaders to take the lead, and it called on the federal government to do more to engage local leaders. In today's maze of complex networks, we can't just pay lip service to partnering with people outside Washington, we must find concrete ways to do so.

Partnering with the private sector can not be, should not be and does not need to be an antagonistic undertaking. There are many good people in many organizations across the country who want to help — they only need an extended hand, not a wagging finger. The challenge for government is not a lack of such energy but finding effective mechanisms to channel and unleash it. Good old fashioned diplomacy should be government's first line of engagement with the private sector. Cooperation and collaboration should be the shared goal.

Some of these efforts will also require resources like money, talent or access to technology. While Gen Next Foundation serves as a convener and incubator of new solutions, driven entirely by the private sector, this space is by no means saturated. As we have done with the defense and intelligence communities — both of which are innovative, sophisticated, and the envy of the world — a dedicated quasi government entity such as DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) or a non profit venture capital firm like In-Q-Tel (IQT) can help bridge the divide between public and private, provide risk capital, eliminate some unnecessary and slow processes and outdated measurements, and potentially reduce the fierce politicization of this issue.

We have moved beyond asking ourselves the simplistic question of "Why do they hate us?" and measuring ourselves against a yardstick of popularity and assuming that "if they just knew us better, they would like us, and if they liked us, they won't kill us." We have moved beyond just "winning hearts and minds." The basic narrative the enemy employs is based on "us versus them." It's a strategy of divide and conquer. We know today that to be lured by Islamist or Jihadist ideology, one can be rich or poor, a boy or girl, religiously observant or not. The demographics we are dealing with are varied, and they require varied solutions.

We know more about behavioral psychology, sociological drivers, and mental health than ever before. While there are still gaps in our understanding, we know that the narratives terrorist recruiters use to radicalize and activate are far more basic to human nature than a simple religious text, foreign policy argument, or ethnic or cultural excuse.

We also know that the vast majority of radicalization — at least the inception of the process — is happening online. The same internet that helps shape our society for good is the same that can be darkly manipulated to seed hatred and destruction from within.

The last two Administrations understood that giant tectonic plates of culture, identity and civilization are colliding against each other: young people are not just observing these collisions, but they are also a part of the conversations shaping them. The last two Administrations also realized that we will never, ever get ahead of this problem without unleashing the power of our people, the private sector and institutions across the country to take control of the conversation — to take control away from groups like ISIS and Al Qaida.

Those conversations, I can tell you, are not happening enough here in Washington, D.C. They are happening in your states, in your districts, at the community and city level. Through one of our ventures, for example, we are learning about some of the geographies in the US where online searches for violent extremist content is taking place – places like California, Texas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. These conversations are happening incredibly fast, and, all too often the bad guys' propaganda is at the ready, shaping that conversation. Homegrown violent extremism is a common threat that manifests itself locally and rapidly.

While we have grown smarter about how to organize and what tools to use, our enemy has also grown more sophisticated in their techniques. Not because they are better or smarter — most certainly not — but because they are committed, organized and learning. They run a 24/7 radicalizing and recruitment machine sustained by a well-funded, complex network of supporters around the world. It is highly nimble, and it evolves with the internet, using hidden networks of content production, distribution, amplification, and of course financing.

The examples I have shared with you, AVE and Redirect, are just two examples of the private sector innovating in this space. We must work together and welcome innovation if we want to counter violent extremism that leads to terrorism. We must fight the "war of ideas" today radically differently than we did 15 years ago. There are solutions out there now, and there are solutions waiting to be found. We just need to get it done.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Mr. Hughes, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF SEAMUS HUGHES

Mr. HUGHES. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to be invited to speak here on the threat of homegrown terrorism and efforts to prevent it.

As the chairman noted, homegrown terrorism inspired by groups like ISIS has been a persistent threat in the U.S. The FBI has reported some thousand active investigations in all 50 States. Since March 2014, 120 individuals have been charged with terrorism-related activities in connection to ISIS. A near majority were accused of attempting to travel or successfully traveling to the so-called caliphate. Nearly 30 percent were accused of domestic plotting.

These individuals represent a very diverse group. Their backgrounds vary. There's not a typical profile of an ISIS recruit. They're old, they're young, they're rich, they're poor. It runs the spectrum.

A careful review of the cases points to a mobilization of individuals and not necessarily a widespread community-level phenomenon. It is homegrown terroism in the truest form of the word. They are born and raised here. The vast majority are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.

While considerably smaller than other Western countries, ISIS mobilization in the United States is unprecedented. The backbone of the response has been through traditional counterterrorism approaches. However, they must be augmented with other non-law enforcement efforts. As such, the U.S. must develop a more robust, transparent, and effective domestic prevention program.

The U.S.'s domestic Countering Violent Extremism or CVE program efforts can best be understood in a series of fits and starts. In 2011, the U.S. Government released their first domestic CVE strategy. It was broken up in three parts: first, enhanced engagement with communities; second, build expertise with State and local officials; and three, counter extremist propaganda. The strategy was explicit in acknowledging that no new resources would be devoted to the issue. Local officials, particularly U.S. Attorneys' Offices, were directed to use existing funding. The Federal Government provided guidance where needed. This new approach was introduced to hesitant local officials and community partners, which struggled to understand the intricacies of radicalization and recruitment.

As a result of a lack of an explicit definition of CVE and direction for CVE, it became a catchall phrase for programming from broad-based engagement on non-terrorism-related programming to more direct one-on-one intervention of radicalized individuals. Lacking dedicated funding and a focused resource, government officials struggled to complete the strategy's goals and objectives.

It is with that backdrop that the previous administration refocused their efforts on three pilot cities. Minneapolis focused largely on societal-level issues or what they saw as societal-level issues, Boston on individualized intervention programs, and Los Angeles primarily on community engagement.

Following the completion of the pilot program, the U.S. Government created a CVE Task Force. This interagency group, with a rotating leadership from DHS and DOJ, would be comprised of detailees from various different agencies, a hub of CVE activity.

There are a few challenges to quickly note. Radicalization is not a linear process. Humans by their very nature are complex. We float in and out of our extreme. There's not a step-by-step guide for why individuals join terrorist organizations, while others with similar experiences do not. Conversely, the radicalization disengagement does not adhere to a straight-line path. Developing CVE programs must not fall in a trap of one-size-fits-all.

The administration's proposed budget significantly curtails CVE funding. While the continuation of DHS grants or more focused continuation of DHS grants is a step in the right direction, the ability to scale up these projects without an influx of new grant funding is doubtful. Moreover, the proposed budget cuts to reduce the number of employees at DHS and other agencies that serve the CVE task force may limit our innovation in the future.

CVE efforts in the previous administration and the current one has largely focused on one form of extremism. The previous administration, while not explicit in its public messaging but clearly in its implementation, focused nearly entirely on countering ISIS-inspired terrorism. By nearly all outward accounts, the current administration also indicates this singular focus. Of course, there should be a prioritization of resources, but CVE programs would do well to concentrate not only on the threat posed by individuals like Omar Mateen but also those by the Dylann Roofs of the world.

Domestic CVE is in a tenuous state. Decisions by government and community partners in the coming months will determine whether CVE is truly a viable option. CVE is a delicate tool, if properly implemented, can help sway young men and women away from radicalization and violence. And families that I met with in Minneapolis, in Boston, individuals who have dealt with loved ones who've joined terrorist organizations and are grappling with these questions, we haven't provided them any form of support from the Federal Government or local effort. We need to step up and provide this. And by the way, it's also an important goal to help adjust resources for the Federal Government so the FBI can focus on more immediate threats, while communities and non-governmental partners can focus on other things.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

[Prepared statement of Seamus Hughes follows:]

Program on Extremism

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Combating Homegrown Terrorism

Written testimony of:

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Before the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform

July 27, 2017

Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to be invited to speak on the threat of homegrown terrorism in the United States and efforts to prevent it.

The Islamic State's American Adherents

Homegrown extremism inspired by groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) has been a persistent threat for the United States. The FBI reportedly has over 1,000 active terrorism investigations in all 50 states.[1] At least 250 U.S. persons have attempted to or have traveled to join extremist groups in Syria or Iraq.[2] Since March 2014, 128 individuals have been charged with terrorism-related activities in connection with IS. A near majority were accused of attempting to travel or successfully traveled abroad to Syria or Iraq. Nearly 30% were accused of being involved in plots to carry out attacks on U.S. soil.[3]

These individuals are quite a diverse group. Their backgrounds vary, from a minor from South Carolina to interested in traveling to the so-called Caliphate, to a 31-year-old man coordinating Syrian extremist organizations' pledges of allegiance to IS from a New York pizza shop. A careful review of the cases points to a mobilization of individuals, not a widespread community-level phenomenon.

It is a 'homegrown' phenomenon in the truest sense of the word. The vast majority are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.

Individuals in America were drawn to the Islamic State for a variety of reasons. By in large, early cases appear to indicate a sense of moral responsibility to fight against the atrocities committed by Bashar al-Assad. Shortly after the announcement of the Caliphate in June 2014, the motivations of Americans inspired by the IS largely shifted towards perceived religious obligations and the hope to live in what they saw as a perfect society. This call was reinforced by a sustained online campaign by IS and its supporters to encourage Westerns to travel to Syria and Iraq.

Other Western countries have experienced much larger IS-related mobilizations than the United States. Though, in the American context, the current mobilization has been unprecedented. Traditional counterterrorism approaches form the backbone of the US response. However, this strategy must be augmented and complemented by initiatives that extend beyond law enforcement efforts. In this regard, the U.S. must develop a more robust, transparent, and effective domestic prevention program.

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[1] Mali, Meghashyam. 2015. "FBI Investigating ISIS Suspects in All 50 States." *The Hill*. February 25. http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/233832-fbi-investigating-isis-suspects-in-all-50-states.
[2] Schmitt, Eric, and Somini Sengupta. 2015. "Thousands Enter Syria to Join ISIS Despite Global Efforts." *The New York Times*, September 26, sec. Middle East. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/world/middleeast/thousands-enter-syria-to-join-isis-despite-global-efforts.html.
[3] "GW Extremism Tracker - June 2017". *Program on Extremism*, https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/extremism.gwu.edu/files/June%202017%20Update.pdf

Countering Violent Extremism

The United States' domestic countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts can best be understood as a series of fits and starts. In August 2011, the U.S. Government released their first domestic CVE strategy, entitled *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism*.[4] The strategy contained three elements: 1) enhancing engagement with communities 2) building state and local expertise on CVE and 3) countering violent extremist messaging. The strategy directed efforts away from federal programs and placed the onus on local governments and partners to implement its goals. A few months later, the strategy was accompanied by a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) which outlined the roles and responsibilities of four primary agencies, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, and the National Counterterrorism Center ("The Group of Four").[5] The SIP, like the strategy, was explicit in acknowledging that no new resources would be devoted to the issue. Local officials, specifically, U.S. Attorney offices in the field, were directed to use existing funding. The federal government would provide guidance where needed.

This new approach was introduced to hesitant local officials and community partners, who struggled to understand the intricacies of radicalization and prevention of terrorism. Due to the lack of an explicit definition of and direction for CVE, it became a catch all phrase for a large swath of programming, from broad-based community engagement on non-terrorism related issues to more direct one-on-one intervention programs for radicalized individuals. Civil rights and civil liberties organizations rallied to stymie CVE efforts, which they saw as, among other concerns, government overreach.[6] Some CVE opponents have very legitimate concerns; others simply used the beleaguered issue as an opportunity to attack a larger counterterrorism approach (primarily unconnected to CVE) that they disagreed with. Lacking dedicated funding and personnel, government officials struggled to complete the Strategy's goals and objectives.

Under this backdrop, the previous Administration refocused domestic CVE efforts on three pilot cities. Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Los Angeles became the incubators of the national strategy. Each city took a decidedly different approach to implementation. Minneapolis-St. Paul focused on societal-level concerns, Boston on interventions for radicalized individuals, and Los Angeles primarily on community engagement.

Following the completion of the pilot program, the Group of Four, with support from the White House, created a CVE taskforce. This interagency group, with rotating leadership from DHS and DOJ, would be comprised of detailees from various agencies, complimented by a cadre of DHS employees. In October of 2016, the Department of Homeland Security issued its Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism. The stated aim of the strategy is to ensure that "communities possess the information, resources, and tools to effectively counter radicalization and recruitment

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[4] "Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States". *The White House,* August 2011. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/empowering_local_partners.pdf

[5] "Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States". *The White House,* December 2011. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/sip-final.pdf

[6] "Coalition Letter to Obama Administration on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program". *ACLU,* December 8, 2014. https://www.aclu.org/other/coalition-letter-obama-administration-countering-violent-extremism-cve-program

to violence" by the year 2019.[7] Under the scope of this strategy, DHS seeks to achieve several objectives, including: 1) broadening the research base of the department on violent extremism, radicalization, and CVE programs; 2) disseminating findings to community partners in order to sufficiently prepare them to participate in CVE; 3) providing support to community organizations undertaking CVE projects; and 4) clearly defining measurements and benchmarks for what constitutes a "successful" CVE program.[8]

Congress approved funding for DHS to award grants for CVE initiatives nationwide as part of the CVE Grant Program in 2015.[9] DHS issued its first call for CVE grant applications in July of 2016, and sought to provide over $10 million to 60 local organizations nationwide.[10] For community organizations, the program's areas of focus within CVE were resilience-building, training and engaging with community members to pursue CVE projects, and building capacities for intervention programs; applicants from the non-profit sector and academia were challenged to develop counter-narrative programs and assisting community organizations in designing programs.[11] In June 2017, DHS Secretary Kelly announced the results of the application process: 26 organizations, spanning the five target areas, received funding. [12] The current Administration's proposed budget significantly curtails CVE funding. While the continuation of current DHS grants for community-based CVE programs is a step in the right direction, the ability to "scale up" these projects without an influx of additional grant funding is doubtful. Moreover, the proposed budget cuts reduce the number of employees at DHS and other agencies that can serve on the CVE taskforce, limiting the possibility that interagency cooperation will result in innovative program design and management in the future.

Unfortunately, there are very few built-in advocates of CVE efforts in the United States. On one side of the political spectrum, CVE is seen as thought policing and stigmatizing. On the other side, it is considered too soft of an approach for a problem as serious as terrorism. I share many of my colleagues' concerns on both sides. There is little to no benefit for advocating for CVE. However, my views are shaped by years of traveling around the country meeting with American Muslim community members, with various backgrounds and personal concerns, who want to engage on these issues in a thoughtful and productive way. The views are also guided by interviews of family members of those who joined terrorist organizations, or were arrested prior to committing a violent act: these families had no tools available to intervene and potentially their loved ones from a violent path. I believe it is morally binding on government and civil society to provide avenues for prevention. Furthermore, there is a public policy benefit to get prevention right, so that law enforcement has the bandwidth to tackle more immediate threats.

Domestic CVE efforts should largely focus on deradicalization and disengagement programs aimed at radicalized individuals. Those programs have the best chance for measures of

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[7] Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism, October 28, 2016. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/16_1028_S1_CVE_strategy.pdf
[8] Ibid.
[9] Fact Sheet: FY 2016 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grants. July 6, 2016. https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/07/06/fy-2016-countering-violent-extremism-cve-grants
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] DHS Countering Violent Extremism Grants. June 23, 2017. https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants

effectiveness and limiting some of the civil liberties concerns that arise from broad based community engagement.

Additional challenges:

- Radicalization is not a linear process. There is not a step by step guide to why some individuals join terrorist organizations, while others with similar experiences do not. Conversely, deradicalization and disengagement also does not adhere to a straight-line path. Developing countering violent extremism programs must not fall into the trap of one-size fits all approach.

- Current federal CVE initiatives show a preference for broad-based messaging programs over one-on-one interventions. In our review of Islamic State-related cases in the United States, many exhibited warning signs. Without targeted intervention programs, some outside the scope of law enforcement, individuals concerned by the radicalization of someone close to them must either report them to the FBI, which may result in decades-long prison sentences, or keep the information to themselves and hope for the best. In this case, families must have access to a "third way", based on one-on-one deradicalization or disengagement programs that have been tried and tested in various European countries, that allow the individual to disembark from the path of radicalization while providing an alternative to arrests and lengthy prison sentences.

- CVE efforts in both the previous Administration and the current one appeared to considerably target only one form of extremism. The previous Administration, while not explicit in its public messaging, but clearly in its implementation, focused almost entirely on countering Islamic State-inspired terrorism. The current Administration's withdrawing of a grant award to an organization that counters white supremacist-inspired terrorism indicates a similar, singular focus. CVE programs would do well to concentrate not only on the threat posed by individuals such as Omar Mateen, but also others like Dylan Roof.

- As territory held by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq contracts, the United States is faced with the prospect of returning foreign fighters. This threat is substantially less pressing in the U.S. than it is for other Western countries, due to the smaller number of successful American "travelers". Arguably, the United States justice system is more prepared than other Western countries to address returnees. The recent case of Mohamed Khweis is a striking example. A Virginia native, Khweis left the US and joined the Islamic State, was arrested by Kurdish forces, and was subsequently extradited, tried, and convicted in a US criminal court. Despite these advantages in numbers and legal frameworks, the threat from returnees is less about quantity and more about quality - the select few fighters that manage to return to the United States will possess concerning new skills. In this regard, efforts by our intelligence services to identify and track potential returnees, as well as share intelligence with allies facing similar threats, are of paramount importance.

- A significant number of individuals imprisoned for terrorist charges are scheduled for release in the coming years. For some, they will move on with their lives and hopefully

> become productive members of society. For others, a more systematic approach for reintegration may be warranted to prevent regression into past criminal activities. In American IS cases, where the average prison sentence is 13.7 years, the risk of recidivism is slightly more long-term. However, one of the roots of the problem is a lack of relevant disengagement programs within the U.S. prison system, giving inmates who were initially arrested for terrorism little incentive or opportunity to reject their former ideology, and thus creating the possibility that they may continue to be involved in extremism post-release.[13]

Domestic CVE efforts are in a tenuous state. Decisions by the government and community partners in the coming months will help determine whether CVE is a truly viable option in the current fight against extremism. As we have written at the Program on Extremism, CVE is a delicate tool that, if properly implemented, can help sway young people away from radicalizing. Apart from saving lives, prevention programs outside law enforcement allow law enforcement and intelligence agencies to better concentrate their resources on those who have made the leap into violent militancy. [14] The Administration would do well to develop a CVE program with clear strategic goals, transparent in its implementation, with a focus away from broad-based community engagement to more measurable one-on-one intervention programming.

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[13] For a deeper discussion on and an acknowledgement of the lack of disengagement programs in U.S. prison systems, see the sentencing court transcript of U.S. v. Natsheh

[14] For a longer historical review of U.S. and European CVE programs, see Vidino, Lorenzo, and Seamus Hughes. 2015. "Countering Violent Extremism in America." *Program on Extremism*. https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/extremism.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20America.pdf.

Mr. DESANTIS. Well, thanks for the witnesses. The chair now recognizes himself for five minutes.

Mr. Selim, we have looked at some of these pilot programs, specifically Minnesota. How do you at the Department evaluate the effectiveness of the CVE pilot program in Minneapolis?

Mr. SELIM. Chairman DeSantis, thanks for the question, and again, thanks for having us here today.

I think there have been a number of ways that we can assess the pilot program in Minneapolis. Overall, I would assess that it has been successful in a number of different categories. It's validated the assumptions that at the local level solutions to CVE programs need to be constructed.

Second, it's validated that working by, with, and through State and local law enforcement, municipal officials, and councilmembers and individuals that hold some type of position, having them act as some type of facilitator or convener is a positive step forward and brings communities closer together.

And three, a number of both governmental and nongovernmental organizations have validated that they want to participate in these efforts, that they would like to participate in programming related to preventing and intervening in the process of radicalization but lack the resources to do so. And in the volume of applications that we received for the grant program, we've seen an overwhelming response from the Twin Cities area, and fortunately, we've been able to act on a number of those very strong applications and make some awards in that place.

Mr. DESANTIS. I would note for the record, and I ask unanimous consent to submit a GAO report. GAO disagrees with that. They say there is no cohesive process for measuring outcomes. So, I ask unanimous consent that this be added to the record.

Mr. DESANTIS. So, let me ask you this. There was a major trial in Minnesota, I think 13 guys for material support to ISIS, and the U.S. Attorney's Office did a good job, FBI, but is that a success of CVE or is that a failure of CVE when something like that happens?

Mr. SELIM. I think that's serve—that's not CVE. A counterterrorism investigation and arrest and a prosecution ——

Mr. DESANTIS. So, then, basically, that would mean that the CVE community-based programs were obviously not successful at steering those individuals away from a violent ideology, correct?

Mr. SELIM. I would say that the CVE-related programs and the small amount that are being implemented across the country are just one facet of the broader counterterrorism approach. So, to the extent that a CVE program in one city can help bring in a tip, can help contribute to an intervention for an individual, that's a positive contribution, but it's not a catchall. It's just one piece in our broader homeland security strategy.

Mr. DESANTIS. Let me ask Mr. Sleeper in terms of the Minnesota—we were able to meet with the folks at the FBI down there on the ground. I will ask you. The effectiveness of the community-based programs, has that been a gamechanger? It seemed to me when we were there, there were still significant threats that they were monitoring.

Mr. SLEEPER. Yes, sir. Thank you. And I spoke with SAC Thornton last evening prior to coming here. The challenge remains. The

SAC would indicate that communication has improved between government authorities and the community, but it's still not what it should be in order to ensure an effective exchange of information to prevent individuals from either harming other people or harming themselves by traveling overseas. This is going to be a long-term commitment to ensuring that the community develops enough confidence to be able to keep the information flow going.

Mr. DESANTIS. One of the things that was a little surprising is the community there, the Somalis, is primarily a refugee community, but yet they are—particularly some of the problem people would travel back and forth. And so if they are coming as refugees, then why are they just going back and forth? It was a little odd to me that that would be something that would be okay. You would think if you are fleeing an area, you wouldn't want to just keep going back, but that seemed to be—I mean, I know a lot of these guys who were convicted, they were going back. They had government money they were using. I mean, it was really, really dispiriting to see.

Mr. SLEEPER. There are some examples, sir, of individuals that have traveled back, yes, sir, and returned.

Mr. DESANTIS. All right. The use of funds, let me ask Mr. Selim. I mean, we looked at some of these grants. For example, there was $160,000 to a group called Music in Common whose task was "empowering diverse cultures and faiths to discover common ground through collaborative songwriting, multimedia, and performance." So, in terms of effectiveness, collaborative songwriting, is that an effective approach to warding off terrorism?

Mr. SELIM. Mr. Chairman, what I could say about that application in particular is that was not one of the ones that was awarded in June of 2017. I think you're referring to one of the earlier ——

Mr. DESANTIS. Right.

Mr. SELIM.—awards from January of 2017. What I can say conclusively—and I think I would echo some of the comments that Mr. Hughes made earlier—is radicalization is not a linear process. There are multiple ways that individuals in the United States and across the globe have been radicalized, and thus, the solution sets to preventing and intervening in the process of radicalization are equally diverse and multidisciplinary.

Mr. DESANTIS. I think that that is true, but I just—is this a good use of tax funds for this particular group? Was there any measurable success as a result of awarding this grant? Are there other groups which I would say are more fuzzy in terms of their approach—has there been documented success from there? Because we looked for it. It was hard for us to find it, and it is a concern.

Mr. SELIM. I understand your concern, Mr. Chairman. Here's the best way I can try to answer that.

Mr. DESANTIS. But, I guess—I mean, the fact that this group got dropped is probably an indication that it had not been having a lot of success, correct?

Mr. SELIM. Part of the reason that group and a number of others were dropped is because of the additional factors that Secretary Kelly and DHS leadership infused into the grant program and to—sorry.

Mr. DESANTIS. No, finish your thought.

Mr. SELIM. And to address your point on measurement and evaluation, looking at each and—each individual grant—grantee and program that we will be funding, overall, I guess I would summarize we're looking at readiness overall, and we're looking at readiness of preventing radicalization here in a couple different facets. The first is in this grant program are we raising awareness on the threat of radicalization and recruitment? Are we creating willingness within communities to engage with State, local, and municipal law enforcement? And third, are we demonstrating an increased level of capabilities for State, local, and nongovernmental actors to do something if radicalization and recruitment is detected?

Overall, what this grant program is trying to do is up our readiness game and factors that we need to work on moving forward.

Mr. DESANTIS. Let me ask Ms. Raza. When you see something like the collaborative songwriting, you have been very clear about going after the ideology. I mean, is that the approach you think would be successful or are you arguing for more of a direct acknowledgement of what the threat is?

Ms. RAZA. Thank you for having me here, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that question. Yes, I would say that the time has come to definitely have a more direct approach. With due respect to the songwriting project, I mean, "fluff stuff" and interfaith dialogue really hasn't led to much deradicalization and hasn't led to countering violent extremism. There need to be specific policies put into place that tackle the ideology, as I have mentioned in both my oral and written testimony.

Mr. DESANTIS. So in terms of the ideology, I notice the government manuals recently, they will not mention radical Islam or they don't use anything associated with the word Islam, but then when I look at people in the Middle East who are fighting this like General President el-Sisi of Egypt, I mean, he gave a speech in front of all those Islamic clerics, and he said, look, he is like, you know, I am a devout Muslim but we can't use the faith to be at war with other people. So, he seemed to view it as really a debate within Islam, and he wanted the nonviolent—which I think is the majority for sure—to really carry the day, whereas I think the government view has been to just say this has nothing to do with Islam; all violent extremism is the same. It just seems like Sisi is confronting the ideological a little more directly. It seems like some of the government manuals, you know, they kind of dance around the core ideological point. Is that a fair description of the difference?

Ms. RAZA. Yes, it is, and thank you for bringing that up because this point has come up more than once that the word Islam is—radical ideology should not be used. As a practicing Muslim, let me point out that to separate Islamist ideology from the spiritual message of Islam is a very pro-Islamic thing to do. It's not about political correctness. There are people here in the West who are afraid to use the word Islamist ideology because they think that it is anti-Muslim. It is actually very pro-Muslim because it makes the ordinary masses of people understand the difference between the faith of Islam and an ideology, which is political in nature and which is evil in its agenda. And in order to fight that ideology, we have to name it. We have a mandate in our organization where we say you

have to use the three E's, expose the problem, educate the masses, and then erase the problem.

Mr. DESANTIS. So, you mentioned designating the Brotherhood as a terrorist-supporting organization. If the U.S. Government did that and that preventing money from flowing to some of the domestic groups, do you think that that would help neuter some of the economic fuel for the extremist ideology?

Ms. RAZA. Yes, designating the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization that aids and abets terrorism definitely would be a step in the right direction, especially when other Muslim countries have already done this. And the—they fuel and feed the radical ideology that eventually leads to terrorism.

Mr. DESANTIS. For Adnan Kifayat, the good thing about the private sector what you are trying to do is you are not really burdened by some of the bureaucratic scriptures and you guys can kind of see things and react. So, you mention some of these online interventions that have been successful, so can you describe, what does that entail and how some of those have worked?

Mr. KIFAYAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, so some of our online work right now is focused on really understanding the narratives and the content that groups like ISIS, al-Qaida, others put out there and the kinds of messages that they use to basically get people to go down those pathways. And what we're learning is geography, so where those searches are taking place, where that content is being consumed, potentially deploying some off-ramping, as has been talked about, some off-ramping programs, hotlines in those geographies.

Two, we've learned about—more about the complexity of the messaging, so it's everything from religious argument, as has been noted a number of times, to things like seeking adventure, things like protecting one's culture, protecting one's community. And understanding what those message points are is very helpful to us as we create content and repurpose content to push back against those messages.

We've also learned, Mr. Chairman, that terrorists are not—they don't start off by viewing beheading videos or the bloodiest or the most gruesome of the content. They actually start off by consuming what might appear to be mild content but has tinges of hate, tinges of hate, intolerance, and so forth. And so nipping it in the bud has been one lesson that we've learned.

Mr. DESANTIS. Great. I am over my time.

I will recognize the ranking member, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just for a threshold matter, I have a couple of documents that I would like to submit with unanimous consent. I have a letter here from the Muslim Justice League of Boston, and I have a letter as well from the Brennan Center for Justice addressed to you and I.

Mr. DESANTIS. And you would ask unanimous consent that they

Mr. LYNCH. I do.

Mr. DESANTIS.—be entered into the record. Without objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LYNCH. One of the difficulties here that I know my colleagues are struggling with is really identifying the metrics for suc-

cess. So, we have got these—we are expending these resources, and we are trying to—it is difficult, I have to admit, to measure or count an attack that doesn't occur, right? If we are putting people out there and trying to reduce radicalization, you know, the strongest evidence is a lack of attacks, and that is, you know, that's a proven negative.

But, Director Sleeper and Mr. Hughes, you have been out there, sort of law enforcement capacity, and we have talked about or heard a lot about trust today from a number of witnesses. There seems to be almost an organic friction between law enforcement coming in and investigating and a faith a mosque—any faith or a church for that matter in which constituents are coming there to practice their religion confidentially, and there is that trust between the imam and the Oma, just as there are, you know, in my faith there is a relationship, a confidential relationship between the priest and Catholics.

So, I am struggling with how do we balance in a way—balance our need to intervene here and at the same time do it in a respectful way that doesn't isolate some of these mosques? Because I have heard in various parts of my community, in the Muslim community that those who accept money, CVE money, are tainted. There is almost a collaborator label among some that say, oh, that mosque is accepting CVE money. They are cooperating with the FBI or with the Boston Police, and so for some, they get a black mark and are seen as less worthy. And others that refuse to take the CVE seek to take on this role of legitimacy in the Muslim community. How do we deal with that, Mr. Hughes?

Mr. HUGHES. I spent a lot of time, about 3–1/2 years, working for the National Counterterrorism Center on this exact issue and a lot of time actually in your district.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes.

Mr. HUGHES. And so my biggest takeaway from kind of traveling around the country and meeting with Muslim American community leaders throughout the country was you just got to be honest and talk about it in human stories. So instead of 128 people have been arrested for terrorism charges, it's my name is Seamus Hughes, I'm a father, and I'm worried about these kids. And I tell the story of a young man from Minneapolis who disappears on election day and doesn't—and his mother's worried about him, goes to Somalia, realizes it's his bill of goods and is killed there for his doubts. And at some point in his radicalization he was reachable. My name is Seamus Hughes and I want to save that young kid because I never want to sit in a room like I used to in a basement of an apartment building talking to mothers of—grieving sons.

And so if you frame the issue in terms of human aspect, I think you'd get a lot farther than you would. And I think you also need to have a bright line between counterterrorism operations and CVE efforts.

So, my engagement with community partners I didn't share my notes with the local FBI office because I needed to let—build levels of trust, and that doesn't happen overnight. So, going to Boston every couple weeks, talking to folks, knowing who their kids are, where they play soccer, things like that, those things matter in

order to actually build this level of trust. It's not just a one-and-done thing.

Mr. LYNCH. That is great.

Director Sleeper?

Mr. SLEEPER. Thank you for the question, sir. I have been a police officer for four decades, the first three decades in State and local law enforcement. Outreach to communities is the cornerstone of law enforcement. It's the essence of how local government communicates with its citizens in order to prevent violence in the communities, all violence. It's an effort to prevent violence from happening, to encourage dialogue between families, community groups, religious organizations, and to open up dialogue so that if someone see something, if they're concerned about a friend or a family member that may be going in the wrong direction, that that's communicated and that violence is prevented. That's really what this program is about is preventing violence. The FBI looks at it from a very broad perspective of looking at all potential avenues of extremism and violence that may be dealt with in a community.

We're very cognizant that all cities and communities are different, and it's the citizens of the community that are best to identify the level of engagement, the type of engagement, and allow them to dictate back to the law enforcement community what they need and what they would like in order to exchange and open up that dialogue, sir.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. So, it just so happens that Mr. Russell and I have spent a fair amount of time in refugee camps on the Syrian border, Syria and Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, Syria and Amman, Jordan, and on one of my visits we actually had an opportunity to bring in six of these so-called moderate rebel groups, the leaders of these groups. They came up out of Aleppo and met with us. And one of my conversations I asked each one of them as they came in separately, I said, how do you communicate? And they are all on WhatsApp, okay? So, not surprisingly, a lot of the radical content that we are seeing on our end here in the United States is also coming through WhatsApp. And I don't want to single them out. There are a few others.

But one of the folks that I deal with on this issue, who is Dr. Nabeel Khudairi, he is the former chairperson of the Islamic Council of New England, he had a great quote. He said, "If we are going to do battle against extremists, we have to bring something in the same genre of the social media to balance a young person's opinion of what to do." So, what are we doing in terms of—and now, I am talking about the social media aspect of it that is oftentimes the point of contact between efforts of others to radicalize our sons and daughters here at home? What is the counterpoint that we are using to sort of push back on that? And has anything that you have been doing so far been successful, Mr. Sleeper or Mr. Hughes, I guess? Or Mr. Selim actually, yes.

Mr. SLEEPER. There's a number of areas, sir, that are being pursued. Some of those fall into the true counterterrorism effort in the sense of identifying and eliminating individuals that are responsible for creating and sending those messages. There's significant work that's being done with the private sector, and there's been significant success with the private sector recognizing that their

applications are being leveraged by people, so there are successes there. And I know George is working a number of initiatives at a different level.

Mr. SELIM. Seamus, do you want to ——

Mr. HUGHES. Yes, if you don't mind. I interviewed an American ISIS supporter who spent about four months in ISIS last month, and he was using WhatsApp to communicate with other friends when he crossed the border. So, absolutely, the online environment does matter for these folks, and in many ways, it's a logistical support and a level of connectivity they wouldn't normally have.

Mr. LYNCH. Just to be clear, it is the level of encryption there that ——

Mr. HUGHES. It's ——

Mr. LYNCH.—allows that, right?

Mr. HUGHES. It's the debate that the FBI would talk about, the ——

Mr. LYNCH. And it is owned by Facebook, right?

Mr. HUGHES. I believe so, yes.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes.

Mr. HUGHES. So, in terms of what we're doing domestically, not a whole lot. So, we have a few programs. We have peer-to-peer program which the U.S. Government and Facebook have stepped up in form and encouraged the university students to create countermessaging. But I think there's a few low-hanging policy questions I think we can solve pretty quickly. One is community partners like the one you mentioned, giving them some level of a legal understanding of what's right and left latitudes online, so they're not crossing against material support to terrorism clauses if they're engaging with a would-be jihadist, right, so letting them know what the latitudes are.

The second one is informing them of how ISIS and other groups use the online environment. So, it's not Twitter anymore. It's largely concentrated on Telegram. And what do those channels look like and how do you get involved and what are the messages that are there? We're not doing enough of that type of work.

And the last part, and I think Adnan would have a point to raise on this is, you know, the Federal Government's not really going to step up in this spot. It's uncomfortable there. It raises a whole host of kind of legal issues and the ability for the Federal Government to move and shift in the online space is very little, right? So, this is where foundations like Gen Next can step up. Other foundations, family foundations and things like that can say, okay, community partner in Boston who has a great idea, you need X amount of money. It's a small amount of funding. Let's try this out, and if it works, let's take it to L.A. or let's take it to Seattle and get the Federal Government out of this process and help kind of do that connective tissue.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Selim, Mr. Kifayat?

Mr. SELIM. Yes, thank you, Ranking Member Lynch, and please feel free to jump in on this. I guess I would only amplify and add one or two points from what my colleagues mentioned. In the past number of years that I've been working on this issue, I've seen a fair bit of progress from industry, from the technology companies, from the social media companies, from the internet service pro-

viders in this space. Next week, in northern California for the first time ever, a number of these companies are convening a forum to talk about this issue with Federal, State, and local officials. Facebook, Google, Twitter, and a whole host of others are convening officials. I think the public-private aspect of this that Mr. Hughes alluded to earlier is critical to two parts of the question that you asked. One is the content and the encryption—how do you remove it or take it down—but then there's another important part of that issue, which is how do you amplify other non-extremist content? How do you amplify the voices of individuals that are in refugee camps, American Muslims or other civic leaders in the United States to help drown out those voices that are online that are trying to recruit and radicalize? And I think a stronger partnership with industry on these issues can help address both those issues, and I think we need to do it sooner rather than later.

Mr. LYNCH. Right. Mr. Kifayat and Ms. Raza, if you have anything to add.

Mr. KIFAYAT. Just to amplify one point, sir, the—there are huge conversations taking—huge tectonic plates of young—Americans having conversations about culture and identity and what civilization means and talked about what religion means, and the problem we've seen online, social media, is that there is an ample amount of really bad information out there that tells you how to act and what adventure means and what a call to action means and what living in a community of nonbelievers means. And what we have been doing in our partnerships with the technology sector is to, as—to pick along what George said, is to drown those out, right, to relegate those to make them impotent online. And so we're putting out narratives that counter those concepts, counter those ideas at the nip so when they begin. And that, I think is where the future is if we are to save the internet and save the online space, sir.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Ms. Raza?

Ms. RAZA. Thank you so much for having us here.

The question of social media is extremely important, and our organization has been approached to create an alternate narrative. And with regards to the conversation that you had brought up before as well, NGOs, nongovernment organizations, need to be part of this movement and to create an alternate narrative on the internet, on social media so that it can drown out, as Mr. Kifayat said, the extremist voices.

And one of the measures that we have looked upon, which has been very successful in terms of community relationships, and you had mentioned your concern, along with Mr. Russell, is to empower the Muslim communities themselves to take responsibility to bring about some of the change so it doesn't seem that it's just law enforcement or CVE or someone else who is telling them to.

And the best example of that I can give you is what happened last week at a mosque in Davis, California, where the imam Ammar Shahin who is at the Islamic Center of Davis called for Muslims to fight the Jews and annihilate them. This was following the troubles at Temple Mount. And it was the Muslim communities that actually took upon this challenge and started an online petition to actually have him fired and hire another imam. And this is something new and different, which is what we need to focus on

is while we want to counter violent extremism through government, we also want to do it from within the communities themselves.

Mr. LYNCH. That is great. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your extreme courtesy. I appreciate that. I yield back.

Mr. RUSSELL. [Presiding] And I thank the gentleman, the ranking member.

We have certainly seen firsthand a lot of these issues as we have tried to address them. I am going to yield myself some time for questions here.

I think that there is really a responsibility in messaging that goes just beyond the Islamic communities. I think it goes even nationwide with our media. For example, when you see a story reported about ISIS, the B-roll in the background is, you know, these people sneaking around with tennis shoes and AK's riding on tanks, you know, looking like they are some heroic figure rather than the barbarians that have committed atrocities that have not been seen since the Dark Ages. I think we bear some responsibility when our own media will not engage in the betrayal. If all you show is this positive, glorious image, then that can be extended through social media, and then we see a lot of those issues there.

It is just a false characterization also of our military targeting where somehow the military, which our military is the most accurate and the most human-rights-conscious. When we have to unsheathe the sword, we try to make sure that it is accurate to the point of enormous expenditures to have our weaponry to be accurate so that we don't cause undue suffering. And yet the opponents, you know, don't abide by any of these rules, and then our media will somehow attack our country, our soldiers, our warriors instead of those that are sawing people's heads off, setting them on fire in cages causing untold human suffering, displacing hundreds of thousands and millions of people, leveling cities. Other than that, they are all pretty nice guys.

What is interesting is that we have large Muslim communities in this country, and a lot of them have lived quite peacefully for decades. And, you know, I think of, you know, little Baghdad in San Diego. You know, not only do they contribute to the economy, not only have we seen very little radicalization from these areas—you know, I think of my own hometown in Oklahoma City. We have got folks that have come from both an Arab, Sunni Arab, Persian Shia background due to different things that have happened in the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s, you know, 2000s, live quite peacefully in the community with very little radicalization.

And then we get to other areas where we have just an outrageous proportionate level of radicalization. For example, Minnesota has produced 26 percent of young foreign fighters recruited in the United States, and more terrorist suspects charged in connection with ISIS than any other State besides New York, and when you compare the population of Minnesota and New York, well, my goodness, you know, you—and so I guess my question to you, Mr. Sleeper, would be why is Minnesota such a significant center of terrorist activity and recruitment?

Mr. SLEEPER. It's difficult for us to articulate the reason why that's happening, sir. Obviously, there's a large Somali population, 100,000-plus, in that ——

Mr. RUSSELL. There is a large Somali population in D.C. ——

Mr. SLEEPER. Geographic ——

Mr. RUSSELL.—but we don't see a recruitment from that. I mean, there has got to be a reason. I mean, one thing I learned as a warrior, you know, fighting—I have lived in these cultures. I have gone to weddings, wakes, you know, done the land grab and the bulls, everything and have made great friends. But when you have enemies that percolate in an area, there is a reason. And so, you know, let's see if we can get some ideas to this. Mr. Hughes, you are raising your hand. I will come back to you, Mr. Sleeper.

Mr. HUGHES. Sure. Looking at the Minneapolis cases, I think we talked a lot about the online environment, this idea of online radicalization, online recruitment. Minneapolis is much more of a peer-to-peer recruitment. So, the reason why you had a number of guys try to join ISIS later is because their brother joined al-Shabaab a few years before that or their roommate before that. And there was—and there's a connectivity there that I don't think we fully understood. So, Abdi Nur goes over to Syria and then FaceTimes with his buddies back in Minneapolis and says it's time to join the so-called caliphate. So, that human interaction actually matters quite a bit. It's the reason why Minneapolis had a higher number with a very—with a large Somali population and Lewiston, Maine, or San Diego doesn't. That peer-to-peer network does matter.

Mr. RUSSELL. And, Mr. Sleeper, what would be the profile of these terrorist suspects or recruits that are coming out of Minnesota, you know, to speak to what Mr. Hughes is—what would that profile look like?

Mr. SLEEPER. There really is no profile. We spent a tremendous amount of time, research, and analysis looking into individuals that are becoming radicalized so that we can get ahead of the curve, behaviors, indicators ——

Mr. RUSSELL. But, see, we got to do better than that. And look, you know, when I was thrust in combat environments, you know, one of the first things I said is three questions: What does the enemy look like? How can he hurt us? And how can we hurt him? Now, we have the most incredible, phenomenal intelligence services in the United States. We have millions of Muslim Americans that are willing to help and serve their country. How do I know? Because I served with quite a few of them. So just to say, well, we can't identify what they look like, we can't make a profile, you really think that is true? I mean, you represent the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I mean, boy, if that is true—because if we can't identify the problem, we can never solve it.

Mr. SLEEPER. It is difficult to identify any commonality ——

Mr. RUSSELL. Life's tough, but it is tough if we don't identify the problem. I mean, so, help me out here. What ——

Mr. SLEEPER. So, if you look at the number of investigations we have open right now, several hundred investigations in this country right now, I'd say the FBI is very effective at identifying individ-

uals that articulate a desire and we determine there's predicated information that they're prepared to act on it.

Mr. RUSSELL. And to your point ——

Mr. SLEEPER. Prior to that, it's a very difficult process to do in consideration with First Amendment rights, freedom of speech.

Mr. RUSSELL. Sure. And to your point on the good job that the FBI does, I don't want you to think I'm picking on you; I have great respect for the Bureau. And ISIS self-turned air traffic controller just caught two weeks ago, charged, indicted in Honolulu, I mean, imagine the destruction and damage he could have done if our Bureau had not been Johnny-on-the-spot. And so, you know, we do appreciate the work that our military and the Bureau does every day.

But I refuse to accept that we can't identify a profile. Anyone else want to take on what that might—Mr. Selim?

Mr. SELIM. Sir, if I may just add one note to this. Part of the group of folks who work for me is there are a group of folks dedicated to working with the latest and greatest, both analytical and social science community on this. Going back to your earlier question on why—in Minneapolis, why is the spike so high, what a number of studies and what a lot of research has shown is that individuals who come to this country that have a higher exposure to violence from wherever they came from may possess a higher propensity to radicalization and recruitment.

Mr. RUSSELL. But, gosh, do you think that is true when you look at like what happened with Beirut? We have had a lot of people come from Lebanon, and we have not seen this problem. We have had civil wars and destruction of all kinds of things before where we see a migration of population and we don't see radicalization. So, do you get my point?

Mr. SELIM. I do. I think it's just—it's one of the factors that we've seen particularly differentiating in the Twin Cities with some of the Somali community attacks that we've seen in Ohio and other places. It's one of the factors, in addition to a whole host of others.

Mr. RUSSELL. Okay. Thank you. And I am consuming some time here, and I have some very patient colleagues I have great respect for. And I will come back on some other things, but I want now to recognize Ms. Demings from Florida.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and believe me, this topic, this conversation deserves all of the time necessary because it is a very important issue. I want to thank our witnesses for being here, thank our ranking member as well, Mr. Lynch.

The FBI has confirmed that there are active ISIS-related investigations in all 50 States. To date, 26 States and the District of Columbia have had at least one charge with offenses related to the Islamic State within their borders.

So, Mr. Selim, I would like to start with you. What is the Trump administration's justification for proposing that the CVE grant funds be eliminated? And what would the impact be if those funds are eliminated?

Mr. SELIM. Ma'am, thank you for that question. I can answer it a few different ways. The first is that the program that we recently announced, these awards that we announced in June, this is a—that award was not a one-year award. That award was a two-year award. So, that $10 million in awards that we've administered will

last for fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019, and we're about to start that period of performance and that cycle now.

So, I'm aware that the presidential budget request did not reflect the CVE grant program in fiscal year 2018. However, there's—it's not that there's zero dollars being spent in '18; it's that this is a two-year period of performance in which I'm very confident, as the director of the office and the program manager here, that we'll be able to demonstrate a high degree of excellence on these 26 awardees. And hopefully, by fiscal year 2019, we'll be able to have the best practices and lessons learned to be able to make the case to the Congress for more funds in this area.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Do you agree—and I would also like to hear from Director Sleeper as well on this. Do you agree with the GAO that the Federal Government does not have a cohesive strategy or process for assessing the overall CVE effort? And we will start with you, Mr. Selim?

Mr. SELIM. So, I am aware of the GAO response on that issue, and there is a DHS response to the GAO report, which, if the committee allows, I'd be happy to submit that for the record as well.

Mr. SELIM. I do not agree with that view that there is no measurement and evaluation of any of the programs.

Specifically on the CVE grant program, we have robust measurement put in place for all 26 of the grantees, both qualitative and quantitative. To give you an example of some of the qualitative measure that we're looking at, in the CVE grant program, there are five focus areas overall. So one of the questions that the committee and you may be wondering is how do you measure the ability to do training on countering violent extremism or radicalization and recruitment? And we're really looking at a number of different factors. When we're looking at training the space, we're looking at both the number and type of people being trained. Are they State and local law enforcement professionals, are they civic leaders, are they spiritual leaders, and so on?

And we're also conducting pre- and post-survey assessments on the level of knowledge acquisition. Historically, in any law enforcement or military training, the nature and scope of the training, the level of knowledge acquisition that's attained, so we're taking into consideration a very broad swath of data that we'll be collecting, and we'll use that to implement and hone our own training in the Federal Government moving forward.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Director Sleeper?

Mr. SLEEPER. This is an incredibly complicated issue. We're not the only country dealing with it. Virtually every Western country is currently wrestling with this. We can always be better, coordinate more effectively. We need to if we expect to meet the challenges facing us.

Mrs. DEMINGS. And I have to agree with our chairman's statement earlier that we do have to do better. This is an ever-critical issue. Do you agree that the evaluation process that is in place is adequate?

Mr. SLEEPER. I have not actually reviewed the report, ma'am.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. RUSSELL. Very efficient on your time. I thank the gentlelady.

And I would like to recognize the gentleman from Vermont, Mr. Welch.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to acknowledge the presence of Kerry Sleeper, who served, Mr. Chairman, as our commissioner of public safety in Vermont, and we are pretty proud of him.

And I want to ask you, Director, in your new job one of the things you did so well in Vermont was walk this tightrope that I think folks in law enforcement have to walk between being all-in, very aggressive, very vigilant to protect our safety on the one hand and also create positive relationships with the community, whose support you need in order to effectively do your job. And I would think that in this mission that all of you now are engaged in of countering violent extremism, that community support continues to be important, but the threat probably that you are all dealing with is even greater than what you have faced on a day-to-day basis when you were the commission of public safety.

Congress tends, I think, to focus understandably on the potential violence that we want to give you the tools to control, but, as you did in your job in Vermont, you also displayed some ability to see the importance of maintaining that community support that is intentioned sometimes with aggressive actions that have to be taken to contain violence. And I wonder if you could just speak a little bit about that and how the FBI managed that.

Mr. SLEEPER. I believe the FBI does an outstanding job, sir, at reaching out to communities, particularly communities at risk. The communities most at risk are those that need the most outreach and communication. We see all across our country right now a number of cities that are struggling with relationships between their police departments and their communities, and violence is resulting as a consequence of that.

This specific threat that we're discussing today requires that the FBI and the communities engage in dialogue with very specific segments of those communities, and the threat requires that there be open, trusted dialogue. The members of those communities recognize the first most fundamental role of the FBI is to protect the citizens of this country and to uphold the law. There's no doubt about that. That's the tough part. The fair part is that we engage in dialogue with those communities so they understand why we need to enforce those laws, why we need to protect those communities.

And if we think particularly of the Somali community members who are leaving Minneapolis, they're going to fight in a far-distant war. The vast majority of them are going to come home in a body bag. So what we're trying to do is protect those people, communicate. And as most of the Americans that have traveled to fight for ISIS, they will eventually end up in a body bag, so we're trying to communicate to their friends and families that there's consequences to this type of behavior. That's the type of dialogue and communication that we want to have with those communities so they understand clearly our role and the likely consequences of their actions.

Mr. WELCH. When we have that kind of trust, does it also lead to you being able to get actionable information?

Mr. SLEEPER. It is, and again, we are seeing in the communities where we engage the communities do respond and recognize—we have been thanked by parents of children who we caught before they traveled for saving their children's lives, and that's the message and the dialogue that we want to put out there that we're about not only protecting the communities and the citizens but the individuals themselves that are making decisions regarding travel. But there is no doubt we are here to investigate and to uphold ——

Mr. WELCH. Right.

Mr. SLEEPER.—the safety of the citizens of the United States first and foremost.

Mr. WELCH. Yes. Well, I really appreciate that.

Mr. Chairman, you probably—in your own work serving our country probably had similar tension between the need to use force in appropriate circumstances but try to get the trust of the folks in the country where you were serving, a hard job.

Well, I thank you. Thank you, Director.

Mr. RUSSELL. And I thank the gentleman, and I would agree with those comments and associate with Mr. Sleeper's earlier comments that community type of interaction is essential. One of the things that made it even harder is when you are not even from the country, you don't have the language, you are automatically hated, you are occupying the territory, and you are trying to earn trust. But guess what? It can be done, even those tall-order things. And we are not facing that. Although maybe in reverse as they come back we see some of those factors play in.

And I would like us, before we close, a couple of additional questions if I may to Mr. Sleeper. You had made mention that there is a number of open investigations earlier in your comments. About how many is that?

Mr. SLEEPER. We've publicly acknowledged in several environments that there's over 1,000 open investigations across the country right now. I can't be specific, but there's over 1,000.

Mr. RUSSELL. Okay. Thank you for that. And how many individuals approximately have left the United States to fight for ISIS or other associated terror groups like al-Shabaab, et cetera?

Mr. SLEEPER. I don't have that number readily available, but we can ensure that you're provided with that.

Mr. RUSSELL. Sure. And if we have to provide it in a secure setting, you know, we can also arrange that. And can you get with us so that we can nail that down?

Mr. SLEEPER. Yes, sir.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you for that, sir.

And then to Mr. Selim, you know, this morphing grants and, you know, we are going to add this many, we are going to subtract this many, and all of that, can we get full, complete without redaction examples of what those grants are and their parameters? Is that possible to provide to the committee?

Mr. SELIM. Mr. Chairman, I believe so. Currently, just to give you an accurate sense of where it is, I believe in a full and high degree of transparency with this and any other of our overseers, the stack of paper that we're looking at that's currently underneath review with our general counsel and so on is over 500 pages. And we're looking to make sure that there's no PII and whatnot, and

that's the type of redaction. In addition to supplying that information on the grant applications to this committee, we want to make as much of that as publicly available and transparent as possible ——

Mr. RUSSELL. Sure.

Mr. SELIM.—so I'm committed ——

Mr. RUSSELL. Personal ——

Mr. SELIM.—to doing so. I need to circle back with our counsel and just ensure what the parameters of delivering that to the committee are.

Mr. RUSSELL. Yes, personal identifiers, Socials, like that, I don't think—let me check with my legal counsel. I don't think that that is an issue, but we don't want, you know, oh, you know, here are the two sentences on page 1, so ——

Mr. SELIM. No, I can assure you we're not looking to reduce any of the substance but just the appropriate things for scoring and so on.

Mr. RUSSELL. Okay. And I appreciate that. And then I thank the committee today not only for the broad bipartisan concern and interest but, you know, for the excellent witnesses on both sides. And I want to thank the ranking member for his tireless work on national security. You know, not only have we developed a friendship; we have traveled large portions of the globe together.

And I also want to thank all of you today that have come before us. And I know it wasn't a convenience to, oh, sure, you know, let me—but I really appreciate the work that you do and the unique perspective that you provide, and I hope that we can work with you more in the future.

And with that, I would like to thank all of our witnesses that are before us today.

If there is no further business, without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:14 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

Opening Statement – Chairman Ron DeSantis
Subcommittee on National Security
"Combating Homegrown Extremism"
Thursday, July 27, 2017

In the words of Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, the U.S. is experiencing an "unprecedented spike in homegrown terrorism."

Currently, the FBI has open terrorism investigations in all 50 states.

As of June 2017, the U.S. government has charged 128 individuals with offenses related to ISIS over the last 3 years.

Radical Islamic extremism is the primary driver of this problem and deserves the government's immediate attention.

In recent years the federal government has sought to combat this problem under the guise of a program called "countering violent extremism," or CVE.

Three cities were used to conduct pilot programs: Los Angeles, Boston and Minneapolis.

Minneapolis is a particularly troublesome area, as it is a major center of Islamic terrorist activity.

The region is home to the largest concentration of Somali refugees and is the epicenter for domestic radicalization.

From 2007 to 2015, over 20 Somali-Americans are known to have left Minnesota to join the al-Shabaab terrorist organization in Somalia.

Over the last three years, federal prosecutors have charged 13 individuals from Minnesota for connections to the Islamic State.

Minnesota is second only to New York, which has four times as many residents, in number of ISIS terrorists charged.

The terrorist problem in Minnesota led former U.S. Senator Norm Coleman to warn the state is in danger of becoming "the Land of 10,000 Terrorists."

I visited Minneapolis in December of last year to meet with federal and local law enforcement and community groups. The area truly is ground zero for terrorist recruitment.

I invited Richard Thornton, the FBI's Special Agent in Charge of the Minneapolis Division, testify today about the problems our country is facing there.

Instead, the Bureau has sent Assistant Director Kerry Sleeper from Headquarters with the expectation that he can speak to Thornton's specific experience and interactions in Minneapolis.

I look forward to hearing specifics about FBI's efforts in Minneapolis so the Committee can evaluate the effectiveness of the CVE approach.

Our law enforcement and intelligence community have their hands full with preventing radicalization and interdicting terrorists before they commit heinous acts in the name of religion.

The Department of Homeland Security leads the governments Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) efforts.

CVE refers to "proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence." Currently, the Department still promotes Obama-era policies related to CVE.

Guidance developed under the Obama Administration specifically limits any intelligence or law enforcement investigative activity through CVE.

By leaving this information on the table, CVE efforts are **missing opportunities to identify and disrupt terrorist plots.**

Obama-era guidance also fails to properly identify the immediate threat of radical Islamic extremism.

The nearly 4,000 word October 2016 CVE strategy does not mention radical Islamic terrorism at all.
The Obama Administration's CVE strategy also relied heavily on non-governmental organizations with vague and immeasurable goals.

One week before President Trump's inauguration, former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson announced the grant recipients of $10 million appropriated by Congress for CVE efforts.

Their selections reflect a preference for working through community-based organizations, some with questionable programs and immeasurable goals.

For example, the Obama Administration selected for funding an organization who suggested countering violent extremism through "collaborative songwriting, multimedia, and performance."

Another suggested hiring college students to make video games.

This was not a serious attempt to stop the flow of foreign fighters to ISIS.

After President Trump took office, DHS froze the $10 million in grants, reviewed the organizations, and announced they were removing 11 Obama grant recipients and adding 6 new ones.

A Committee review of the organizations indicates a preference for law enforcement organizations over community based organizations.

Despite this positive step, some of the law enforcement organizations designated for funding have problematic agendas.

For example, the City of Houston's application relied on so-called community experts with vocally partisan and anti-Israel agendas.

The City of Denver submitted an application that prioritized an agenda unrelated to CVE, suggesting working through organizations such as Black Lives Matter.

The Committee requested the applications of all grant recipients to determine what taxpayer dollars were funding. But DHS has still not produced these applications.

The Committee requested a briefing on the rationale for the selections of the grant recipients. But DHS refused.

Today, the Subcommittee seeks to understand what this Administration's policy is for countering violent extremism.

According to DHS this policy is currently under review, and DHS has declined to share any details about this process, including when this review is supposed to be complete and which organizations are participating.

For Congress' immediate purposes, we must determine what is driving DHS's agenda: Obama-era assumptions or the President's pledge to put political correctness aside and defeat ISIS at home and abroad.

We will question witnesses on whether the FBI and DHS are properly vetting organizations and individuals who participate in the CVE program.

We will also hear from non-governmental witnesses on the role of the private sector in CVE efforts and the scope of violent extremism problem facing the United States.

I thank the witnesses for their attendance and look forward to their testimony.

The April 2017 GAO report titled, "Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts" can be found at https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/683984.pdf.

July 26, 2017

Muslim Justice League
51 Melcher Street
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National Security Subcommittee Chair Ron DeSantis
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
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Representative Steve Russell
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Re: National Security Subcommittee Hearing on Combatting Homegrown Terrorism

Honorable Chair DeSantis and Members of the National Security Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share input ahead of the National Security Subcommittee Hearing on Combatting Homegrown Terrorism. My name is Shannon Al-Wakeel. I am Executive Director of the Muslim Justice League (MJL), a non-profit organization in Boston, Massachusetts, advocating for protection of human and civil rights that are at risk of erosion by certain national security-themed initiatives.

MJL's has serious concerns about "countering violent extremism" ("CVE") campaigns due to (1) the highly subjective nature of the problems CVE ostensibly seeks to combat — specifically "radicalization" or "extremism," as opposed to violent actions[1] — giving rise to the danger that CVE could criminalize or chill disfavored political or religious expression, (2) the absence of sound research to support theories that there are identifiable signs of "radicalization" or "extremism" (exacerbated, again, by the highly subjective nature of these concepts)[2] and (3) CVE's track record of violating human rights — including rights to

[1] We additionally note that, in the U.S., political violence represents a relatively very small proportion of total violence. While preventing all types of violence to the degree possible is an important objective, an outsized focus on political violence may have the counterproductive effect of falsely glamorizing it.

[2] See, e.g., Faiza Patel (Brennan Center for Justice) *Rethinking Radicalization,* March 8, 20111. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/rethinking-radicalization; Arun Kundnani (Claystone), *A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism*, January 2015. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.claystone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Claystone-rethinking-radicalisation.pdf; Arun Kundnani, *Radicalisation: The Journey of a Concept*, Race & Class Vol. 54, issue 2, 3-25, September 18, 2012. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0306396812454984; Asim Quereshi (CAGE), *The 'Science' of Pre-Crime: The Secret 'Radicalisation' Study Underpinning Prevent*, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://cage.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CAGE-Science-Pre-Crime-Report.pdf

education and health, and freedoms of speech, worship, and association — without advancing public safety.[3]

Since MJL's founding in 2014, many individuals in the Massachusetts communities MJL serves have experienced early impacts of CVE deployment. Below I describe some of these impacts, including chilled access to mental health services and increased polarization and fear within Muslim communities.

CVE's Impacts on Massachusetts Communities

Chilled Use of Mental Health Services

In 2015, the U.S. Attorneys Office for the District of Massachusetts ("USAO-MA") produced a *Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies Incorporating Violent Extremism Into Violence Prevention Efforts* which cites "Enhanced Communication among Law Enforcement/Mental Health/Social Services Agencies" as one planned focus of the USAO-MA's Massachusetts CVE Collaborative.[4] Based on MJL's observations and information shared by members of the community, this objective has in fact been prioritized by law enforcement agencies deploying CVE in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the U.S.

Examples of law enforcement efforts to recruit mental health providers to assist in deployment of CVE have included, for example, the Recognizing Extremist Network Early Warning Signs ("RENEW") program in Los Angeles involving the Los Angeles Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigations ("FBI"), Los Angeles Department of Mental Health and Los Angeles County Sheriff;[5] as well as outreach by the FBI and U.S. Attorneys Offices, respectively, to mental health providers attending an American

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[3] Information about impacts of the U.K.'s PREVENT program (on which the U.S. CVE campaign is in many respects modeled — for example, both focus on the ill-defined concepts of "extremism" or "radicalization," both recruit social services providers to identify and refer individuals deemed "at-risk" of "radicalization" or "extremism," both have relied on funding incentives to secure community participation, and both incorporate "interventions" as a means of changing political or religious views of those labeled potential extremists) is highly relevant to understanding CVE's likely impacts in the U.S. Because CVE, through PREVENT, has been operational in the U.K. for many years longer than in the US, more information about its impacts is available. See, e.g., RightsWatch UK; *Preventing Education? Human Rights and UK Counter-terrorism Policy in Schools,* July, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://rwuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/preventing-education-final-to-print-3.compressed-1.pdf; Dr. Derek Summerfield, *Mandating Doctors to Attend Counterterrorism Workshops is Medically Unethical,* BJPsych Bulletin (2016), 40, 87-88, February 11, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://pb.rcpsych.org/content/40/2/87.full-text.pdf+html; Arun Kundnani, *Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2009. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.kundnani.org/wp-content/uploads/spooked.pdf; Arun Kundnani (Claystone), *A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism*, January 2015. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.claystone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Claystone-rethinking-radicalisation.pdf. See also Jane Kinninmont (The Guardian) *Britain's Loose Definition of Extremism is Stoking a Global Crackdown on Dissent*, September 23, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/23/britain-extremism-global-effects.

[4] U.S. Attorneys Office for the District of Massachusetts (USAO-MA), *A Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies Incorporating Violent Extremism Into Violence Prevention Efforts,* February 2015, at 15. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-ma/pages/attachments/2015/02/18/framework.pdf

[5] See *The RENEW Program: A New Approach to Identifying Early Warnings of Potential Violent Behavior* (slide presentation). Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/Intervention%20model%20%282%29.pdf

Psychological Association 2016 Annual Conference[6] and the 2016 Annual Muslim Mental Health Conference.[7]

Additionally, in Massachusetts, the USAO-MA tapped the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services ("EOHHS") as a conduit for Department of Justice CVE grant monies,[8] and hosted a session at Suffolk Law School promoting CVE interventions (citing British and German models) for mental health and other social services providers and law enforcement,[9] among other outreach activities. The routing of Department of Justice CVE monies through EOHHS appears to have been intended to rebrand CVE as a public health — as opposed to law enforcement or surveillance — campaign.[10]

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[6] See conference agenda listing *Symposium: Countering Violent Extremism—Psychologists Partnering With Law Enforcement* with representatives of the Chicago School of Professional Psychology and the FBI. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8511353/file/8511360.pdf

[7] See conference agenda listing March 18, 2016 presentation titled *Resilience to Violent Extremism: Engaging Behavioral Health Experts in the Discussion*, with representatives of the U.S. Attorneys Offices of Michigan and Massachusetts. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.psychiatry.msu.edu/_files/docs/MMH-Conference-Agenda-2016.pdf

[8] See *Cooperative Agreement Between United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services for Implementation of Strategies to Enhance Resilience to Violent Extremism*, September 30, 2015. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.scribd.com/document/321906162/CVE-Cooperative-Agreement-of-USAO-for-Massachusetts-with-Massachusetts-EOHHS

[9] See USAO-MA invitation to *Resilience to Violent Extremism: Effective Intervention Approaches,* November 10, 2015 ("Who Should Attend: Public health and mental health service providers, non-profit organizations engaged in intervention, school administrators and counselors, faith-based organizations, mental health clinicians, law enforcement and crisis support and crisis intervention team members … The goal of the presentation is to increase knowledge about effective ways to provide support and services to those who have demonstrated concerning behavior that is inspired by violent extremist ideology. Participants will increase knowledge of specific methods of intervention and better understand the role that they can play. Presentation provided courtesy of Program on Extremism, George Washington University and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts"). Email invitation (forwarded by a third party) on file with Muslim Justice League.

[10] See, e.g., email of Brandy Donini-Melanson (Strategic Engagement and Law Enforcement Coordinator for USAO-MA) of April 5, 2016, asking EOHHS staff to speak with press in order to counter a petition of 1000 Massachusetts residents requesting EOHHS disengage from CVE, and explaining, "EOHHS's engagement [in CVE] is key *so that this can be framed as a public health issue*." (Emphasis added.) Obtained via Freedom of Information Act request by Waqas Mirza (MuckRock). Accessed July 26, 2017. Available at: https://cdn.muckrock.com/foia_files/2016/09/27/Public_Record_Request_CVE_-PEACE.pdf#page=63.

MJL and many other human and civil rights organizations, as well as mental health clinicians,[11] have expressed alarm at CVE's potential to encourage use of implicit bias in ways that harm patients and to erode confidentiality norms; both such outcomes are likely to chill recourse to mental health services.

Mental health and other health and social services providers are legally permitted, and in some cases mandated, to breach confidentiality where there is imminent risk of harm to a patient/client or another individual. CVE does not propose improvements to existing confidentiality standards; instead CVE recruitment efforts have promoted the idea, without sound empirical support, that vague "concerning behaviors" may predict violence. Explicit guidance about such warning signs is rarely shared publicly, but available guidance cites factors that are extremely broad and common, often particularly common among Muslims (such as "increased activity in a pro-Muslim social group or cause").[12] Encouraging the mental health sector to be alert to vague and discredited[13] signs of "vulnerability" to "extremism" — in contrast to clear indications of plans for imminent violence — invites use of implicit bias and may also spur invasive or patronizing questioning about clients' and patients' religious or political views.

Many Muslims, like members of all communities, must overcome shame and misunderstanding surrounding mental illness in order to access mental health services. Unfortunately, some CVE proponents have suggested that investments in mental health and other social services can prevent or counter "extremism" — at least among Muslims, who are the focus of most CVE-related conversations about "extremism." This unfounded assertion serves to further stigmatize, degrade and discourage would-be consumers of mental health and other social services.

MJL does not provide mental health counseling or social services of any kind. Yet individuals with whom we work — including those experiencing distress as a result of discrimination — occasionally share with us that they are suffering from a mental health problem and would like to seek counseling or treatment but feel unsafe doing so given an inability to know which providers may now or in future be collaborating in CVE. MJL believes mental health services benefit many individuals invaluably, and we would like to offer unqualified assurances that seeking help is safe. However, given known instances of CVE recruitment of mental health providers, and the reality that CVE is being deployed in a non-transparent manner, we cannot ethically, and do not, give such assurances.

In contrast to political dissent or religious conservatism (which are not public health issues), many genuine public health challenges — from addiction to violence-induced trauma to suicide — can be ameliorated through access to confidential and dignified mental health services. In MJL's experience, Massachusetts residents generally view public health issues (such as addiction and violence) as far more harmful and relevant to their lives than the ostensible threats of a neighbor's foreign policy views or choice to worship in ways that seem more rigid than one's own practices. This reality may of course explain why some CVE proponents have sought to rebrand CVE a public health campaign. However, attempts to reduce CVE's stigma through such a rebrand unfairly transfers the justified mistrust of a surveillance campaign to the public health sector. Recruitment of mental health and other social services providers for

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[11] See, e.g., Dr. Wesley Boyd M.D., Ph.D. and Dr. Alice LoCierco Ph.D., *The Dangers of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programs*, July 19, 2016 ("As mental health professionals, we are obligated to take action if we know that someone is imminently at risk of harming him/herself or others… But taking action along these lines is very different from what is being advocated by CVE programs."). Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/almost-addicted/201607/the-dangers-countering-violent-extremism-cve-programs

[12] See, e.g., "Table I. Terrorism Indicators Identified by Government Agencies and Programs" in Faiza Patel and Meghan Koushik (Brennan Center for Justice) *Countering Violent Extremism*, 2017, at 15. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/countering-violent-extremism

[13] See note 2.

CVE implementation threatens public confidence in these sectors broadly, and can discourage recourse even to programs which are uninvolved in CVE.

Any campaign that chills use of mental health services interferes with residents' rights to health and inflicts real damage to individuals and communities. Because CVE entangles social services provision with bias-based profiling and intelligence gathering, it has precisely this chilling effect.

MJL believes it is dangerous to tie investments in mental health other social services to national security-related campaigns, even if funding for those initiatives were directed solely through health and human services agencies. Investments in health and human services should be made equitably for all communities, with the goal of promoting health, and completely divorced from any explicit or implicit objectives related to national security, intelligence gathering or discouraging certain political or religious views.

Community Polarization

Nearly immediately upon federal announcements of CVE pilot programs in Boston, Minneapolis and Los Angeles, the CVE campaign increased fear and mistrust within Muslim communities and undermined collaboration among organizations that took different positions regarding CVE. While Muslim communities, like all communities, have always been heterogeneous politically, religiously and across multiple other dimensions, differences need not generally lead to mistrust. However, when individuals and entities are incentivized to propose and/or watch for pseudoscientific "concerning behaviors" of fellow community members, mistrust and fear are virtually guaranteed. Non-profit organizations face constant funding pressures to sustain important pre-existing services, and CVE grants encourage organizations to fit such services within a counterterrorism agenda. Given that CVE operates by offering funding and other opportunities to collaborating entities, and yet has threatened the rights and well-being of marginalized communities, its polarization of those who collaborate and those who do not was entirely foreseeable.

We are aware that if a population is viewed as a potential fifth column by some law enforcement entities, divisions within that population — such as divisions along lines of support for or opposition to CVE[14] — may be perceived by those entities not as a harm but as an aid to intelligence gathering and management of dissent. We hope and believe this Subcommittee, however, would agree that such mistrust and fear is at odds with important public policy objectives, such as that individuals feel safe to practice their religion in community, debate controversial views in public as opposed to underground, participate in organizations that advocate to solve societal problems, and partake in services offered by community-based programs, without fearing such actions could cause them to be falsely labeled a threat.

Anticipated Additional Harms if CVE Deployment Persists

While Boston was named a pilot city for the CVE campaign by federal officials in 2014, funded deployment of CVE in Massachusetts has been relatively recent. Federal Department of Justice grants, routed through Massachusetts's Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), were not awarded in

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[14] It is highly troubling that some law enforcement materials have deemed a choice not to engage in a law enforcement "community outreach" program a sign of being "radicalized." See Michael Price (Brennan Center for Justice), *Community Outreach or Intelligence Gathering? A Closer Look at "Countering Violent Extremism" Programs*, January 29, 2015, at 5 (excerpting a grant proposal for the "African Immigrant Muslim Coordinated Outreach Program" (AIMCOP) which explains, "The [St. Paul Police Department] … in partnership with the FBI and US Attorney's Office, … will first seek to gain the trust of the Somali immigrants … [by] attend[ing] community meetings in the targeted areas and refer[ing] you to the [Police Athletic League] and YWCA programs. … During this period, *the team will also identify radicalized individuals … who refuse to cooperate with our efforts.* … " Emphasis added.) Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Community_Outreach_or_Intelligence_Gathering.pdf

Boston until December, 2016.[15] Department of Homeland Security CVE grants to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and, via the Police Foundation, to a project involving the Boston Police Department and two Massachusetts-based nonprofit organizations,[16] were awarded only this summer.[17] Prior to any known operation of a CVE program in Massachusetts, however, the community impacts described above became apparent following promotion of CVE by law enforcement entities and recognition within local communities that CVE treats Muslim populations as a problem to be monitored and reformed.

It is highly likely that additional harms similar to those experienced in the U.K. under PREVENT will become evident in the U.S. if CVE deployment persists. In the U.K., for example, Muslim students have been subjected to referrals or threatened referrals for de-radicalizing "interventions" following completely innocuous behavior, ranging from participating in a middle school French class discussion about eco-activism[18] to — in the case of a four-year-old — mispronouncing the word "cucumber."[19]

The treatment of Ahmed Mohamed — subjected to police interrogation, arrest and school suspension after bringing a clock to school in Irving, Texas; and the prosecution of Mahin Khan — an autistic and developmentally delayed youth the FBI monitored for years after coordinating his mental health treatment,[20] are emblematic of the types of criminalization which may become more frequent if U.S. agencies continue pursuing CVE. Far from promoting "off-ramps" from prosecution for misguided youth who once contemplated violence, we believe CVE is well-designed to "on-ramp" youth who — for reasons of mental health, intellectual disabilities, or outspoken political views — provide low-hanging fruit for inchoate prosecutions in spite of posing no real threat of committing or facilitating violence.

CVE Programs Would Be Troubling Regardless of which Communities or Viewpoints were Targeted.

Finally, we wish to be clear that, in MJL's view, CVE programs would be deeply troubling *regardless of which communities or viewpoints they were to target*. MJL believes expanding CVE's targets would ex-

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[15] See Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, *Three Boston-based Organizations Chosen for 210K in PEACE Project Grants*, December 1, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/press-releases/eohhs/three-boston-based-orgs-chosen-for-210k-in-peace-grants.html

[16] See Boston Police Department response to MJL public records request, *Re Public Record Request DHS "Countering Violent Extremism" Grant*, Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.muslimjusticeleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BPD-CVE-grant-public-records-response.pdf

[17] See Department of Homeland Security, *DHS Countering Violent Extremism Grants*, June 23, 2017. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants

[18] See Vikram Dodd (The Guardian), *School Questioned Muslim Pupil about Isis after Discussion on Eco-activism*, December 22, 2015. Accessed July 25, 2016. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/sep/22/school-questioned-muslim-pupil-about-isis-after-discussion-on-eco-activism

[19] See Ben Quinn (The Guardian), *Nursery Raised Fears Of Radicalization Over Boy's Cucumber Drawing,* March 11, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2016. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/11/nursery-radicalisation-fears-boys-cucumber-drawing-cooker-bomb

[20] See, e.g., Beau Hodai (The Progressive), *Arizona's Manufactured Terrorism Threat*, May 23, 2017. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://progressive.org/magazine/arizona%E2%80%99s-manufactured-terrorism-threat/; Mike Truelson (KVOA.com), *Parents of Tucson Terrorism Suspect Mahin Khan Release Statement; Ask for 'Understanding,'* July 21, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: http://www.kvoa.com/story/32501286/parents-of-tucson-terrorism-suspect-mahin-khan-release-statement-ask-for-understanding

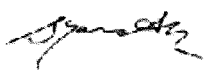
pand, not reduce, its harms to communities and societal freedoms. Therefore, we would continue to harbor strong concerns if CVE were to expand its focus beyond the communities currently targeted (i.e. Muslims, especially Somali Americans; Black Lives Matter organizers, refugees and LGBTQ communities[21]) to also target white supremacists, white Christians, or even all U.S. civilians. MJL does not advocate for, nor could we support, "ecumenical" or "equal opportunity" CVE.

Alternatives to CVE

We believe the solution to CVE's extensive problems is to end the campaign before it can further damage intracommunity and community-law enforcement relations or further chill use of needed social services and First Amendment freedoms. We do not believe CVE can be resuscitated in a way that avoids the consequences of its central problems: namely, that it is founded on unsound theories about "radicalization" and that it frames disfavored political or religious views, as opposed to planned or actual violence, as appropriate problems to be countered. Moreover, these central obstacles, combined with years of demonstrated harms in the U.K. and more recently the U.S., make it unlikely CVE could be sufficiently reformed even to be benign. Instead of CVE — or *any* rebranded campaign that incorporates the false premise that certain viewpoints can predict violence — we believe evidence-based law enforcement methods[22] that (1) uphold the clear distinction between viewpoints and actions and avoid criminalizing viewpoint expression, (2) refrain from surveilling civilians based on viewpoints or immutable characteristics, and (3) fully respect the ethical obligations of social services providers, would best promote the interrelated objectives of protecting human rights and promoting safety and security of all communities.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to share MJL's observations regarding CVE's impacts on Massachusetts communities. For questions or further information, please contact me at swakeel@muslimjusticeleague.org.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannon Al-Wakeel
Executive Director, Muslim Justice League

cc:

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[21] See, e.g., Waqas Mirza (MuckRock), *Denver's Counterterror Program Sets Sights on Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ Groups, and Refugees*, March 9, 2017. Accessed July 25, 2017. Available at: https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2017/mar/09/denvers-counterterror-BLM/

[22] We encourage reference to resources published by the *Rethinking Intelligence* project of the Brennan Center for Justice for expert analysis of law enforcement, intelligence and national security tactics and recommendations about reforms to increase effectiveness. Available at: https://www.brennancenter.org/rethinking-intelligence-enterprise

The July 27, 2017, Brennan Center for Justice letter addressed to Chairman DeSantis and Ranking Member Lynch can be found at https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/letter-subcommittee-national-security.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

March 10, 2017

Diana Maurer
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Management's Response to Draft Report GAO-17-300, "COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts"

Dear Ms. Maurer:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appreciates the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) work in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

The Department is pleased to note GAO's positive recognition of DHS' countering violent extremist (CVE) efforts, particularly the threat posed by a range of violent ideologies in the United States, including white supremacists, militia extremists, and ISIL-inspired violent extremists, among others. In particular, GAO found that the Department's initiatives to partner with the social media industry and efforts to improve community outreach and law enforcement CVE-focused training were on track to meet the aims of the national CVE strategy and domestically-focused tasks identified in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for CVE in the United States.

In partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ), DHS guides domestic CVE efforts for the Federal Government to implement the overall national strategy goal to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence. The updated *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, released in October 2016, responds to the current dynamics of violent extremism and reflects experience and knowledge acquired since publication of the national strategy. GAO notes that, as of December 2016, involved agencies have implemented tasks focused on expanding CVE efforts in local communities and identifying ways to increase funding for CVE activities. DHS has led or participated in thirty-seven of the forty-four 2011domestic-focused CVE tasks. Both DHS and DOJ identified funding within existing appropriations to incorporate CVE into eligible public safety and community resilience grants.

In accordance with the *2016 Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism*, DHS remains committed to ensuring communities possess the information,

resources, and tools to effectively counter radicalization and recruitment to violence, without regard to motivation; and will continue to partner with DOJ in leading non-security federal partners to build CVE programs across the nation.

The draft report contained two recommendations with which the Department concurs. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Technical comments were provided under separate cover. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

JIM H. CRUMPACKER, CIA, CFE
Director
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

Attachment

Attachment: DHS Management Response to Recommendations Contained in GAO-17-300

GAO recommended that the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General – as heads of the two lead agencies responsible for coordinating CVE efforts – should direct the CVE Task Force to:

Recommendation 1: Develop a cohesive strategy that includes measurable outcomes for CVE activities.

Response: Concur. DHS, in partnership with the DOJ, leads domestic CVE efforts across the Federal Government through the CVE Task Force. In October 2016, the White House issued an updated SIP that responds to the current dynamics of violent extremism and reflects experiences and knowledge acquired since the 2011 release of the national strategy and corresponding SIP. The 2016 SIP provides specific objectives and the multi-tiered actions of Federal departments and agencies to synchronize and integrate whole-of-government CVE programs and activities. The CVE Task Force and DHS recognize that additional strategic-level performance documentation will improve coordination and collaboration tasks among partner agencies; define how cross-cutting tasks will be implemented, and how they will measurably contribute to achieving the federal CVE goals. The CVE Task Force is currently developing measurable outcomes to support and guide the development of performance, effectiveness, and benchmarks for federally sponsored CVE efforts.

The CVE Task Force plans to report on the implementation progress of the 2016 SIP to the White House Homeland Security Advisor in January 2018. Estimated Completion Date (ECD): January 31, 2018.

Recommendation 2: Establish and implement a process to assess overall progress in CVE, including its effectiveness.

Response: Concur. The CVE Task Force and DHS recognize that establishing a process for assessing overall strategy success will drive an understanding of the contributions of individual activities in the federal CVE effort. While the Task Force will not be engaged in specific evaluation projects of its members or partners, the Task Force will support and guide the development of measures of performance, effectiveness, and benchmarks for federally sponsored CVE efforts. To develop a set of standard guidelines for CVE measurement and evaluation, the Task Force will consult with departments and agencies that have already invested in CVE program assessment, namely the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the DOJ National Institute of Justice, and the DHS Science and Technology Directorate. Some of the CVE evaluation efforts undertaken by these agencies are still underway, but interim findings have been shared with the CVE Task Force regarding methodology and general areas of measurement. Based on this information, the CVE Task Force Research and Analysis team will develop and distribute summaries and resource guides to our federal and non-government partners. Overall, the long-term goal of the Task Force's engagement on CVE metrics is to develop an evidence based system in order to provide a meta-

assessment of CVE programs, similar to other rigorous federal efforts to evaluate gang prevention programs or community policing initiatives.

As the current agency lead for the CVE Task Force, DHS is working with DOJ to synchronize and integrate CVE programs and activities to ensure successful implementation of this multi-agency collaborative effort.

The CVE Task Force plans to report on the implementation progress of the 2016 SIP to the White House Homeland Security Advisor in January 2018. ECD: January 31, 2018.

July 28, 2017

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Chair
National Security Subcommittee
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Stephen Lynch
Ranking Member
National Security Subcommittee
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman DeSantis and Ranking Member Lynch:

We write to provide the views of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for the House Oversight and Government Reform National Security Subcommittee hearings on "Combating Homegrown Terrorism." We ask that this statement be included as part of the official hearings record.

The Anti-Defamation League
Since 1913, the mission of the Anti-Defamation League has been to "stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all." For decades, the League has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism by exposing and reporting on extremist groups who spread hate and incite violence.

ADL is now the foremost non-governmental authority on domestic terrorism, extremism, organized hate groups, and hate crimes. Through our Center on Extremism, whose experts monitor a variety of extremist and terrorist movements, ADL plays a leading role in exposing extremist movements and activities, while helping communities and government agencies alike in combatting them. ADL's team of experts – analysts, investigators, researchers, and linguists – use cutting-edge technology to monitor, track, and disrupt extremists and terrorists worldwide. The League provides law enforcement officials and the public with extensive resources, such as its analytic reports on extremist trends and its Hate Symbols[1] and Terror Symbols databases.

Assisting Law Enforcement
ADL is the largest non-governmental provider in the United States for law enforcement training on hate crimes, extremism, and terrorism. Each year, ADL experts deliver customized, in-depth training on these subjects to over 10,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. ADL arms law enforcement with the information it needs to respond to those extremists who cross the line from espousing hateful ideologies to committing violent or criminal acts, thus protecting the Jewish community and all Americans.

Support for Properly-Crafted CVE Programs
ADL strongly supports properly-crafted CVE programs. We believe an "all hands on deck" holistic approach is required to confront the sophisticated recruitment efforts employed by domestic extremist groups and by ISIS and other terror groups. Through the CVE program launched under President Obama, the Department of Homeland Security had administered federal grants to nongovernmental organizations and higher-education institutions to carry out programs that counter the potential for violence from domestic terrorists and homegrown violent extremists.

[1] https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols

ADL professionals were directly involved in the February, 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.[2] Convened by President Obama, the three-day program involved experts from around the world working to develop an action plan to address violent domestic and international extremism. Oren Segal, Director of ADL's Center on Extremism, participated and provided insights into the nature of violent extremist movements in the U.S., as well as how Americans of all religions, races, and backgrounds are being recruited by international terrorist organizations online.

The Summit also provided a showcase for pilot programs in three cities, which had developed collaborative networks of government and non-governmental stakeholders. ADL served as a partner in the Boston area pilot program, which developed a framework for prevention and intervention strategies in the wake of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. The Framework developed by the Boston collaborative (including the League's New England Regional Director, Robert Trestan), takes a multi-disciplinary and community-wide approach to addressing the threat posed by violent extremists.[3]

Identifying the Threat

In the United States, adherents of a variety of extremist movements – from white supremacists to violent left-wing ideologues, to Islamic extremists – perceive Jews as their enemy and target the Jewish community with both propaganda and violence. Extremists also target other communities or minorities, as well as the democratic foundations of government that protect everybody's rights. Understanding the diverse list of perpetrators that threaten the Jewish and other minority communities is the first step to protecting them from violent extremism.

Right Wing Extremism

Over the past 10 years (2007-2016), domestic extremists of all kinds have killed at least 372 people in the United States. Of those deaths, approximately 74% were at the hands of right-wing extremists such as white supremacists, sovereign citizens, and militia adherents.[4] Right-wing extremists have been responsible for plotting at least 150 acts of terror in the United States over the past 25 years.[5]

Right-wing extremists choose many targets for their anger, most frequently government, law enforcement, and racial and religious targets. The most common religious targets are Jews and Muslims, while the most common racial targets were African-Americans, including multi-racial targets.

The White supremacists who target minority communities for acts of terror and violence include adherents of every major segment of their movement, including neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, the religious sect Christian Identity, and the Alt Right. The militia movement has specially embraced a particular type of bigotry: anti-Muslim hatred. This Islamophobia has taken numerous forms, from armed protests in front of mosques to a major terrorist plot in October 2016 in Garden City, Kansas, where three militia members were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to blow up an apartment complex that primarily housed Muslim Somali-American residents. We should be concerned that the militia movement could produce similar terror attempts aimed at Muslims in the future.[6]

The social networking revolution from 2006-2009 made it easier for extremist ideas and tactics to spread very far, very quickly. This facilitated the emergence of new extremist movements, such as the white supremacist Alt Right, to quickly gain followers, and helped established movements, such as the sovereign citizen movement, to rapidly resurge. Social networking has also provided opportunities for extremists to meet each other and even to plot online. The October 2008 school attack plot in Tennessee

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[2] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/white-house-invites-adl-to-present-at-summit-on-countering-violent-extremism
[3] https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-ma/pages/attachments/2015/02/18/framework.pdf
[4] https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2016
[5] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-exposes-right-wing-terrorism-threat-in-the-us
[6] https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states

and the Georgia militia plot of February 2014 are two examples where extremists who connected online later met in person to plot terrorist acts.[7]

Left Wing and Black Nationalist Violence

On Wednesday, June 14, a congressional baseball team in the midst of a morning practice was attacked by a lone gunman. The U.S. House Majority Whip, Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA), was seriously injured, and several others were also shot.

In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, the ADL has been tracking growing anger within the American left, directed at President Trump, his administration, and political allies. In recent months, the ADL has been warning law enforcement personnel about the possibility of an increase in left-wing violence as a result of the growing anger. The shootings in Alexandria appear to be an example of this.[8]

While from the 1960s through the 1980s extreme Black Nationalist groups like the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army killed dozens of people, including many police officers, violent Black Nationalism decreased sharply after that. Over the course of the past year, however, Black Nationalist violence has taken a deadly toll, responsible for the deaths of eight police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge in 2016. In July 2016, Micah Xavier Johnson, who had ties to black nationalist groups such as the New Black Panther Party, killed five police officers (and injured nine others) in Dallas, Texas, in an ambush attack aimed at police who were maintaining public order at a Black Lives Matter protest. That same month, Gavin Eugene Long ambushed and shot six police officers, three of them fatally, in Baton Rouge. Long was also an adherent of Black Nationalism as well as the anti-government sovereign citizen movement. Both incidents were acts of "retaliation" against police officers in response to controversial police shootings of African-American men.[9]

Extremism Sparked by Radical Interpretations of Islam

Over the past 10 years, about 24% of victims killed by domestic terrorists were at the hands of domestic Islamic extremists. One of the most striking elements of today's domestic threat picture is the role that a growing number of American citizens and residents motivated by radical interpretations of Islam have played in criminal plots to attack Americans in the U.S. and abroad. Last year, in the worst mass shooting in American history, Omar Mateen opened fire inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, killing 49 people. During the shooting, Mateen, an American citizen born in New York, declared his allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS). As demonstrated by this horrific shooting, it is clear that there are deliberate attempts by international terrorist groups that justify and sanction violence to appeal to and engage sympathizers in the U.S. A. A disturbing number of cases also demonstrate the degree to which hatred of Jews and Israel play a part in radicalization process of homegrown extremists. However, efforts to explore these legitimate security concerns should not be overwhelmed by the kind of unfair stereotyping and prejudice that has too-frequently accompanied recent public debates. This is especially true now, given the ADL has tracked an objectionable, intensified level of anti-Muslim bigotry in a variety of public forums, as discussed below.

Terrorist Exploitation of Social Media

As Internet proficiency and the use of social media grow ever-more universal, so too do the efforts of terrorist groups to exploit new technology in order to make materials that justify and sanction violence more accessible and impactful. Terrorist groups are not only using various online and mobile platforms to spread their messages, but also to actively recruit adherents who live in the communities they seek to target.

While the fundamental ideological content of terrorist propaganda has remained consistent for two decades – replete with militant condemnations of perceived transgressions against Muslims worldwide,

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[7] https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states

[8] https://news.vice.com/story/extremism-experts-are-starting-to-worry-about-the-left

[9] https://www.adl.org/blog/fresno-shootings-latest-incident-in-rise-of-black-nationalist-violence

and appeals for violence and anti-Semitism – terrorists groups are now able to reach, recruit and motivate extremists more quickly and effectively than ever before by adapting their messages to new technology.

In the past, plots were directed by foreign terrorist organizations or their affiliates and recruitment and planning generally required some direct, face-to-face interaction with terrorist operatives. Indoctrination came directly from extremist peers, teachers or clerics. Individuals would then advance through the radicalization process through constant interaction with likeminded sympathizers or, as the 2007 New York Police Department (NYPD) report on radicalization described, with a "spiritual sanctioner" who gave credence to those beliefs. Today, individuals can find analogous social networks, inspiration, and encouragement online, often packaged neatly together with bomb-making instructions. This enables adherents to self-radicalize without face-to-face contact with an established terrorist group or cell.

Individual extremists, or lone wolves, are also increasingly self-radicalizing online with no physical interactions with established terrorist groups or cells – a development that can make it more difficult for law enforcement to detect plots in their earliest stages. Approximately half of the 150 terrorist incidents described in a 2017 ADL report on 25 years of right-wing terrorism were perpetrated by lone wolf offenders.[10] Today, thanks to the Internet, it is easier than ever for someone to become steeped in extremist ideologies, even to the point of being willing to commit acts of great violence, without ever being involved in an organized extremist group. The overwhelming majority of American citizens and residents linked to terrorist activity motivated by Islamic extremism in the past several years – including at least 63 U.S. residents in 2015 – actively used the Internet to access propaganda or otherwise facilitate their extremist activity.

Funding CVE – and the Need for a Holistic Approach

In May, the League expressed concerns about press reports that the administration was proposing to cut funding for its CVE programs entirely.[11] And last month, ADL expressed concerns as DHS announced their 2017 two-year CVE funding grantees.[12] Funding for Life After Hate, a successful and in-demand program to de-radicalize neo-Nazis and white supremacists, was not renewed. *Politico* reported that, since Election Day, Life After Hate has seen a twenty-fold increase in requests for help "from people looking to disengage or bystanders/family members looking for help from someone they know."[13] At a time when right-wing extremist groups are experiencing rising membership and expanding influence, DHS must invest in community-based organizations that work to counter these groups.

In addition, the 2017 list of CVE grantees[14] indicates a shift in funding focus away from community-based civil society organizations and toward law enforcement agencies. Police play a critical role, but we cannot enforce our way out of this problem. Community-based organizations must help lead this work. These groups are much more likely to have credibility and trust needed to reach the targets of extremists, which include many disaffected or vulnerable youth. The League called on DHS to clarify its funding criteria and demonstrate that it is committed to funding the full range of programs – domestic and international – designed to counter all forms of violent extremism.[15]

Importantly, ADL has also strongly advised the administration against focusing its CVE program solely on extremism motivated by radical interpretation of Islam. We responded to press reports[16] that the administration wanted to change the name of the government initiative from "Countering Violent

[10] https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states
[11] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-concerned-over-reports-of-trump-administration-proposing-to-cut-entire
[12] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-homeland-security-grants-to-counter-terrorist-recruitment-and
[13] http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/playbook/2017/06/23/what-mcconnell-is-thinking-winners-losers-in-gop-health-care-bill-obama-speaks-dawsey-download-wapo-trump-talks-russia-every-morning-pelosis-future-220996
[14] https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants
[15] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-homeland-security-grants-to-counter-terrorist-recruitment-and
[16] http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-extremists-program-exclusiv-idUSKBN15G5VO

Extremism" to "Countering Islamic Extremism" or "Countering Radical Islamic Extremism" by stating that such a change would be damaging to the American Muslim community and dangerously narrow.[17] Singling out Muslims and the American Muslim community for special scrutiny or suspicion is discriminatory, offensive, ineffective, and counterproductive. In fact, one essential focus of our nation's CVE programs should be to build trust within American Muslim communities to reduce radicalism, not to further foster mistrust.

This is especially true now, because over the past few months, ADL and others have documented an objectionable, intensified level of anti-Muslim bigotry in a variety of public forums. For example, according to a recent Pew Research Center publication on Muslim Americans place in society released this week,[18] nearly half of Muslims (48%) say they have experienced at least one form of discrimination over the past year. Of those whose appearance is identifiably Muslim, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they have experienced at least one of the specific types of discrimination asked about in the survey. Three-quarters (75%) of Muslim respondents say there is "a lot" of discrimination against Muslims in the U.S., with Muslim women more likely than Muslim men to hold this view (83% versus 68%). These findings reinforce an ADL survey on anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim discrimination published this past year.[19] Our survey revealed that 89 percent of Muslim Americans are concerned about violence directed at them and Islamic institutions in the U.S., and 64 percent said that they do not believe the government is doing enough to ensure their safety. While most Muslims don't feel the need to hide their faith, 66 percent said they feel less safe in America since President Trump was elected.

Limiting CVE programs to only focus on Islamic extremism would not only isolate the Muslim American community, but would also exacerbate the problem of how little scrutiny right-wing extremists are receiving.[20] At a time when our research indicates that right wing extremists are more visible and emboldened,[21] the government should focus on all types of extremism whether it comes from terrorists motivated by extreme interpretations of Islam or white supremacists.

Relationship with Tech Industry

As modern technology has provided new fuel for extremists, including using "cyberhate" to attack minorities on social media and coordinate terror attacks more easily, a well-funded CVE program is vital to combat the diverse options extremists have to perpetuate their violence against the American people.

Over the past decade, the League has worked closely with the Internet industry and they have been very responsive to information regarding terrorist and extremist exploitation of their platforms. Our relationship has led to increased successes in mitigating the exploitation of platforms by groups such as ISIS. In addition, working with industry officials, the League developed the ADL Cyber-Safety Action Guide,[22] a user-friendly online platform where consumers can learn how and where to report bigoted, bullying, or hateful speech to the major Internet providers and social media platforms.

The League has also convened a Working Group on Cyberhate to develop recommendations for the most effective responses to manifestations of hate and bigotry online.[23] The Working Group includes representatives of the Internet industry, civil society, the legal community, and academia. The Working Group input and guidance has been invaluable, and is reflected in a set of Best Practices[24] which provide

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[17] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-limiting-scope-of-countering-violent-extremism-programs-places-nation-at

[18] http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/

[19] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/in-first-new-adl-poll-finds-majority-of-americans-concerned-about-violence

[20] http://time.com/4671901/donald-trump-extremism-terrorism-muslims/

[21] https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-exposes-right-wing-terrorism-threat-in-the-us

[22] http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/discrimination-racism-bigotry/new-adl-platform-helps-consumers-take-action-against-internet-hate-speech.html#.Vi58MX6rTct

[23] For a comprehensive review of the League's work addressing the scourge of online anti-Semitism since pre-Internet days -- when dial-up bulletin boards were a prominent communications tool – see *Report of the Anti-Defamation League on Confronting Cyberhate to the 5th Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism,* May, 2015, http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/ICCA-report-2015-With-hyperlinks-May-8-2015_final.pdf

[24] http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/cyber-safety/best-practices/#.Vi58F36rTcs

useful and important guideposts for all those willing to join in the effort to address the challenge of cyberhate.

Conclusion

We very much hope that these hearings – and any that come after them – will acknowledge and highlight the extraordinary, successful efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to prevent and deter terrorism on our shores since September 11, 2001. But police and counterterrorism officials do not work in a vacuum; they cannot do their job without community relationships, trust, community cooperation, and a shared sense of responsibility for public safety.

The administration and Congress should do all in its power to promote trust and encourage stronger relationships to counter attempts by international terrorist organizations to recruit disaffected or alienated Americans.

As the Subcommittee and Congress continue to examine the nature of the current threat to our nation, the Anti-Defamation League hopes to play an ongoing, helpful, and constructive role by offering its expertise in documenting the domestic and international terror threats from across the ideological spectrum, while urging members of Congress and other public officials to make every effort to explore this serious issue without creating an atmosphere of blame and suspicion. And ADL will continue to advocate – in Congress and in the courts – for law enforcement officials to have investigative tools sufficient to deter and prevent terrorism, while appropriately balancing national security and individual rights.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our views on this issue of high priority to our organization. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information or if we can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely

Deborah M. Lauter
Senior Vice President
Policy and Programs

Oren Segal
Director
Center on Extremism

Michael Lieberman
Washington Counsel

Selected ADL Resources on Hate Groups, Terrorism and Extremism

MAJOR REPORTS:

Alt Right to Alt Lite: Naming the Hate (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/from-alt-right-to-alt-lite-naming-the-hate

Despite Internal Turmoil, Klan Groups Persist (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/despite-internal-turmoil-klan-groups-persist

A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right Wing Terrorism in the United States (May 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states

Defining Extremism: Glossary of Anti-Government Extremism (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/defining-extremism-anti-government

Defining Extremism: Glossary of White Supremacist Terms, Movements and Philosophies (May 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/defining-extremism-white-supremacy

Domestic Islamic Extremism Report (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/CR_5062_Domestic%20Islamic%20Extremism%20Report_vF1.pdf

White Supremacists on Campus: Unprecedented Recruitment Efforts Underway (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-on-campus-unprecedented-recruitment-efforts-underway

Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2016 (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2016

US Residents Linked to Activity Motivated by Islamic Extremist Ideology in 2016 (November 2016)
https://www.adl.org/news/article/us-residents-linked-to-activity-motivated-by-islamic-extremist-ideology-in-2016

White Supremacist Prison Gangs in the US (April 2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/white-supremacist-prison-gangs-in-the-united-states

The ISIS Impact on the Domestic Islamic Extremist Threat: Homegrown Islamic Extremism 2009-2015 (March 2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/the-isis-impact-on-the-domestic-islamic-extremist-threat-homegrown

2015 Sees a Dramatic Spike in Islamic Extremism Arrests (March 2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/2015-sees-dramatic-spike-in-islamic-extremism-arrests

Anatomy of a Standoff: The Malheur Refuge Occupation (February 2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/anatomy-of-a-standoff

Oath Keepers and Three Percenters Part of Growing Anti-Govt Movement (September 2015)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/oath-keepers-and-three-ers-part-of-growing-anti-government

With Hate in Their Hearts: The State of White Supremacy in the U.S. (July 2015)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/state-of-white-supremacy

Farrakhan: In His Own Words (March 2015)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/nation-of-islam-farrakhan-in-his-own-words

Homegrown Islamic Extremism in 2014 (February 2015)
https://www.adl.org/blog/new-adl-report-homegrown-islamic-extremism-in-2014

Hashtag Terror: How ISIS Manipulates Social Media (August 2014)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/isis-islamic-state-social-media

Homegrown Islamic Extremism in 2013 (March 2014)
https://www.adl.org/news/article/homegrown-islamic-extremism-in-2013

BACKGROUNDERS:

Backgrounder: Vanguard America (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/vanguard-america

Backgrounder: ACT for America (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/profiles/act-for-america

Backgrounder: Alt Right: A Primer About the New White Supremacy (2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/alt-right-a-primer-about-the-new-white-supremacy

Backgrounder: Frank Gaffney and the Center for Security Policy (2016)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/profiles/frank-gaffney-jr-and-the-center-for-security-policy

Backgrounder: Traditionalist Youth Network (Heimbach/Parrott) (2014)
https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/traditionalist-youth-network

2017 BLOG POSTS:

Sovereign Citizen Funny Money Not So Humorous for Victims (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/sovereign-citizen-funny-money-not-so-humorous-for-victims

Jewish Voice for Peace: Increasing Anti-Jewish Radicalism (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/jewish-voice-for-peace-increasing-anti-israel-radicalism

Al-Aqsa Aftermath: Analyzing post-Attack Extremist Rhetoric (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/al-aqsa-aftermath-analyzing-post-attack-extremist-rhetoric

Colorado White Supremacist Latest to Be Arrested for Attacks on Jewish Institutions (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/colorado-white-supremacist-latest-to-be-arrested-for-attacks-on-jewish-institutions

Analysis of Reddit User Claiming Responsibility for President Trump's CNN Video (July 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/analysis-of-reddit-user-claiming-responsibility-for-president-trumps-cnn-video

Virginia Shooting Underscores Risk of Domestic Terror from Across Ideological Spectrum (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/virginia-shooting-underscores-risk-of-domestic-terror-from-across-ideological-spectrum

White Supremacists Adopt New Slogan: You Will Not Replace Us (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-adopt-new-slogan-you-will-not-replace-us

White Supremacists on Campus: Unprecedented Recruitment Efforts Underway (June 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-on-campus-unprecedented-recruitment-efforts-underway

White Supremacists Targeting High Schools with Fliers (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-targeting-high-schools-with-fliers

White Supremacists Praise Rep. Steve King's Racist Tweet (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-praise-rep-steve-kings-racist-tweet

Fourth Arrest Connected to Washington-based Hakenkreuz Skinheads (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/fourth-arrest-connected-to-washington-based-hakenkreuz-skinheads

Extremists Blame Jews for Anti-Semitic Bomb Threats, Cemetery Desecration (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-blame-jews-for-anti-semitic-bomb-threats-cemetery-desecration

Anti-Trump Rallies Give Voice to Longstanding Anti-Israel Narrative (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-trump-rallies-give-voice-to-longstanding-anti-israel-narrative

Anti-Semites Celebrate When Jews Are Targeted (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semites-celebrate-when-jews-are-targeted

Google Deletes White Supremacist App from Play Store (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/google-deletes-white-supremacist-app-from-play-store

Convicted Terrorist to Address Jewish Voice for Peace Conference in Chicago (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/convicted-terrorist-to-address-jewish-voice-for-peace-conference-in-chicago

Anti-Defamation League Reveals Extremist Background on Alleged Plotter (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-defamation-league-reveals-extremist-background-of-alleged-plotter

Alt-Right Moving from Online to Real-World Activity (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/alt-right-moving-from-online-to-real-world-activity

Ricin Found in Car of Georgia White Supremacist (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/ricin-found-in-car-of-georgia-white-supremacist

Milo and Freedom Center Launch New Campaign Against Campuses (February 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/milo-and-freedom-center-launch-new-campaign-against-campuses

White Supremacists Launch Racist Poster Campaign (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-launch-racist-poster-campaign

Group of Klan Members Charged with Robbery (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/group-of-klan-members-charged-with-robbery

Extremists Exploit Unintentional Swastikas (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-exploit-unintentional-swastikas

White Supremacists Demonstrate in Front of Menorah at Chicago's Daley Plaza (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-demonstrate-in-front-of-the-menorah-at-chicagos-daley-plaza

ISIS's New Focus: Incendiary Attacks (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/isiss-new-focus-incendiary-attacks

White Supremacists Try to Turn Martin Luther King Jr Day Into James Earl Ray Day (January 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-try-to-turn-martin-luther-king-jr-day-into-james-earl-ray-day

COMBATING CYBERHATE:

Online Harassment: Extremists Ramp Up Trolling, Doxxing Efforts (March 2017)
https://www.adl.org/blog/online-harassment-extremists-ramp-up-trolling-doxxing-efforts

ADL Best Practices for Responding to Cyberhate
https://www.adl.org/cyberhate-response
Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Twitter, Yahoo, YouTube and other companies have adopted ADL's standards for responding to hate online.

Cyber-Safety Action Guide
https://www.adl.org/cyber-safety-action-guide
To empower any consumer to take action against Internet hate speech, ADL created the guide and an online portal to make it easy for any member of the public to register complaints with the most frequented websites and major social media channels, including AT&T, eBay, Facebook, Google, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, Yahoo and YouTube.

ADL's Work Combating Cyberhate and Countering Violent Extremists Online
https://www.adl.org/news/article/about-adls-work-combating-cyberhate-and-countering-violent-extremists-online