

# ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS TO COMBAT EXTREMISM

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## HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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## ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS TO COMBAT EXTREMISM

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,  
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The committee will come to order. And good afternoon to everybody, or good morning, I should say.

Today's hearing will explore ways to combat violent extremism by advancing fundamental human rights—in particular, the freedom of religion. Advancing freedom of religion both as an end in and of itself and as a means to achieve peace, stability, and human flourishing should be a core objective of U.S. foreign policy.

Religious liberty is opposed, however, by extremists who seek to impose their vision of an ideal society upon us all. Oftentimes a “choice” they give to those who seek to adhere to the beliefs they were raised in boils down to: Convert or die. This clash manifests itself in numerous parts of the world in varying degrees of intensity but is particularly acute in certain Muslim-dominated regions where groups such as ISIS, al-Nusra, Boko Haram, and Al Shabaab seek to bring all under their sway.

To personalize this, let me tell you about a victim of Boko Haram that I have gotten to know and greatly admire. On one trip to Nigeria, in an IDP camp in Jos, I met with Habila Adamu. Dragged from his home by Boko Haram terrorists, he was ordered to renounce his faith. Four Boko Haram terrorists threw him to the ground, and one literally put an AK-47 to his face and said, “Are you ready to die as a Christian?” With amazing courage, Habila answered, “Yes, I am ready to die as a Christian.”

He was asked a second time if he was ready to die, and he said yes. This time, despite the pleas of his wife, who was crying profusely, the terrorist pulled the trigger. A bullet ripped through Habila's face. He crumpled to the ground and was left for dead. By some miracle, he survived.

I asked Habila to come to DC to tell his story at a congressional hearing that I chaired. Habila told our committee, “I am alive because God wants you to have this message. Knowing Christ is so much deeper than merely knowing Boko Haram's story of hate and

intolerance.” He closed his testimony, “Do everything you can to end this ruthless religious persecution, but know Christ first.”

I would point out that on that trip I also met with the Archbishop Kaigama, whose churches have been firebombed in Jos, but also with the Imam and his top clerics. They were equally appalled, both the Christians and the Muslim moderate leadership, appalled at what Boko Haram was doing. I remember the Imam saying, “We don’t know who they are. They are not us.” It couldn’t have been clearer that he saw that this was a cruel manifestation of extremism under the name falsely of Islam.

It should be stressed that extremist groups such as Boko Haram coerce and oppress not only members of other faiths but also, in particular, members of the Muslim faith—and, again, that is what I have heard all over the world, and you have heard it, I am sure, too—whose interpretation of Islam differs from that of the extremists. They also target converts whose consciences have led them to choose a different path.

To combat these extremists, the ideological battlefield is just as important as a territorial one. By emphasizing human rights principles, we counter extremist messaging, support moderate voices, and promote the popular aspirations of people around the world who simply want to live in peace and freedom.

Last year, an important weapon in the fight against extremism was passed by the Congress and signed into law, the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act. This law provides tools and resources to our State Department to integrate religious freedom into all of our diplomacy in order to counter, in part, terrorism but also to promote religious freedom.

In building upon this landmark International Religious Freedom Act that was passed in 1998, authored by Frank Wolf, this law addresses the changed circumstances in the world since 1998 by designating nonstate extremist groups, such as Boko Haram and ISIS, as violent nonstate actors, making it easier to ostracize and apply financial sanctions against their members, thereby helping starve extremists of resources.

The law strengthens the ability to investigate and monitor religious persecution by creating a designated persons list of violators while also setting up a database of those detained, imprisoned, and tortured for their faith so that the victims are not forgotten but, rather, can be more readily advocated for.

Indeed, the Frank Wolf Act elevates the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and we are all waiting with bated breath for when Governor Brownback assumes that chair. Governor Brownback has been designated; it is pending in the Senate. Our hope is that the Senate will move quickly to put him into that important strategic position to begin doing what will be an extraordinarily good job.

Finally, the act requires our foreign service officers to undergo training in religious liberty so that they are able to integrate this important tool into their daily work. And that would also include our Ambassadors and our top leadership in our Embassies.

Before we move on to my colleague’s remarks, I would like to thank especially Congressman Francis Rooney, the former United States Ambassador to the Holy See, for suggesting that we have

this hearing and for helping to make this a reality. He has written a tremendous book, and I recommend it to all of you that you read it. I don't know if we can endorse books from the chair, but——

Ms. BASS. Go right ahead.

Mr. SMITH. But I want to thank him for this strategic vision that he has and, again, for making this hearing a reality.

I would like to yield to my good friend and colleague, Karen Bass, the ranking member of our committee.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Chair, once again, thank you for holding this hearing.

And I appreciated everything you said about the legislation that was passed. And I am glad to know that there is somebody that is designated, and we hope the Senate moves. But all of us are concerned these days that the legislation be fully implemented. And so you mentioned foreign service officers and all of that. And I am deeply concerned at the departures that I hear of so many people leaving the State Department. And so I think we have to keep that in mind as well. We want the person designated, but we also want to be able to have foreign service officers so that they could actually implement this on the ground.

So I want to thank the witnesses for being here today and especially Mr. Hicks, who I know traveled from New York to testify before us.

And Mr. Smith has already highlighted the importance of religious freedom when countering violent extremism. And we all know that the title of this hearing is "Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism." And so, with this in mind, I want to focus my comments on talking about the root causes and push for factors for why people might turn to or engage in violent extremism in the first place.

So we know, of course, that some are driven by ideology. But, overwhelmingly, as we look around the world, people without opportunities in formal, legal economies, we know, will resort to informal, illegal economies. We know that is even true here in the United States, but I have been not really surprised, but to hear some young people, especially young people on the continent of Africa, who say that, in order to eat, they realized that they needed to have a gun. So, in other words, participating in extremism was also a way of providing for themselves and their family. I find that particularly tragic. And I also find that, as we go about looking to address violent extremism, we have to think about what drives people to become extremists in the first place.

So the Institute for Security Studies, which is a think tank based in South Africa, conducted a study in 2014 where they interviewed 88 people who joined Al Shabaab, the terrorist group operating in Somalia and other parts of East Africa. When asked to indicate what finally pushed them to join Al Shabaab, 40 percent of the interviewees referred to economic reasons specifically or in combination with other circumstances.

The study also noted that education can counter radicalization because better-educated people tend to participate in more formal economic and political sectors. Lack of education, of course, also adversely affects employment opportunities.

So poverty and unemployment have to be considered when we think about combating extremism. Push factors or enabling circumstances also include poor governance, lack of civil liberties, political exclusion, perceived mistreatment or discrimination that can include mass arrests, police or military crackdowns, ethnic profiling, or extrajudicial killings.

The bottom line is, if people feel they are discriminated against and there aren't dispute-resolution mechanisms available, they may resort to violence because they have no hope. Respectful religious freedom is an important component of countering violent extremism, but when governments suppress peaceful dissent, do not allow freedom of press, and prevent the legitimate activities of non-violent civil society organizations, they are not countering extremism; they are fomenting it.

What I am trying to do here is highlight that the denial of rights and freedoms, whether economic, social, or political, contribute to the problem of violent extremism. Therefore, a holistic and comprehensive strategy for combating violent extremism should promote the rule of law; human rights, including freedom of association, expression, and assembly; ending repression of civil society and opposition groups, among others; and, of course, creating economic opportunity.

So I want to conclude where I began by looking at some of the changes that we see taking place within the State Department. And I know tomorrow we are going to have a full committee hearing on combating violent extremism on the continent of Africa. So what I am concerned as we move forward with the new administration, we know that there is a focus on security, but I think part of our role here in this subcommittee, as well as in the full committee, is that we have to push on the other factors. Because we know that trying to address this strictly from a security perspective or militarily is not going to be enough. So the full function and staffing and programs of the State Department are also going to be very important.

And, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to now yield to Ambassador Rooney.

And, again, thank you for suggesting this hearing.

Mr. ROONEY. Well, Chairman Smith, thank you so very much for holding this hearing and for all you have done. Your life is a testimony and a witness to Christian values, religious values, religious freedom, and protecting human dignity. And you are a great example for all of us.

I thought I might mention a couple of things about soft-power diplomacy since we have some real-world experts down there, and they have touched on it.

I would like to thank all of you for being here.

The Holy See is a penultimate soft-power diplomatic force in the world. It goes back to Stalin's quote about how many tanks does the Pope have. Well, it is actually a Pope that brought them down. And the Christian Democrat formation in 1953 was largely organized by the Holy See to keep the Communists out of Italy—no one knows about that—or Norman Cousins' incipient detente shuttle diplomacy with John Kennedy and Khrushchev in the fall of 1962,



which people as luminary as Henry Kissinger have said was the very beginning of detente.

So now the penultimate soft-power application was Pope Benedict's speech at Regensburg, where he spoke out more clearly and aggressively than any other politician could about the evils of Islamist extremism and the destruction of religion when it is used for war. And he called out for a reinterpretation, if you will, of Islam to come into consensus with the modern world. And he made it clear that Muslim voices are really the most important ones in this debate, because we need them to help to bring their religion into the modern world and end the stimulus of radicalization.

And since that time, Ambassador Charles Freeman, former Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, the Jordan Minister of Religion, and even the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia have said you can't fight an idea. Just like what the Congresswoman said, we have to fight with soft power and ideological war.

We have seen the impact of the radical Wahhabi madrassas in sub-Saharan Africa. Pope Benedict spoke with President Bush and Mrs. Bush and I about that back in 2005. And now we see some incipient indications of problems in Malaysia and Indonesia. So I think we have a very timely topic here, a very important one. And I would like to thank Congressman Smith again for bringing light to it and thank Dr. Lenczowski and Tom and Sayyid for participating.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

My good friend from New York, Mr. Suozzi.

Mr. SUOZZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank you again for your good work and the ranking member's work on this committee and what you bring to light to the people of this country.

And I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. And I am just interested in listening to what they have to say, and I will maybe some ask some questions later.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. The distinguished gentleman from New York, Mr. Donovan.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will yield my time so that we have more time for the witnesses to speak. Thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Rohrabacher?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I, too, will yield my time.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

And, Mr. Garrett, the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Chairman, I will yield my time and reserve for down the road. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

I want to welcome our distinguished panel.

Beginning first, Dr. Thomas Farr, president of the Religious Freedom Institute, a nonprofit organization committed to achieving religious liberty for everyone. He also directs the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University's Berkley Center. He is associate professor of the practice of religion and world affairs at Georgetown's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and also teaches at the National Defense University.

Dr. Farr served for 28 years in the United States Army and the U.S. Foreign Service. In 1999, Dr. Farr became the first Director of the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, responsible for establishing America's new IRFA policy. He held this position until 2003.

Dr. Farr currently trains American diplomats at the Foreign Service Institute and is also a consultant to the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference. This is not the first time Dr. Farr has testified before Congress, nor is it the first time he testified before this committee. He is truly an expert. And he, too, has written a tremendous book that I would recommend to everyone, as well, on religious freedom.

We will then hear from Dr. John Lenczowski, who is founder and president of the Institute of World Politics, an independent graduate school of national security and international affairs in Washington.

From 1981 to 1983, Dr. Lenczowski served in the State Department in the Bureau of European Affairs and as Special Adviser to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Larry Eagleburger. From 1983 to 1987, he was director of European and Soviet affairs at the National Security Council. In that capacity, he served as principal Soviet affairs adviser to President Ronald Reagan.

He has been associated with several academic and research institutions in Washington, including Georgetown University, the University of Maryland, the American Enterprise Institute, the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the Council for Inter-American Security, and the International Freedom Foundation.

Then, we will hear from Dr. Sayyid Syeed, who is the national director of the Islamic Society of North America, heading up its Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington, DC. He served for 12 years, 1994 to 2006, as secretary general of the Indiana-based national umbrella organization, which has more than 300 affiliates all over the U.S. and Canada.

Dr. Syeed was born in Kashmir and migrated to the United States in the mid-1970s. From 1980 to 1983, he served as president of the Muslim Students Association of the U.S. and Canada and pioneered its transformation into the modern-day Islamic Society of North America.

He has been actively involved in fostering understanding among world religions and has participated in interfaith dialogues from local to international levels in the United States and Canada. A frequent speaker at interfaith dialogues, he has served as a member of the board of trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. In 2000, he was invited to dialogue in the Vatican by the late Pope John Paul II and, in 2008, led the American Muslim leadership delegation to meet with Pope Benedict in Washington.

Then we will hear from Neil Hicks from Human Rights First. He advises Human Rights First programs on a wide variety of international human rights issues and serves as a resource to the organization in identifying opportunities to advance human rights around the world. Mr. Hicks also writes and conducts advocacy on issues relating to human rights around the world. He also writes and conducts advocacy on issues relating to human rights pro-

motion in the Muslim world and the impact of counterterrorism measures on human rights.

Before joining Human Rights First, he worked as a researcher for the Middle East department of Amnesty International in London, where he worked between 1985 and 1991. He has also served as human rights project officer for Birzeit University in the West Bank. He has authored many reports and scholarly articles, including, "The Public Disorder of Blasphemy Laws: A Comparative Perspective." And we welcome him to the subcommittee as well.

Dr. Farr, please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS FARR, PH.D., PRESIDENT, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE, DIRECTOR, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESEARCH PROJECT, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**

Mr. FARR. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, Ambassador Rooney, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for holding this important hearing.

My message today has three parts: First, U.S. religious freedom diplomacy can improve our Nation's ability to combat Islamist terrorism. More religious freedom abroad can help prevent the spread of terrorism around the world and protect Americans here at home. Second, our religious freedom diplomacy can protect other fundamental U.S. interests by enhancing political, economic, and strategic stability. Third, religious freedom diplomacy that employs evidence-based self-interest arguments can reduce religious persecution more effectively than do our current diplomatic methods.

Unfortunately, the President's nominee to head U.S. religious freedom policy is not yet at work. I urge the Senate to confirm Governor Sam Brownback immediately. We need him on the job.

During the past two decades, global religious persecution has increased dramatically, and protections for religious freedom have been in sharp decline. Millions suffer persecution. Tens of millions lack religious freedom. Religion-related terrorism threatens much of the world, including the United States. But our religious freedom diplomacy has not been understood or used as a counterterrorism weapon. It should be.

Twenty years of working on this issue have convinced me that a simple proposition is both true and useful, and that is that religious freedom is necessary. It is necessary for the flourishing of every individual and every society. It is necessary to reduce the presence of violent religious extremism.

Social scientists at the Religious Freedom Institute, where I work, have amply documented that societies lacking religious freedom are far more likely to incubate, suffer domestically, and export internationally religion-related terrorism, and societies that protect religious freedom generally do not incubate and export religion-related violence and terrorism.

So how does this work? How does religious freedom undermine violent religious extremism? First, by protecting anti-extremist Muslim voices who advocate for a tolerant, nonviolent interpretation of Islam. Second, by protecting the rights of non-Muslim communities not only to exist as tolerated minorities but to contribute to their societies as equal citizens.

Unfortunately, current U.S. counterterrorism policy ignores these connections. That policy consists almost exclusively of the employment of military force, law enforcement, and intelligence. While each is obviously necessary, none is sufficient to defeat Islamist terrorism.

This form of terrorism is not simply a military force; it is not simply a cadre of militants whose military defeat, capture, or death will end the threat. It is an ideology, a set of lethal ideas derived from Islam that have proven their capacity to motivate men and women to kill, to torture, and to destroy.

We need an all-of-government religious freedom policy that not only protects the persecuted but, at the same time, advances U.S. national security by employing programs and policies that directly target the self-interest of stakeholders in societies where terrorism flourishes.

Let me end with an example of Iraq. Since 2014, the United States Government has allocated nearly \$1.7 billion in humanitarian aid to Iraq, but most of that aid has not reached the Christian and other minorities designated as victims of ISIS genocide. These people are unlikely to return to their homes without our help.

For the United States, this presents both a moral and a national security imperative. Religious pluralism is a necessary condition for long-term stability in Iraq. If minorities do not return and stay, Iraq will likely become a perpetual Sunni-Shia battleground where terrorism flourishes.

The current administration has pledged to channel aid to these minorities, but financial aid is only the first step. The U.S. should mount a sustained campaign to convince Iraqi stakeholders that they will never live in peace and security without the pluralism that non-Muslim minorities bring.

With our help, Iraq must provide security, economic development, and religious freedom to those minorities. It must also provide religious freedom to Muslims who will defend tolerant, non-violent forms of Islam.

We will prevail against Islamist extremism only when we expand our national security strategy to include the advancement of religious freedom both to protect the persecuted abroad and the American people at home.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Farr follows:]

### **Employing Religious Freedom Diplomacy to Combat Extremism**

Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, December 6, 2017

Thomas F. Farr<sup>\*</sup>

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this important hearing and for inviting me to testify.

My message today has three parts. First, **U.S. International Religious Freedom diplomacy can improve our nation's ability to combat Islamist terror. More religious freedom abroad can help prevent the spread of terrorism, and protect Americans here at home.**

**Second, religious freedom can protect fundamental U.S. interests here and abroad by enhancing political, economic, and strategic stability.** Stability grounded in religious freedom can strengthen resistance to religious extremism of all kinds.

**Third, a religious freedom diplomacy that employs evidence-based self-interest arguments can reduce religious persecution more effectively than do our current diplomatic methods,** which are highly rhetorical, reactive, and ad-hoc.

For almost twenty years U.S. religious freedom diplomacy has been led by smart men and women, and staffed by some of the best minds in our diplomatic service. But they have been hamstrung by a lack of imagination and vision within the State Department. Fortunately, that deficit has begun to diminish, in large part because of the work of the current staff and the most recent Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, David Saperstein.

Unfortunately, so long as that position remains vacant, those gains are at risk. It is vitally important that the Senate vote quickly on the President's nominee for Ambassador, Governor Sam Brownback. People around the world are suffering vile religious persecution. Religion-related terror is spreading. We need Ambassador Brownback on the job.

#### **The Shortcomings of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy**

The International Religious Freedom Act, which formally established U.S. religious freedom policy, was passed in 1998. Since then its implementation has consisted primarily of verbal advocacy for human rights -- urging governments to protect their citizens by adhering to international norms, such as those in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Likewise, the policy has entailed rhetorical condemnation of persecutors through annual reports and lists of particularly severe violators. On rare occasions, it has imposed a punitive sanction. In 2004, it imposed new economic sanctions to punish Eritrea. In 2005, the visa of a senior Indian official was revoked.

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<sup>\*</sup> Thomas Farr is President of the Religious Freedom Institute. He also directs the Religious Freedom Research Project at Georgetown University where he is an Associate Professor of the Practice of Religion and International Affairs at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Farr was the first Director of the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom.

These punitive actions were not only unusual. They were also reactive and ultimately ineffective, which is to say they did little to address the causes of persecution. Eritrea today remains a persecuting nation. The Indian official in question is now Prime Minister of India, but the underlying problem that led to his visa revocation – Hindu extremism – remains in place.

Between 2004 and 2006 Vietnam was listed as a particularly severe violator and then removed in return for religious freedom concessions. A decade later, most of those concessions have disappeared.

It has been my contention for some years, including in appearances before this Committee, that this general mode of U.S. action – rhetorical advocacy, reports, ad hoc punitive actions, none of which is part of a national strategy -- is insufficient. By itself it has not been effective.

During the past two decades, global religious persecution has increased dramatically and protections for religious freedom have been in sharp decline. Millions suffer persecution. Tens of millions lack religious freedom. Religion-related terrorism threatens much of the world, including the United States.

Indeed, during these years we have seen the emergence of a global crisis in religious freedom. While U.S. foreign policy is not responsible for this highly-significant development, the State Department has not recognized it as a crisis, and has done little to address its root causes. Our religious freedom diplomacy has not been employed strategically. It has not been understood as, or used as, a counter-terrorism weapon.

The reasons for our inertia and ineffectiveness are complex, but, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> they derive in part from an aggressive secularism in our own political culture. Many of our leaders no longer believe in the value of religion in our public lives and therefore are indifferent or hostile to religious freedom. It is hard to sell a product in which you do not believe, let alone one you hold in contempt.

Unfortunately, there are also powerful reasons why our religious freedom policy is staunchly resisted by foreign societies and their governments, and why our rhetorical, reactive, and occasionally punitive actions have had so little purchase.

Each society is different, but the resistance often comes down to this: no nation responds well to condemnations of, and exhortations to alter, its policies on religion. Religion is often culturally and politically integral to a nation's identity and fundamental interests. In the case of communist nations such as China or Cuba, religion is a threat to the state's monopoly on power. Moreover, ad hoc punitive actions not only do not work; they are deeply resented and sometimes make things worse on the ground.

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<sup>1</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Freedom is Vital to American National Security* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

### **Improving the Effectiveness of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy**

I believe that there is an answer to this twin pathology, i.e., increasing confusion over the meaning and value of religious freedom in the U.S., and persistent international skepticism over U.S. religious freedom policy. The answer lies in re-examining the facts about religious freedom.

Twenty years of working on this issue have convinced me that a simple proposition, one instinctively understood by America's founders, is both true and useful: religious freedom is *necessary*. It is necessary for the flourishing of every individual and of every society.

And it is certainly necessary if societies abroad are to reduce the incubation and export of violent religious extremism.

The Religious Freedom Institute where I serve has, along with other groups, accumulated substantial empirical evidence that indicates a causal relationship between religious freedom and other social goods, such as political stability, economic development, the equality of women, increased literacy, and – most important for today's hearing -- undermining violent religious extremism.

We have disseminated that evidence widely within the government, but, unfortunately, it has thus far largely been ignored. The United States can no longer afford to neglect this important opportunity for advancing religious freedom and American interests simultaneously.

Our foreign policy and national security leadership should, on the basis of the evidence, *make a conscious decision* to integrate religious freedom into our national security strategy, and to generate far more diplomatic energy and resources than currently is the case. Given the will to do so, our diplomacy can reduce the threat of religion-related terror by presenting to skeptical nations abroad persuasive evidence that religious freedom is in their interests, and that it can benefit their own societies.

### **How Religious Freedom Undermines Terrorism**

Social scientists at the Religious Freedom Institute and elsewhere have amply documented that societies lacking religious freedom are far more likely to incubate, suffer domestically, and export internationally, religion-related terrorism.

We have documented the reverse connection as well: Societies that protect religious freedom generally do not incubate religious violence and terrorism. Several Muslim-majority states in West Africa have avoided the violent extremism that plagues other Muslim states. Each has significant legal protections for the religious freedom of Muslims and non-Muslims, and each encourages interreligious cooperation. Even in the face of externally funded extremist pressure in recent years, these states have managed to retain broad protections for religious pluralism.

How does religious freedom help create stability via religious pluralism? First, by protecting and encouraging anti-extremist Muslim voices to advocate for a tolerant, non-violent interpretation of

Islam. Second, by protecting the rights of non-Muslim minorities – not only to exist as tolerated minorities, but to contribute to their societies as equal citizens.

Even a secular foreign policy establishment should be able to recognize these connections and construct a sensible strategic response to these empirical facts.

Unfortunately, current U.S. counter terrorism policy ignores these connections. Our policy consists almost exclusively of the employment of military force and its accessories, law enforcement and intelligence. While each is necessary, none is sufficient to defeat Islamist terrorism. That form of violent extremism is not simply a military force. It is not a cadre of militants called ISIS or Al Qaeda whose military defeat, capture, or death will end the threat. It is an ideology – a set of lethal ideas derived from Islam that have proven their capacity, over and over again, to motivate men and women to kill, torture, and destroy.

Islamist terrorism's persistence and lethality make the threat to our nation and our interests around the world a grave one.

It has hit us in the homeland – in San Bernardino, Ohio State, Fort Hood, Manhattan, Orlando, and elsewhere.

It has come close to eliminating the possibility of stabilizing pluralism in Iraq by forcing from the country most non-Muslim minorities. If those minorities, especially the Christians, do not return, Iraq will very likely become a perpetual breeding ground for the ideology of Islamist terror, a development with terrible consequences for the region and the world. Of all the counter-weights to this development, none is more important than advancing religious freedom in Iraq.

#### **How to Integrate Religious Freedom into U.S. National Security Strategy**

To summarize: Notwithstanding compelling evidence of its value to all societies and to vital American interests, religious freedom has been isolated from the mainstream of U.S. foreign policy and national security thinking. It has largely been overlooked as a means of promoting stability and national security.

It is important to note that State Department-funded programs have begun to help. Under former IRF Ambassador David Saperstein program funding increased to \$20 million. But that amount pales in comparison to other programs intended to protect American national security.

Unfortunately, those religious freedom programs we do have, though often meritorious, are not part of an all-of- government strategy. They are spread too thin and are too *ad hoc* to have any appreciable impact on Islamist terrorism, or to convince governments that religious freedom will improve governance, stimulate economic growth, or undermine religious violence.

In practical terms, religious freedom policy can advance U.S. national security by going beyond rhetoric and employing a combination of sticks and carrots that directly targets the self-interest of key societies. Let me end with two examples.



Last summer the State Department announced the withholding of \$290 million in aid to Egypt because of, inter alia, its harsh restrictions on religious communities. This is a good start, but we must go further. The U.S. should also provide hard evidence that altering repressive laws and policies will benefit Egypt, for example by reducing the violent extremism that is harming the country's all-important tourist industry, and threatening the government itself.

Iraq provides another opportunity. Since 2014, the U.S. government has allocated nearly \$1.7 billion in humanitarian aid to Iraq, but most of that aid has not reached the Christian and other minorities designated as victims of ISIS genocide. These people are unlikely to return to their homes without our help.

This is a U.S. national security problem. Religious pluralism is a necessary condition for long-term stability in Iraq. If minorities do not return and stay, Iraq will likely become a perpetual Shia-Sunni battleground where terrorism flourishes. The current administration has pledged to change its aid policies and focus on these minorities, but financial aid is only the first step,

The U.S. should mount a sustained campaign to convince Iraqi stakeholders that they will never live in peace and security without the pluralism that non-Muslim minorities bring. With our help, Iraq must provide security, economic development, and religious freedom to those non-Muslim minorities. It must also provide religious freedom to Muslims who will defend tolerant, non-violent forms of Islam.

What is true for Iraq is also true for Syria and the rest of the Middle East. What happens there will impact the region and the entire world.

We will prevail against Islamist extremism only when we expand our national security strategy to include the advancement of religious freedom. And we can achieve that goal only by adopting a clear-eyed, pragmatic set of policies and programs that show governments how religious freedom can advance their own interests.

Success in such efforts will not come easy. But the long war against Islamist terrorism and religious persecution cannot be won with law enforcement and military force alone. America needs new ideas and new combatants to win this war. Religious freedom must be part of the mix.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Farr, thank you so very much for your testimony. Dr. Lenczowski.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN LENCZOWSKI, PH.D., FOUNDER AND  
PRESIDENT, THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD POLITICS**

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Minority Member, Ambassador Rooney, and members of the subcommittee. I am honored to be able to discuss how to defeat the ideology of radical Islamism, with a particular focus on human rights.

The U.S. has spent trillions fighting Islamist terrorism as if it is a military problem, as Dr. Farr has just said, with little reference to what inspires it in the first place. I have a metaphor for this. Our wars are akin to trying to eradicate mosquitoes in your backyard by inviting all your friends over for a garden party, arming them with shotguns, and shooting mosquitoes all afternoon. You will get a few. The problem is that the garden has a puddle where the recruitment of new mosquitoes is going on and we are doing very little about it.

This is a problem of politics, propaganda, ideology, culture, economic opportunity, and extremist politicized religious doctrines. To solve this problem necessitates fighting a war of ideas, and the problem is that we have virtually no ideological warriors in this war.

We have a Cold War precedent, where we worked to undermine the Marxist-Leninist core of the Soviet system. Among other things, this war required anathematizing Communist human rights violations and offering the peoples of the Soviet empire a positive alternative: Human rights, freedom, democracy, and hope for a better life. These efforts centered around giving people the courage to demand political change and the respect of their human rights.

Today, we must also use similar means to target the ideological core of radical Islamism. This ideology differs from politically moderate Islam insofar as it seeks to turbocharge the Islamization process by conducting "jihad of the sword" and "resettlement jihad"—the migration to non-Muslim lands, establishing separatist enclaves that run according to sharia, and culminating in political-demographic conquests.

This ideology, which incorporates Marxist-Leninist strategy, has been key to the recruitment of new jihadists, both terrorists and resettlement jihadists. It depends on generating hatred against the infidel, principally through a moral attack against colonialism, Zionism, U.S. hegemony, and the West's moral degradation.

Defeating it requires an ideological counterattack based on superior moral precepts. Such an effort has two components, both of which focus on human rights.

The first involves telling the truth about radical Islamism. This means ending self-censorship about jihadism and conducting an information campaign exposing jihadist ideology, the weaponization of religious doctrines, the denial of human rights under sharia, and the crimes and human rights violations of Islamist regimes.

The second component involves offering a positive alternative, including the promotion of human rights. First, it is necessary to promote the dignity of the human person as the creation of God. It is

as a result of this dignity that man possesses inalienable rights in the first place that come not from other men but, as our Founders said, from a creator.

Perhaps the most effective human rights campaign today in this ideological war has been conducted by a private nonprofit group called Good of All and its academic centers on three continents. They promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an “idea virus” to prevent the radicalization of “digital natives”—the younger generation who have grown up with social media. The idea is to present an idealistic vision that rejects violence and the human rights violations that have attended radical Islamist movements and regimes.

Central to this effort is the appeal to Muslim women, whose rights are systematically violated wherever radical Islamism prevails. Many of these women have participated in the organization’s campaign to produce YouTube videos that have exposed the dark side of sharia—the stoning of women, acid attacks, honor killings, and wife beating.

There are also efforts within the Islamic world to fight radical jihadism. In Indonesia, there is a long history of challenging the radical secular political goals of jihadism by offering a vision of Islam that is pluralist and tolerant. For example, Indonesia’s former President, Abdurrahman Wahid, argued that there is no such thing as a genuine secular Islamic state. The true Islamic state, he said, is when an entire people have achieved holiness.

A new assemblage of 41 Muslim nations, the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition, stresses the importance of fighting terrorism in the domains of ideology and communications, in addition to counterterrorism finance and the military, by promoting moderation, tolerance, compassion, diversity, and the value of human life. It remains to be seen how effective this effort proves to be.

The U.S. Government is intellectually, culturally, and organizationally unprepared to combat both elements of the radical jihadist threat and to fight a true war of ideas. There is no agency of the U.S. Government charged with ideological warfare. What must be done is to create a new U.S. public diplomacy agency that will become a force in U.S. foreign policy that will concentrate on relations with and influence over people and not just governments. A renewed concentration on public diplomacy and strategic influence will go a long way toward giving America a capability to secure our country while minimizing the need to use force to do so.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lenczowski follows:]

**Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism  
Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and  
International Organizations  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
By John Lenczowski  
Founder and President, The Institute of World Politics  
December 6, 2017**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Minority Member, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to be able to share with you my recommendations on one of the key dimensions of the war of ideas against extremist ideologies, especially radical Jihadism. My testimony consists of an examination of:

- the nature of Jihadist extremism and its ideological source;
- the salient principles of strategy, which can inform our nation's efforts to defeat this enemy;
- how we used an integrated, proactive strategy to defeat Communist totalitarianism during the Cold War;
- the principal dimensions of the Jihadist threat – particularly the movement's recruitment methods;
- how a systematic campaign of informational and ideological warfare with a strong human rights component must be the critical element of our strategy; and finally,
- how our government should be organized to succeed in these efforts.

**Jihadism is Principally an Ideological Problem**

The United States has spent trillions of dollars mostly fighting two wars to destroy terrorism-supporting regimes, seeking out terrorists, and killing them. In doing so we have treated terrorism as principally a military and intelligence problem with little reference to what inspires it in the first place. I have a metaphor for this. Our wars are akin to trying to eradicate mosquitoes in your back yard by inviting all your friends over for a garden party, arming them with shotguns, and shooting mosquitoes all afternoon. You will get a few mosquitoes. The problem is that there is a puddle in the back yard and something is going on there: it is the spawning of new mosquitoes – and we are doing very little about it. This is not principally a military matter, but a problem of politics, propaganda, ideology, culture, and religious doctrines. What we are up against is a totalitarian effort to establish a temporal state (the Caliphate) by mobilizing Jihadists via an extremist interpretation of the Islamic religion. To solve this problem necessitates fighting a war of ideas. The problem is that we have virtually no ideological warriors in this war.

There is, to be sure, a military element to ideological war. So long as the Islamic State was able to conquer and control new territory, it, like the Soviet Union, could claim that these victories proved that its ideology and its vision of the future are correct because they were visibly sanctified by Allah. So long as the Islamic State was expanding, it enjoyed a high rate of recruitment of new Jihadists. Nevertheless, even without the expansion and military success, the

Islamist terrorists can canonically invoke Allah, explaining away their failures as “the time of trial,” thus continuing to draw on divine sanction of their aggression to attract followers. But ultimately, the lure of the Jihadist ideological vision has been the essence of the appeal for new recruits.

### **The Foundations of Successful Strategy**

Any effort to defeat an enemy that is seeking to destroy and transform our civilization must have a clear goal and a coherent strategy. As for the goal, we must have a proper vision of what constitutes victory. As for strategy, there are several prerequisites: We must distinguish between policies that are merely reactive and defensive and those that are pro-active and that exploit our own advantages. Operating solely in a reactive mode enables the enemy to define the terms of debate and choose the battlefield, the weapons, and the timing. Yielding all these to the enemy is to give him a strategic advantage from the beginning. In contrast, a pro-active, or offensive policy enables us to choose those aspects of the conflict that are advantageous to us.

Good strategy means that we must understand the enemy, his strengths and weaknesses, and understand the same things about ourselves. Understanding the enemy means understanding his and his allies cultures on their own terms, avoiding mirror-imaging, avoiding our own cultural biases, and overcoming the many other obstacles to perceiving reality correctly, such as propaganda, disinformation, strategic deception, overt and covert influence operations, as well as the moral failings such as wishful thinking, willful blindness, and ideologically-defined “political correctness” which discourages us from seeing the truth and telling the truth.

The proper understanding of the enemy requires good intelligence in several areas: the nature – the genetic code – of the enemy, which greatly assists us in understanding his intentions and purposes; the nature of his allies; his capabilities; his strategy; his population support base; his recruitment base; and his fears, internal divisions, and other weaknesses. Only some of this consists of threat-based intelligence, which is what our intelligence community principally emphasizes. The larger part of it consists of “opportunities intelligence” or “vulnerabilities intelligence” – in this case, cultural intelligence, which takes the form of everything from audience research to detailed biographical information about leading individuals, their power base, their allies, their internal enemies, and the like. Since our government operates more often in a reactive and defensive mode, it rarely asks for this kind of information. Only when one has a pro-active strategy is there a systematic requirement for it – and then those implementing that strategy must ask for it.

Understanding ourselves involves recognition of the materialist bias of our own strategy culture, which emphasizes “hard power” while neglecting the importance of such “soft power” instruments as information, ideology, cultural diplomacy, counter-propaganda, and an adequate strategic communications capability. It involves a recognition of: our own internal divisions; our lack of consensus of what constitutes the essential features of our civilization on which all Americans can agree such as our Founders’ conception of inalienable individual rights; the extent to which our divided citizenry share a commitment to defend that civilization; and what must be done to restore national unity and consensus on the irreducible values and principles that must be maintained to preserve our civilization.

### The War of Ideas in the Cold War

During the Cold War, after some periods of strategic confusion, we developed a proper understanding of what victory looks like. Broadly speaking, there was consensus that victory meant ending the causes of U.S.-Soviet tensions. But for a long time, many thought that this required reducing or eliminating arms as if they were the cause of tensions. The problem was that arms were a symptom, not a cause, of those tensions. We could never have real *détente* – a relaxation of tensions – without a relaxation of the political concerns that were the real source of tensions.

In the case of the USSR, our concern was with Soviet expansionism and aggression in its many forms, including military intervention, occupation, and proxy war, and the many forms of conquest without war, including subversion, cultural warfare, propaganda, active measures (such as disinformation, forgeries, and covert political influence operations), psychological operations, economic warfare, strategic deception, espionage, and other forms of covert action.

The deeper concern was with the nature of the Soviet communist system – its “genetic code.” This consisted of:

- its systematic denial of basic human rights;
- its totalitarian control of all communications, education, publishing, news media, film, and entertainment;
- its internal security system, including the Gulag Archipelago and the pervasive system of secret police informants (in East Germany, where we have been able to ascertain with accuracy the extent of this system, a full 25 percent of the population were compelled into becoming informants, most against their will);
- the consequent process of “atomization” of society, where each individual is separated from others and left alone to fend for himself against the all-powerful state: a phenomenon made possible by the pervasive atmosphere of mistrust engendered by the system of informants;
- its system of forced conformity, which was enforced by its ideological methods of thought and speech control (“political correctness”), including the “daily force-feeding of a steady diet of lies” (which Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn called the single most oppressive feature of life under communism) – a regimen which compelled people to violate their consciences in order to demonstrate subjugation and loyalty to the regime;
- its crushing economic privations, stemming from the destruction of private property, which forced people into the underground economy, thus leaving them vulnerable to being accused of economic crimes and blackmailed into becoming accessories of the internal security system;
- its mass murder of 30 million to 60 million of its own citizens, including the forced starvation of millions of Ukrainians (the *Holodomor*); and
- its genocide of many small national groups within its empire.

To eliminate the political concerns that underlay Cold War tension, it was therefore essential to change the nature of the Soviet system, to change its genetic code. The heart of that

genetic code was the ideology, which produced the enforced conformity, the totalitarian atomization of society, and the expansionistic foreign policy that was necessary to prove the validity of the Marxist-Leninist ideology and therefore the ideologically-based “legitimacy” of the regime.

To do this, the United States conducted a political-ideological war, episodically, sometimes effectively and sometimes barely, for four decades. This consisted of several elements:

- A war of information – the use of truth as our most powerful weapon – to counter the propaganda and disinformation that sustained the communist system from within and which it used as a key element of its subversive foreign policy.
- A systematic effort to delegitimize the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and its satellites. This strategy exploited one of the principal vulnerabilities of Communist Party rule: its rule without the consent of the governed, its consequent lack of legitimacy, and its consequent fear of its own people.
- An effort to anathematize the inhuman nature of communist rule and its systematic violations of human rights.
- An effort to isolate the Soviet empire in the world community, including efforts to create divisions within its own empire.
- An effort to offer the peoples within the Soviet empire a positive alternative: individual human rights, freedom, democracy, justice, and hope for a better life.
- An effort to support forces of resistance against communist expansionism, including anti-communist movements in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Angola, and elsewhere (the success to such movements would demonstrate that resistance against communism is not futile and that the victory of communism is not inevitable).
- An effort to support resistance forces within the Soviet empire, including dissidents, human rights organizations, religious movements, the Solidarity Movement in Poland, and national independence movements in many union republics within the USSR. These efforts involved Presidential rhetoric, Congressional resolutions, covert political and communications assistance, and perhaps most importantly, international broadcasting by the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty. All this activity connected America and the West with people behind the Iron Curtain who yearned for freedom, for the protection of their human rights, including individual liberty and property rights, and for some semblance of justice, which they described as their desire to lead a “normal life.”

Altogether, these efforts used the tools not of traditional, government-to-government diplomacy, but rather public diplomacy, political warfare, and ideological warfare.

All of these efforts were complemented by various material pressures on the Soviet empire which pushed it toward bankruptcy and caused a crisis in its military economy. These included: our military buildup, our technology security measures, our depriving the Kremlin of hard currency (mostly by a successful effort to lower global energy prices), and other actions. It should be noted, however, that none of these measures were sufficient to explain how millions of people would take to the streets in Moscow, Vilnius, Tashkent, and other cities demanding radical political change.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, constituted victory in the Cold War? The obvious answer was the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, the destruction of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the entire Soviet system. A part of this collapse, however, involved the defection of one of the most prominent Soviet Party leaders: Boris Yeltsin, who made a complete moral-ideological break with the Party and later declared that the USSR under Gorbachev's Party-led rule was a "totalitarian system." Another indicator was the declaration by chief Party ideologist, Alexander Yakovlev, that the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the system it produced were "evil."

### **The Nature of the Jihadist Threat**

The Jihad which concerns us here is not that which concerns fighting against one's own temptations to do wrong. It is the "Jihad of the Sword" that has been adopted by those varieties of radical Islamism that stress warfare against unbelievers, even when those infidels are not at war with them. Here is a key distinction between radical Islamists and politically moderate Muslims: the former maintain that the U.S. and the West and their constituent peoples have been at war with all of Islam, where the latter, the large majority of Muslims, do not agree. What they do agree upon, however, is the necessity of spreading Islam throughout the world.

Today the most prevalent and virulent form of radical Islamism is the combination of reactionary Wahhabist Islam from the Arabian peninsula and the modernist-totalitarian Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood as developed by Said al-Qutb. It is this combination that emerged as the regnant ideology of Al Qaeda. While al-Qutb says that it is the duty of Muslims to cleanse the world of ignorance about Allah, he then describes Islam not as a religion, but as a revolutionary party. He borrows from Marxist-Leninist ideology and its prescriptions for the use of power to advance communism. It is for this reason that it is fair to say that this ideology is a new totalitarian movement.

A corollary to this new Islamist ideology, developed by Abdullah Azzam, the founder of Al Qaeda's predecessor organization, the MAK, posits that every Muslim has the duty to conduct Jihad and needs no permission to do so. This is, in fact, mandated by the Koran. He who cannot (for reasons of health, age, or other) participate in the Jihad is obligated to assist the Jihadist materially, spiritually, and in any way leading to the victory of Islam over the infidel.

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<sup>1</sup> For an authoritative review of the U.S. strategy as described by the Presidential advisors who were among its authors, see: Douglas Streusand, Norman Bailey, Francis Marlo, and Paul Gelpi (eds.) *The Grand Strategy that Won the Cold War*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).



Because there is no Muslim pope or magisterium as there is in the Catholic faith, the interpretation of doctrine is up for grabs, and even the most radical of Islamists can claim authenticity based on Koranic teachings.

There are two major elements of the radical Jihadist threat. Both are the results of Islamist supremacism in the political realm – the secular political passion to establish a worldwide caliphate by incremental means.

The first consists of what has become known as “re-settlement Jihad” – the process of immigration to the lands of the *Dar al-Harb*: the “house of war” – in other words, the non-Islamic world (in contrast to the *Dar al-Islam* – i.e., the “house of Islam”). Once Muslim immigrants arrive in these lands, ordinary Muslims have the obligation under the doctrine of *hijra* to conduct missionary activity (*dawa*) and seek the transformation of their place of immigration to the *Dar al-Islam* – a process that historically has taken hundreds of years in various places around the globe.

Meanwhile, the aim of the radical Jihadists is to turbocharge and accelerate the process of Islamization by setting up separatist enclaves and conducting what the Muslim Brotherhood calls “civilization Jihad.” As stated in a secret document outlining the Muslim Brotherhood’s strategy for North America, which was entered as evidence in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation terrorism funding trial, “The process of settlement is a ‘Civilization-Jihadist Process’ with all the [sic] word means. The *Ikhwan* [Muslim Brotherhood] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand *jihad* in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers...”<sup>2</sup> This process is advanced by demanding accommodation to Islamic practices, establishing a parallel track within “infidel” societies for Sharia law, and then, through greater birth rates than those of the native population, establishing irreversible and, ultimately, preponderant political influence.

It should be recognized that this process is well advanced in Europe, where, in just one example in the United Kingdom, Sharia law has established a solid foothold within British society. In France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other western and northern European countries, many Muslim enclaves have become “no-go zones” where the native police cannot venture without unusual danger, where Sharia law is practiced within the community, where culture is permeated by Muslim cultural mores, including sexual practices, and where Jihadist ideology finds the opportunity to propagate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *An Explanatory Memorandum: On the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America*, 5/22/1991, [https://clarionproject.org/muslim\\_brotherhood\\_explanatory\\_memorandum/](https://clarionproject.org/muslim_brotherhood_explanatory_memorandum/), page 7 of 18.

<sup>3</sup> The problem concerning no-go-zones is how such zones are defined. As former Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew McCarthy explains: “It is therefore easy for Islamists and their apologists to knock down their strawman depiction of what a no-go zone is when they leave it at that: a place where non-Muslims are ‘not allowed.’ That is not what no-go zones are—neither as they exist in fact nor as they are contemplated by Sharia....no sensible person is saying that state authorities are prohibited from entering no-go zones as a matter of law. The point is that they are severely discouraged from entering as a matter of fact—and the degree of discouragement varies directly with the density of the Muslim population and its radical component. Ditto for non-Muslim lay people: It is not that they are not permitted to enter these enclaves; it is that they avoid entering because doing so is dangerous if they are flaunting Western modes of dress and conduct.” Andrew McCarthy, “What Bobby Lindal Gets About Islam – and Most People Still Don’t,” *National Review*, January 24, 2015,

In the United States, the Islamist effort to establish Sharia law has already made major advances. To date, over 140 legal decisions in American courts have been influenced by Sharia law. In just one of these, a judge in New Jersey refused to grant a woman a restraining order against her husband who had serially raped her on grounds that he is a Muslim and therefore subject to Sharia law and not American law.<sup>4</sup>

Other noteworthy accommodations to civilization Jihad include conformity within our financial system to the rules of Sharia finance, adaptation of our rules of taxation to include Islamic foundations (*waqf*) as religious tax deductible charities despite their involvement in Jihad, and the tacit acceptance of sexual molestation of minors by Muslim men.

In already majority-Muslim nations which have a record of peaceful coexistence with non-Muslim minorities, the threat consists of an effort to establish Sharia law which threatens that peaceful coexistence, which tolerates or encourages the promulgation of ever greater radicalism, and which threatens harmonious relations with non-Muslim nations.

The second major threat, of course, is terrorism. Radical Jihadist ideology is the key to the success of terrorism. It involves the enlistment of new recruits through promises of heavenly rewards for martyrdom and secular political power and privilege. It supplies meaning to lives

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<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/397110/what-bobby-jindal-gets-about-islam-and-most-people-still-dont-andrew-c-mccarthy>. For numerous examples of such zones and the variations among them, see: David Rieff, "Battle Over the Banlieues," *New York Times Magazine*, April 14, 2007; Jonathan Tobin, "No-Go Zones' Are Not a Conservative Meme," *Commentary*, January 23, 2015; Andrew McCarthy, "France's No-Go Zones: Assimilation-Resistant Muslims Are the Real Refugee Problem," <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/427302/frances-fifth-column-muslims-resist-assimilation>; Soeren Kern, "European 'No-Go' Zones: Fact or Fiction? Part I: France," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5128/france-no-go-zones>; Idem., "European 'No-Go' Zones: Fact or Fiction? Part 2: Britain," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5177/no-go-zones-britain>; Idem., "Police Warn of No-Go Zones in Germany," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6264/no-go-zones-germany>; Idem., "Inside Germany's No-Go Zones: Part I - North Rhine-Westphalia," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/9279/germany-no-go-zones-nrw>; Fjordman, "Europe: Combating Fake News," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10037/no-go-zones-europe>; Yves Mamou, "France: No-Go Zones Now in Heart of Big Cities," <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/10404/france-no-go-zones>; Leslie Shaw, "No-Go Zones for Women," May 22, 2017, <https://clarionproject.org/paris-neighborhood-no-go-zone-women/>. The French government published a list of 750 so-called *Zones Urbaines Sensibles* (or No-Go Zones) in December 1996 where non-Muslims (including law enforcement) are unwelcome and sharia law holds sway: <http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Atlas/ZUS/>. Just this month, 20,000 French women signed a petition protesting the effects of no-go zones in Paris: Rory Mulholland, "Paris boosts police in female 'no-go zone', as French feminist decries 'unquestionable' regression in status of women," <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/03/paris-boosts-police-female-no-go-zone-french-feminist-decries/>

<sup>4</sup> *Shariah Law and American State Courts: An Assessment of State Appellate Court Cases*, (Washington, DC: Center for Security Policy, 2011), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/228663-sharia-law-and-american-state-courts.html>; *Shariah in American Courts: The Expanding IncurSION of Islamic Law in the U.S. Legal System*, (Washington, DC: Center for Security Policy Press, 2014). For an overview of the larger threat of Sharia, see: LTG William G. Boykin, LTG Harry Edward Soyster, Christine Brim, Amb. Henry Cooper, Stephen C. Coughlin, Michael Del Rosso, Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., John Guandolo, Brian Kennedy, Clare M. Lopez, Adm. James A. Lyons, Andrew C. McCarthy, Patrick Poole, Joseph E. Schmitz, Tom Trento, J. Michael Waller, Diana West, R. James Woolsey, and David Yerushalmi, *Shariah: the Threat to America*, (Washington, DC: Center for Security Policy, 2010).

that have not yet found meaning. It offers redemption of all sins and involvement in a glorious victorious cause. Fighting in the Jihad, including martyrdom, is the only canonically guaranteed way to Paradise.

The success of the ideology depends on the generation of hatred against the infidel by juxtaposing him with the perfect Islamic deity, Allah. And central to this project is the Islamists' moral attack against the United States and West. It is partly an attack against the perceived injustice of Western colonialism (principally Zionism and American support for it), and the Western, principally American, and therefore "infidel," presence and hegemony in the Middle East. But more importantly, the attack is against the moral degradation of the West, and its rejection of Islam. Islamists see the conflict as being between belief and unbelief. They see the West as godless, materialistic, and sexually libertine – a culture with no soul.

In fact, with increasing frequency the radical Islamists refer to the West not as "Christendom" but as *Dar al-Jahiliyyah* (The Land of Paganism/Ignorance of Allah). The difference is crucial. Pagans are given a choice: death or conversion to Islam. Christians (along with Jews) are regarded as "The People of the Book." If they submit, their lives will be spared for a price. They will have to pay *jizya* (poll-tax) – in addition to all other taxes. They will have to surrender their arms and never bear them. They will have to recognize Islam and Muslims as superiors. In other words, they will be reduced to semi-slavery as the *dhimmi* (the inferior non-Muslims) and be subject to exploitation and humiliation. But they will remain alive as long as they please their Muslim masters. In the most radicalized of Islamist regimes, Christians, Jews, and other religious minorities face harassment, persecution, murder, and ethnic cleansing.

Before subjugation of the infidel, the two elements of the Jihadist threat involve differing levels of intensity. The terrorist threat is what commands public attention. But the incremental establishment of Sharia-based government or separatist enclaves with parallel legal systems and alien social norms constitutes what may be the greater of the two threats. For the latter involves the use of democratic freedoms, rights, and laws to effect the steady, incremental erosion of the system of human rights that characterizes Western democratic society, and the creation of separatist enclaves that provide the "sea" in which terrorists can swim. Migrants thus demand the rights denied to the non-Muslim in their original places of domicile to achieve domination over the Western host nations. That domination means bringing about the superiority that Muslim migrants used to enjoy at home over the *dhimmi*.

So, the question that we (and other Western nations) must address is: do we want our country to be governed by our Constitutional system of the consent of the governed, the rule of law, enumerated powers, inalienable individual rights (including the rights of women), the separation of powers, checks and balances, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and other elements of our Bill of Rights – all based on respect for the dignity of the individual human person no matter what his or her background or condition?

Or do we wish to have a parallel society within our country run on the basis of a system that canonically denies the rights of women, prescribes the stoning of adulterers and extreme punishment of homosexuals, permits marriage with adolescent girls, allows the unilateral, capricious declaration of divorce solely by a husband, denies women the right to see their

children if taken from them by their separated or divorced husbands, prescribes wife beating, denies free speech through the imposition of “blasphemy laws,” and other features of Sharia law?

### **Defeating Radical Jihadism**

#### The Prerequisite of Strategy: the Establishment of a Political Goal

The Cold War lesson in ideological warfare must inform our war against radical Islamist Jihad. As in the formation of any strategy, the first question that must be asked is: what constitutes victory? What is the political result that we would like to achieve?

In full recognition of the limits of what may be possible, there is a hierarchy of desirable outcomes, from the perfect (and probably utopian) to the more achievable.

The perfect outcome would be the equivalent of the Yakovlev admission – by the way, an admission that nobody in the West thought would have been possible. That equivalent would be for one or more of the leaders or ideologists of radical Jihadism to say that, upon reflection, their interpretation of the Koran, including their version of Jihad, is wrong, misguided, and evil. As impossible and unrealistic as this seems, one form such an admission could take would be to acknowledge that a person who kills innocent people will go not to heaven but to hell, and that doing so is not Allah’s will. What makes this impossible as a practical matter is that Sharia justifies all manner of killing in the process of Jihad until the non-believers submit. The radical Jihadis must nevertheless concede that killers of innocents are not honoring essential passages of the Koran. They could also admit the manifold human rights violations, policy failures, injustices, hypocrisies, crimes, and privations of regimes run by radical Islamism.

Another desirable outcome would be for unrepentant Jihadist leaders to be so widely discredited that they become isolated and no longer capable of mobilizing the recruits who serve as their terrorist cannon fodder. Insofar as such leaders are heads of nations, such as the Supreme Leader in Iran, the desired outcome would be for the society to reject such leadership and replace it with a more humane, honest, and just leadership that has the capacity to respect the human rights of its citizens, particularly women and religious minorities.

Another outcome concerns those young people who have been attracted to Jihadism as part of their increased devotion to Islam. Here, it would be desirable for them to reject the temptation to treat their Islam as principally a secular ideology and not as a religion.

Then, there are less perfect outcomes that nonetheless represent positive steps toward the optimal goals. One of these is the disuniting of Jihadist groups. In addition to creating internal divisions, this can mean splitting Jihadist front groups, allied organizations, and even cooperative regimes from the metropolitan centers of Jihad, whether they be the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, or Jihadist Shia Iran.

Other partial goals include de-funding the progenitors of Jihadist ideology, preventing them from enjoying political support and safe haven, and banning those of their websites that

advocate the violation of our fundamental laws and Constitutional rights, thus rendering them significantly less able to spread their propaganda.

Another is the creation of a consensus among human rights-respecting nations as to the sources of the Jihadist threat, what fuels it, and how to minimize that threat within our own societies. Such consensus must also be built among majority Muslim nations. It will be interesting to see what the results will be of a new initiative taken by 41 Muslim nations – the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition – which stresses fighting terrorism in four domains: ideology, communications, counter-terrorism financing, and military. The first of these, the ideological, emphasizes what this Coalition says are the Islamic traditions of moderation, tolerance, compassion, diversity, and the value of human life.

The accumulation of various types of political, ideological, doctrinal, and military defeats, and for established regimes, the breakdown of totalitarian Islamist structures of internal security and their attendant harsh violations of human rights, can also force Jihadist leaders to face the possibility that their entire program, their secular political goals, and their ruthless methods, may not comport with Allah's will. This was what they were forced to consider after the Ottoman caliphate's defeat in the battle of Vienna by the Polish cavalry on the symbolically important dates in 1683: September 11, when the battle was joined, and then September 12, when the Grand Porte's armies were routed.

#### The Strategy to Achieve Victory

Truth as the First Weapon in the War against Suppression of Free Speech Radical Islamism as a totalitarian ideology and political system depends on the violation of a multiplicity of human rights, foremost among which is freedom of speech. Thus, the principal weapon that the free world enjoys in this ideological war is the truth. The truth, and the freedom to speak it, is central to any system that respects individual rights. Speaking the truth means bearing moral witness. It is what is necessary to hold accountable and discredit the progenitors of Jihadism and their supportive regimes. It can expose the crimes and human rights violations of Jihadism, the hypocrisies and corruption of its advocates and supporters, and the consequences of Jihadist rule. It can also focus on the defeats of Jihadist forces to demonstrate that their victories are not inevitable.

Promulgation of the truth requires a robust information campaign using every medium possible in every major language of both Muslim countries and nations where Muslim communities have established themselves. It must involve official government media, covertly supported media, non-governmental organizations, and assistance to indigenous individuals and organizations within Muslim nations and communities. A thorough information campaign would de-legitimize radical Islamist regimes in both Islamic and non-Islamic terms by exposing their many characteristics, including:

- corrupt, dishonest, hypocritical leaders whose goal has been political power and/or personal wealth and not holiness;
- the illegitimacy of radical Islamist leaders, from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Iran to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of the Islamic State;

- arbitrary and capricious “justice” often administered with cruelty;
- the many features of totalitarianism, including systematic violations of human rights, enforced conformity, thought and speech control, mistrust, atomization, violence, fear, and lack of respect for the dignity of the human person and human life – the creation of Allah;
- slavery (including sex slavery) which was the economic mainstay of the Muslim world until Western colonialism eradicated its public manifestations;
- active collaboration with criminal activity, including narcotics, kidnapping, human trafficking, and smuggling;
- economic privation, aggravated by lack of freedom to innovate, a culture of fatalism, and intellectual stasis;
- gradually turning non-Muslim majorities into minorities by extermination, conversion, persecution, traumatization, and humiliation through Jihad and subsequent Islamic domination in a Caliphate which historically was sustained by slaves and *dhimmis*; and
- overall civilizational decline.

Truth telling also requires the end of self-censorship by the leaders of Western countries and politically moderate Muslim nations as well.

Finally, telling the truth requires the end of false portrayals of radical Islamism by Western leaders, who are motivated partly out of ignorance of the nature of radical Islamism and partly out of a misguided desire to cultivate good “community relations” with those who they think are politically moderate, but in fact are not. One need only recall the case of Abdurahman Alamoudi, founder of the American Muslim Council with the help of the Muslim Brotherhood, who was received by Presidents Clinton and Bush as part of their outreach to the Muslim community, yet who ultimately revealed himself to be a felon now serving a long prison sentence for terrorism conspiracy.

Central to the effort to tell the truth is the need to make a distinction between Islamic organizations in the West whose leaders and members respect our concepts of inalienable individual rights versus those who reject them in favor of Sharia supremacy.

One of the greatest fears of the radical Islamists is of their enemies’ use of the truth. They understand the power of words, pictures, film, and the mass media. That is why they censor free speech in the areas they control, ban satellite television, punish criticism, and establish the *sine qua non* of totalitarian rule: an ideological “Party line” that serves as the vehicle of thought control, speech control, and standard of enforced conformity – the prerequisites of behavior control. This suppression of truth extends to the academic realm as well, as it requires the suppression of reason and logic. Scholars are thus prohibited from seeking the truth, and using reason and logic as tools to find it.

The War of Ideas Articulation of the truth also applies to the ideological front. If the United States, the West, and politically moderate Muslim nations and communities are to free themselves of radical Jihadism, we must discredit the totalitarian ideology of radical Islamism and show the positive alternatives. The promotion of inalienable individual rights based on

respect for the dignity of the human person no matter what one's background or condition is central to this task.

Fighting an ideological war presupposes that one has some knowledge of the ideas in question and how ideas have been used in this type of warfare in the past. This requires some working knowledge of several fields that are not part of any official U.S. government professional education programs but should be: Islamism, philosophy, comparative religion and civilization, and the history and methods of wars of ideas.

It also requires the collection of what one can call "cultural intelligence" which can inform us of the thinking of Islamist leaders, propagandists, and the people who live under their influence. This is a form of "audience research." It is also a form of "opportunities intelligence" – i.e., information that enables us to identify opportunities that can be exploited by one or another instrument of statecraft, in this case, the tools of information and strategic influence.

The radicals of the Islamic State have succeeded in enlisting thousands of recruits through their exploitation of social media. Despite America's invention of these media and their underlying technologies, our government has been woefully absent from competing in this new information battlespace. Russians, Chinese, and Jihadists have all used these media extraordinarily effectively with little to no American response or counter-effort.

While the counter-narrative work of the State Department's Global Engagement Center is a start, its effectiveness, as well as that of our other foreign information efforts and international broadcasts as not been consistently informed by adequate audience research. There are new technologies and techniques in this field, however, that give us hope for the future. Just one example is the "opinion mining" capabilities of a South African company called "BrandsEye," whose technique of combining crowds of human analysts with computer programs has produced extraordinary accuracy in selected cases of political forecasting.

The first step in an ideological warfare strategy is to identify and discredit the toxic ideas and religious doctrines that result in terrorism and totalitarian Islamist regimes. This must be the prerequisite for offering positive alternative ideas, especially those grounded in Western concepts of human rights.

One of these toxic ideas is the doctrine of focusing only to the "Medina verses" of the Koran, that prescribe war against the infidel, while paying no attention to the "Mecca verses," which command peaceful coexistence with the "people of the Book," i.e., Christians and Jews – people who believe in God. The fact that these two sets of verses stand in opposition to one another introduces us to the problem of relativism within Islam and the fact that, like the establishment of the Party line in Communist regimes, circumstances dictate which interpretation should hold sway among Muslim clergy and scholars at any given historical moment. This, needless to say, is a problem that Western democracies cannot solve. The solution is the responsibility of Muslims who reject the idea of war against the infidel.

A corollary doctrine is that which says that a Muslim must use the sword against those who are at war with Islam. The question is: who is at war with Islam, and what constitutes war?

The radical Jihadists argue that all sorts of people – particularly the West in general – are at war with Islam when, in fact, the opposite is true. Exposing the falsehood by honestly recounting history is key to debunking the Jihadist argument.

Another example is the doctrine concerning the nature of Allah that has dominated Sunni Islamic thought for a thousand years. This is the doctrine that Allah is pure will, that he wills every second of every minute of every day and that everything that actually happens is Allah's will. That means that the cholera epidemic in Pakistan is Allah's will, as is the rape of the twelve-year-old girl. This deterministic idea lies at the root of so much of the fatalistic culture throughout the Islamic world.

Insofar as Muslims subscribe to, and live by, this doctrine, an ideological counter-argument can be made. If an Islamic State terrorist decides that he wants to attack a segment of what he considers to be a heretical Shia community with a terrorist bomb and succeeds at the project, killing scores of innocents, it must mean that Allah willed it. That means that the terrorist's will equates with Allah's will. And that means that the terrorist has decided that, at least in his own sphere, he is his own god. Could it be that in doing so he is being blasphemous?

A few years ago, in his famous speech at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict asked some pertinent questions (the gist and implications of which I present here): Is Allah reasonable? Can one divine Allah's rules of life through the application of right reason in the same way that it is possible to figure out the rules of the God of Christians and Jews without the benefit of divine revelation? Is there any logic to Allah at all? If he is "almighty," can he contradict himself or will himself to cease to exist? Is there any coherence to Allah's moral standards? Or is Allah capricious and arbitrary? Can Allah will good and evil at the same time? Can one justify violence – even against the innocent – on the basis of Allah's will? In other words, is there in Islam any concept approximating the Natural Moral Law – as C.S. Lewis described it, the Law of Decent Behavior, a law higher than man-made law, the law written on the human heart that either inheres in nature or comes from God, the law that underlies our concept of inalienable individual rights?

There was indeed such a concept in Islam during its first three centuries. Islamic schools of thought, such as the Mutazilites, propounded ideas such as the acceptance of reason and logic that were related to this doctrine. However, as documented by Robert Reilly in *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*, that concept was defeated by a rival school of Islamic thought that posited the doctrine of Allah being "pure will."<sup>5</sup> This remains the dominant doctrine in Sunni Islam today.

Those both in the West and in the movements for Islamic reform must raise this issue again and challenge the idea that Allah wills evil. Islam is said to be an Abrahamic religion. But insofar as it accepts the idea that Allah can will evil, it has nothing to do with the other two Abrahamic faiths. Those two, Judaism and Christianity, posit that God wills only good, that God has endowed man with free will and respects man's moral choices, such that He will permit evil

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis*, (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute Books, 2011)



to take place but never will it. In contrast, both Sunni and Shia Muslims see free will as blasphemous.

Then there is the question of whether Islamism is more a secular totalitarian political movement than a religion. A major campaign in an ideological war must expose the fact that radical Jihadists are motivated more by passions for secular political power than they are by matters of the spirit. Indeed, a key element of their ideological recruitment campaigns is to recruit foot soldiers to their cause by giving them the excitement of participation in a glorious secular movement that enjoys some blessing from the Almighty, but simultaneously portraying it as a religious phenomenon.

This argument against the radical Jihadists is already being made by prominent Muslim leaders in, among other places, Indonesia. Indonesia has a few mass organizations of Muslims that have a long tradition of resisting Islamist radicalism, the most notable of which is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which is the world's most prominent voice of pluralistic and tolerant Sunni Islam. These organizations, who of which have tens of millions of members, have been working for years to prevent what they call the "Arabization" of Indonesian Islam. Specifically, this means resisting the Saudi export of Wahhabi Islamism to their archipelago. The leader of one of these organizations, the late Abdurrahman Wahid, who became President of Indonesia, published a book, *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, which has been a major salvo in the ideological war. In it Wahid argues that there is no such thing as a genuine secular Islamic state. The true "Islamic state" is when an entire people have achieved holiness.<sup>6</sup>

A noteworthy fact about Indonesian Islam is that it retains many local, regional, and national characteristics: the land was never conquered by the Jihad but, instead, was converted through gradual missionary activity. So, these Indonesian Islamic organizations were in the forefront of national liberation struggle against colonialism and, later, against communism. By being both religious and nationalist, they are opposed by the radical Islamists who view nationalism as something forbidden. It follows that the promotion of nationalism is another ideological weapon against the radical Jihadists.

The Indonesian efforts to resist Islamist radicalism, however, have not been so successful recently. Radical groups have been gradually gaining ground there, most notably manifested by the emergence of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a small group by Indonesian standards, whose mass protests succeeded in pressuring the government to prosecute and imprison the Chinese Christian governor of Jakarta, Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, for committing the criminal act of blasphemy against Islam. The alleged blasphemy was that Purnama stated that, contrary to the Islamist argument that Muslims cannot vote for a non-Muslim, it was acceptable for them to vote for whomever they considered to be best candidate. The success of this fringe group is now a moment of truth for the Nahdlatul Ulama – a moment that has enormous implications for Sunni Islam worldwide.

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<sup>6</sup> Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid, *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, (Jakarta: Wahid Institute, LibForAll Foundation, and Maarif, 2011).

In addition to exposing, questioning, and debunking the Jihadist doctrines that legitimize evil, an ideological strategy must promote positive alternatives. It must show potential recruits that there is a better vision, a better way to find meaning and fulfillment in life. It must appeal to the better angels not only of potential recruits but those already recruited to the Jihadist cause.

There are several ways to do this. Perhaps the most important is to promote the dignity of the human person as the creation of God. It is as a result of this dignity that man possesses inalienable rights that come not from other men but, as our founders said, from a Creator.

The cause of human rights is one of the most powerful weapons in the ideological war. What is arguably the most effective campaign on this account has been conducted by a small private organization, Good of All, and its affiliated academic centers on three continents, which is dedicated to promoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an “idea virus” among “digital natives” – the younger generation who have grown up with computers, cell phones, and social media. The audience consists of both Muslims and also non-Muslims (some of whom may be also recruited to the Jihadist cause). The idea is to present an idealistic vision of how society should run that rejects violence and all the human rights violations that attend radical Islamist movements and regimes.

Central to this effort is the organization’s appeal to Muslim women whose rights are systematically violated wherever radical Islamism prevails. Many of these women have participated in the organization’s campaign to produce YouTube videos that have exposed the dark side of Sharia: the stoning of women accused, sometimes falsely, of adultery; the disfiguring of women by acid thrown in their faces by husbands or boyfriends who accuse them, again sometimes falsely, of infidelity; the Islamic State’s systematic practices of using women and sex slaves; wife beating (books about which can be easily purchased in some Islamist bookstores and online in the United States; and so forth.

Another central front in an ideological strategy is the appeal to conscience – to the little voice, the articulator of the Natural Law, which tells a person that he or she is doing the wrong thing. The Jihadists do much to suppress the voice of conscience. One of their techniques is to give mind-distorting drugs of different varieties to those who they send to commit suicide terrorist missions. This is why the etymology of “assassin” derives from “hashish.” They use other, more effective drugs that perform the same conscience numbing function.

The appeal to conscience has antecedents in the Cold War. Perhaps the most compelling articulation of this was made by Whitaker Chambers, a senior editor of *Time* magazine, who was a believing Communist and, proceeding from this idealism, a spy for the Soviet Union. In his magnificent memoir, *Witness*, Chambers describes how recognition of his own conscience caused him to convert from communism to the cause of freedom and ultimately to Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

Chambers argued that Marxism-Leninism follows an air-tight secular, materialist logic. He said that the essence of that ideology is a vision of life without God. Here, human reason is

<sup>7</sup> Whitaker Chambers, *Witness*, (Washington, DC: Regnery/Gateway Editions, 1980).

the creative intelligence of the world. If this is so, then it must follow that man has the capacity to improve and perfect a grievously flawed world, and even perfect human nature itself. And since it is man and not God who determines the moral standards of society, it must be moral to do what is necessary to bring about the perfect society. Since, as Marx observed, the oppressor class will not politely step out of the way, it must be removed by violent revolution. One cannot make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

This argument was what Chambers called “the logic of the mind.” It was reasonable and logical, if one accepted the philosophical premises of materialism. But then Chambers began to feel the tug of another force. He described it by relating the story of an East-German Communist apparatchik, whose daughter explained what her father experienced: “one night he heard screams.” Chambers explains that these were the screams of the political prisoners being sent to the death camps of the Gulag Archipelago. They were the screams of the widows and orphans left behind. They were the screams of the prisoners being tortured in the dungeons of the Lubyanka. This, Chambers explained, was “the logic of the soul.” The East German was haunted. Even though he was a bureaucrat working in some government agency like the transportation ministry making the trains run on time, he was nevertheless an accessory to the apparatus of oppression. His trains included those sending those innocent wretches to their fate.

Chambers then explained that the Communist Party had acute antennae that could detect when apparatchiks such as that East German were haunted or when they were hearing the voice of conscience. The good Party member develops moral calluses and learns to suppress that little voice. The Party is smart enough to know that it cannot ask its new recruits to do monstrous tasks at the outset of their careers. It eases its cadres into full ruthlessness incrementally. When it does detect a member listening to his conscience, it knows that he is becoming morally sick. He is defecting in his heart. And spiritual defection is the ineluctable precursor to physical defection.

So, Chambers recognized that neither he nor his distant East German comrade could escape the haunting. And he could only conclude that this logic of the soul was more powerful than the logic of the mind. Here, he acknowledged the existence of a higher moral force than that exercised by human reason and its relativistic, contingent, and changing moral standards.

This same experience can be shared by Jihadists. But someone has to prick their consciences, awaken them from their suppressed state. Someone has to appeal to the Jihadists’ basic humanity.

Educational programs and institutions are a powerful potential weapon in this war. Under the George W. Bush Administration, the Defense Department attempted to set up an Office of Strategic Influence, which, regrettably, collapsed under a dishonest political-bureaucratic attack. Among its plans was to set up and fund schools in Pakistan that would compete with the *madrassas* – the Islamist schools that principally taught Koranic memorization. Poor parents would send their children to these Saudi-funded indoctrination programs because they also supplied food, clothes, and shelter, which the parents could ill afford. The competitive schools would give the students an all-round education that would include vocational training so that the graduates could earn a living and be less likely to become Jihadist recruits.

The ideological war can be fought with cultural means as well. In Indonesia, another private American group, LibForAll, has worked to promote a song written by the most prominent pop singer in the country. His song, which became the most popular song at the time, is called “Warriors of Love,” whose title is derived from the name of a local radical Islamist organization, *Laskar Jihad* (Warriors of Jihad). The song rejects Jihadist violence and proclaims that genuine Islam is based on love.

Finally, the ideological war can be fought with public diplomacy, the most systematically neglected instrument of American power. One way this has been done has been through foreign assistance. One group that has excelled in this task has been the Asia America Initiative, which has established strong relationships of trust with Muslims living in poverty stricken islands of the southern Philippines. With the tiniest of budgets – and therefore no excessive quantities of money that can be diverted into corrupt officials’ pockets – this organization has demonstrated through its work in medical aid, education aid, and agricultural aid, that America is not an enemy of Islam. The islands in question have been prime Al Qaeda recruitment territory. Yet this small organization has parried the Jihadists’ advances.

Most Islamists, including those who do not necessarily agree with violence, harbor considerable illusions about American society. These are based on the caricature of America and the West that they see on the products of our popular culture, particularly our movies, television programs, and popular music. They focus on the gratuitous sex and violence. They see an America consisting of skyscrapers, car chases, rappers, high tech, and dishonest businessmen, all surrounded by pornography. What they never see is small town America, church-going America, volunteer charitable work, or the products of our high culture. Our vehicles of public diplomacy used to expose the world to these less sensational realities of America through visitors programs, exchanges, cultural diplomacy, distribution of literature, book fairs, film festivals, and international broadcasting. Today, however, our public diplomacy capabilities are a shadow of their former selves.

One important vehicle of public diplomacy is inter-religious dialogue. Exposing ordinary Muslims, including the non-radical clergy and scholars, to religious figures in America is a powerful instrument to counteract the lurid caricature of America that so many of them have been brought to believe. We have seen felicitous results of such interactions in the case of visits by our military chaplains to local imams in the recent theaters of war. These chaplains are virtually the only officials in the U.S. government who are authorized to talk about religion with anyone.

The fact that virtually no one else has such authority is the result of a thoroughly bogus legal opinion, remarkably prevalent within the government, that any discussion of religion or religious motivations for Jihadist activity, including terrorism, is somehow a violation of the Constitution’s First Amendment. This misguided opinion has no legal basis and fails to take into account the ample historical precedent of U.S. governmental involvement in religion as an intrinsic part of our traditional and public diplomacy. For example, our international broadcasters, the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty all broadcast actual religious services to people of different faiths living behind the Iron Curtain. Our government

also worked closely with the Vatican to assist the cause of religious liberty within the Soviet empire.

### **Organizing Our Government to Counter Radical Jihad**

The U.S. government is intellectually, culturally, and organizationally unprepared to combat both elements of the radical Jihadist threat and fight a true war of ideas. There is no agency of the government charged with ideological warfare. There is no agency that hires warriors of ideas. There is no agency that trains its personnel to conduct such a war.

The U.S. Information Agency was one agency in the government that had capabilities to conduct ideological war. It was the principal agency in the government charged with having relations with people and not just governments and cultivating a culture of excellence in this field. However, it was eliminated in 1999, and only a fraction of its former capabilities was transferred to the Department of State which devotes only scanty strategic attention to this entire art of statecraft.

What must be done is to create a new U.S. Public Diplomacy Agency (USPDA) that will become a new bureaucratic empire within the State Department. The new agency would incorporate:

- all the former functions of the USIA;
- the various other public diplomacy functions at State, such as human rights, democracy, and international labor policy, women's issues, etc.;
- the many functions of the U.S. Agency for International Development;
- broadcasting in radio (on all wave-lengths), television, and internet/social media by the Voice of America;
- policy and budgetary oversight of the activities of the National Endowment for Democracy and its subsidiary organizations; and
- possibly even the Peace Corps. (There are sound arguments that the Peace Corps should remain independent. But so long as it is, it will remain an orphan child of the foreign policy community, perennially under-funded and lacking national strategic attention.)

The Director of USPDA should be a Deputy Secretary of State and a statutory observer in the National Security Council at the same rank as the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Finally, in order that a culture of public diplomacy and strategic influence develop at State, fifty percent of all ambassadorships and Deputy Assistant Secretaryships going to career Foreign Service Officers should be given to personnel who spend the larger part of their careers at USPDA.

Within the new agency should reside a couple of relevant offices. These should include:

- An office to counter Jihadist propaganda. It took the State Department over a decade to establish such a function within its walls: originally the Center for Strategic Counter-terrorism Communications, now the Global Engagement Center. This was a long overdue, but excellent development that needs much greater resources, both human and financial, as well as specialized training and targeted hiring of personnel who are optimally intellectually equipped to fight a war of information and ideas.
- An office specializing in semantics as a key component of information and counter-propaganda.
- An office with a robust capability to do foreign audience and opinion research and to hire private organizations or companies that possess unique capabilities.
- A Bureau of Education, Culture, and Ideas, within which should reside an office of religious and ideological affairs charged with strategic policy making and implementation in ideological warfare.
- An equivalent of the USIA's Office of Private Sector Programs, which gave grants to private organizations to do work best done by groups other than the U.S. government such as the aforementioned GoodOfAll, Asia America Initiative, and LibForAll.
- An office that would provide counterintelligence protection of U.S. public diplomacy programs against penetrations by foreign agents of influence.

The Central Intelligence Agency must embark on a major revival of its covert political influence capabilities. There are limits as to how much U.S. government representatives can say to Islamic audiences concerning issues of radical Jihad. Many of the messages on this score must come from politically moderate Muslims who do not seek radical Jihadist domination and are capable of arguing against the killing of innocents. Such voices must be supported quietly and covertly. They must be given funding, media assistance, and possibly even physical protection.

During the Cold War, the CIA operated broadcasting stations, published and distributed newsletters, books, and other literature, subsidized journals of opinion, and established front organizations. It funneled funds to supportive foreign organizations. It distributed communications equipment to resistance cells within totalitarian regimes. It needs to do all these activities and more – and do so secretly to maximize their effectiveness.

The Defense Department has capabilities to conduct many related activities. Its Military Information Support Operations have considerable cultural knowledge and cross-cultural communication capabilities. They are under-funded and under-emphasized in overall defense strategy. Similarly, the Special Operations Command can fulfill a variety of relevant functions in areas where it has its personnel.

The FBI and local law enforcement agencies have a key role in fighting this war as well. They need significantly improved capabilities to distinguish between ordinary Muslims and radical Jihadists when it comes to their efforts at domestic intelligence and community outreach. This requires better education in history, religion, and ideology.

Finally, the Department of Homeland Security, in collaboration with the State Department, must have similarly improved analytical capabilities to determine whom to admit to the United States. A simple but essential solution, even in the absence of such capabilities, is to include a key question on every application for a visa to enter the country. Like the questions asking the applicant whether he or she has ever been a member or supporter of the Nazi or Communist parties, each applicant should be asked if he or she supports the establishment of Sharia law in the United States. If the person answers in the affirmative, he or she should be disqualified from entry: Sharia law necessarily means the overthrow of the Constitution of the United States. If the person answers in the negative, but later proves to be a Sharia advocate, such a person, having lied on the application, should be deported.

All these institutional solutions, however, most of which I cover in greater detail in my book *Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy*, require strong leadership from the White House and funding that meets the national strategic need.<sup>8</sup> Public diplomacy, strategic influence, and ideological warfare are dramatically less expensive than fighting kinetic wars. It is about time that the United States equips itself intellectually, institutionally, culturally, and financially to conduct methods of non-violent conflict before resorting to killing people to defend our vital interests.

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<sup>8</sup> John Lenczowski, *Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy: Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2011). For some updated thoughts of mine on this, please see: "Integrating Non-Military Arts of Statecraft to Address National Security Threats," *World Affairs*, Summer 2016.

Mr. SMITH. Doctor, thank you very much for those very thoughtful remarks.

Dr. Syeed?

**STATEMENT OF SAYYID SYEED, PH.D., SENIOR ADVISOR, OFFICE OF INTERFAITH AND COMMUNITY ALLIANCES, ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA**

Mr. SYEED. Thank you.

Distinguished leaders, greetings of peace, and, in Arabic, assalamu alaykum. Thank you for inviting me to this hearing, a valuable opportunity to present my understanding, experience, and vision about the role of Islam in promoting peaceful societies and our ability to counter the violent extremism not only in Muslim societies, among Muslims, but for people of all faiths and no faith.

The past October marked the 19th anniversary of the landmark International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which upholds religious freedom as a core American value and a universal human right. The law calls for the U.S. Government to stand “for liberty and with the persecuted, to use and implement appropriate tools in the United States foreign policy apparatus . . . to promote respect for religious freedom by all governments and all peoples.”

This institutional landmark act is very important not just for us as Americans but for us as humanity. Nearly two decades after the law’s passage, freedom of religion or belief is unfortunately an unrealized ideal in too many parts of the world. The essence of Islam can be summarized as “those who protect and promote religious freedom.” I will elaborate on this further in my speech as I give you a brief background of myself and of the American Muslims.

The Muslim community is as diverse as America itself, as humanity itself. We have members from all colors and ethnicities, from all schools of thought. Our success to bring them together and build institutions in large numbers—several thousand Islamic centers, several hundred full-time Islamic schools, and hundreds of Sunday schools—is a historical achievement by itself. The evolution of this community over half a century has strengthened my vision and that of my colleagues in democratic and pluralist institutions as most congenial for Islam as a faith and for Muslims believing in a peaceful message of Islam.

Our vision of Islam was developed from the historical vision of the Prophet of Islam when he migrated from his hometown, Mecca, to Medina, where he recognized and respected the diversity of the population in terms of their faith and tribes.

In his hometown, he was dealing with one tribe, the Quraysh, his own kith and kin, who persecuted him and his followers and did not allow him to teach and preach his religion. In contrast, he chose to move to a city where he invited representatives of different tribes—Aws, Khazraj, immigrants from Mecca, and several different Jewish tribes—and, jointly, with all of them, drafted a constitution of Medina state where all the participating entities were given freedom to practice their religion and collectively be responsible for the welfare, safety, and security of the new state.

This Medina constitution has served as a reminder for us as a forerunner of the United States Constitution giving us individual rights and freedom of religion. While developing our Muslim com-



munity, we had to educate our members that the only way we could develop our congregations and communities was to incorporate our organizations and adopt constitutions. This helped our members to become religiously conscious of the rights and duties, rules and regulations that govern our Islamic Centers, our umbrella organization with which these centers were affiliated.

This provided a rich experience in mutual respect, power sharing, membership of men and women in administering our institutions. Eventually, we have by now Muslim women not only serving on the boards of Islamic organizations but heading national institutions.

The Medina model of the Prophet, after his passing away and after the four successors became irrelevant because of the dynastic rule of monarchy for all the subsequent centuries. Today, Muslim countries that are independent and are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) because they are Muslim-majority countries are ruled by either monarchs or dictators. The American Muslim community is the only Muslim community in the world that has lived in a democracy with a constitutional commitment to freedom of religion, highlighting the essence of Islam and promotion of human rights.

There have been times when hatred against Islam has resulted in dangerous acts of violence and intolerance. But it is in those times, those moments of challenge that we have experienced the highest level of support from other faith groups denouncing hate against Muslims in the name of religion.

When the pastor in Florida threatened to burn the Koran as a means of intensifying hate against Muslims and Islam, the major religious organizations in America—National Council of Churches, Catholic Conference of Bishops, Union of Reform Judaism, American Baptist Church, and others—came forward to denounce the pastor's hateful rhetoric and expressed their support to me, representing the largest and oldest Islamic organization.

And they held a press conference in Washington, DC, and established a campaign called, "Shoulder to Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims Against Anti-Muslim Sentiment, Upholding American Values." This campaign is steered and funded by more than 30 Christian and Jewish national organizations here to date.

The Koranic verse, "There is no compulsion in religion," has been our guiding light. We have people coming into Islam and going out of Islam. We are proud to say that we have a large number of leaders of the American Muslim community who were not born Muslims. We are aware of Muslims who have, of their free will, chosen to give up their religion. We find nothing in the Koran or in the example of the Prophet that would have commanded us not to allow such a free will to be treated with respect to the choice of religion or no religion.

It has been painful at times for us to see some hatemongers producing cartoons and false allegations against our prophet. While it is our duty to promote a better understanding about our prophet's life and contributions, we cannot fight hate with hate. Again, we find in the life of the Prophet instances where he was directly insulted but he prayed for the misguided for peace and guidance.

However, we should not allow extremists to take actions in the name of Islam as a means of retaliation.

We have built robust partnerships with people of other faiths and celebrated theological developments that we appreciate as Muslims. The *Nostra Aetate* from the Second Vatican opened the doors for Catholics to remove the stigma against Jews as the ones responsible for the crucifixion and for welcoming Abrahamic roots of Judaism and Islam. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* in 2015 with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops as a welcome reform within Christianity.

We celebrated this year the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's desire to understand Islam and engage with it and his commissioning the translation of the Koran for the first time in Christian history.

We have worked with various denominations of Judaism to have a better understanding between Jewish and Muslim communities under our joint project called Children of Abraham.

These achievements in the understanding of our faith in a pluralist society have tremendous implications for the Muslim world. The books, the electronic materials are of utmost importance for giving hope and confidence to our new generations around the globe.

Our American Constitution provides us the opportunity for life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness—the three key elements of human rights. American Muslims have thrived due to the liberties that every American citizen in this great country can enjoy.

Now is a time when we need to work together as Americans. The best of America is represented as “love thy neighbor,” and, as neighbors, I am always heartened to see organizations like Islamic Relief working directly with government and interfaith organizations alike to solve the problems and bring relief. The work of LDS Charities, United Methodist Church, Catholic Relief Services, and many more, in partnership with Islamic Relief USA, rebuild our Nation's communities and give hope to them.

When we work together across all faiths, America is stronger. Organizations like Guidance Residential, which provides American Muslims the opportunity to be compliant with their sharia requirement to buy their homes without interest—and it is amazing that 97 percent of the people who are benefiting from Guidance Residential are not Muslims.

American Muslims flourish when America flourishes, and America excels when all of its citizens excel. For us to make America great, we have to reach out to all Americans of all faiths, all ethnicities, all backgrounds with respect and dignity, opening up opportunities and prosperity for all.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity to be here with you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Syeed follows:]

Testimony of Sayyid M. Syeed

Senior Advisor

Islamic Society of North America

Date Dec 6, 2017

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

Distinguished Leader,

Greetings of Peace, and in Arabic Assalamu Alaykum

Thank you for inviting me to this hearing, a valuable opportunity to present my understanding, experience and vision about the role of Islam in promoting peaceful societies and our ability to counter the violent extremism not only in Muslim societies, among Muslims, but for people of all faiths and no faith.

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This institutional landmark Act is very important not just for us as Americans but for us as humanity. Nearly two decades after the law’s passage, freedom of religion or belief is unfortunately an unrealized ideal in too many parts of the world. The essence of Islam can be summarized as those who protect and promote religious freedom. I will elaborate this further in my speech as I give you a brief background of myself and American Muslims.

I have provided leadership at various levels in the emergence of Muslim community in America, in building Islamic centers and communities from city to city, state to state . I have led to the formation of the largest and the oldest Islamic organization, Islamic Society of North American better known as ISNA, where I served as its Secretary General (National Executive Director) at its headquarters in Indianapolis and later established an office for this organization on the Capitol Hill for interfaith dialogue and partnership building and outreach to various government branches at the federal level. The organization under ISNA was formally known as Muslim Students Association, under my Presidency of MSA in the 70s I transformed the Organization to

take the next step from being a student based organization to a communal based national organization.

Muslim community is as diverse as America itself, as human kind itself. We have members from all colors, all ethnicities and all different schools of thought. Our success to bring them together and build institutions in large numbers, several thousand Islamic centers, several hundred full time Islamic schools and hundreds of Sunday schools is a historical achievement by itself. The evolution of this community over half a century has strengthened my vision and of my colleagues in democratic and pluralist institutions as most congenial for Islam as a faith and for Muslims believing in a peaceful message of Islam.

Our vision of Islam was developed from the historical vision of the Prophet of Islam when he migrated from his home town Mecca to Madinah where he recognized and respected the diversity of the population in terms of their faiths and tribes. In his home town, he was dealing with one tribe, the Quraish, his own kith and kin, who persecuted him and his followers and did not allow him to teach and preach his religion. In contrast he chose to move to a city where he invited representatives of different tribes, Aws, Khazraj, immigrants from Mecca, and several different Jewish tribes and jointly with all of them drafted a constitution of Madina state where all the participating entities were given freedom to practice their religions and collectively be responsible for the welfare, safety, security of the new state.

This Madina Constitution has served as a reminder for us as a forerunner for the United States 'constitution giving us individual rights and freedom of religion. While developing our Muslim community we had to educate our members that the only way we could develop our congregations and communities was to incorporate our organizations and adopt constitutions. This helped our members to become religiously conscious of the rights and duties, rules and regulations that governed our Islamic Centers, our umbrella organization with which these centers were affiliated.

This provided a rich experience in mutual respect, power sharing, membership of men and women in administering our institutions. Eventually, we have by now, Muslim women not only serving on the board of Islamic organizations but heading national Islamic institutions.

The Madina model of the Prophet after his passing away, and after the 4 rightly guided Caliphs became irrelevant because of the dynastic rule of monarchy for all the subsequent centuries. Today Muslim countries that are independent and are members of OIC because they are Muslim majority countries, are ruled by either monarchs or dictators. American Muslim community is the only Muslim community in the world that has lived in a democracy with a constitutional commitment to freedom of religion, highlighting the essence of Islam and promotion of Human Rights.

There have been times when hatred against Islam has resulted in dangerous acts of violence and intolerance. But it is in those moments of challenge we have experienced the highest level of support from other faith groups denouncing hate against Muslims in the name of religion.

When the pastor in Florida threatened to burn the Quran as a means of intensifying hate against Muslims and Islam, the major religious organizations in America, National Council of Churches, Catholic Conference of Bishops, Union of Reform Judaism, American Baptist Churches and others came forward to denounce the Pastor's hateful rhetoric and expressed their support to me and to my organization. They came to a major press conference on September 7, 2010 at the National Press Building to make a powerful statements against anti Muslim sentiment. They also established a campaign called **Shoulder to Shoulder Standing with American Muslims Against Anti Muslim Sentiment, Upholding American Values**. This campaign is steered and funded by more than 30 Christian and Jewish, national and regional organizations working hard to keep our country free from hate against Muslims.

The Quranic verse (2: 256) " There is no Compulsion in Religion" has been our guiding light. We have people coming into Islam and going out of Islam. We are proud to say th at we have a large number of leaders of the American Muslims who were not born Muslims. We are aware of Muslims who have of their free will chosen to give up their religion. We find nothing in the Quran or in the example of the Prophet that would have commanded us not to allow such a free will to be treated with respect to the choice of religion or no religion. I know of examples where someone came and embraced Islam and in time relapsed back . Our scholars have convened conferences and discussions and found nothing in the Quran or in the practice of the Prophet against freedom of religion.

It has been painful at times for us to see some hatemongers producing cartoons and false allegations against our Prophet. While it is our duty to promote a better understanding about our Prophet's life and contributions, we cannot fight hate with hate. Again, we find in the life of the Prophet instances where he was directly insulted but he prayed for the misguided for peace and guidance. However, we should not allow extremists to take actions in the name of Islam as a means of retaliation.

We have built robust partnerships with people of other faiths and celebrated theological developments that we appreciate as Muslims. The Nostra Aetate from the Second Vatican, opened the doors for Catholics to remove the stigma against Jews as the ones responsible for the crucifixion, and welcoming Abrahamic roots of Judaism and Islam. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate in 2015 with US Conference of Catholic Bishops as a welcome reform within Christianity. We celebrated the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's desire to understand Islam and commission the translation of the Quran for the first time.

We have worked with various denominations of Judaism to have a better understanding between Jewish and Muslim communities under our joint project called Children of Abraham. Several books have been published to enhance the understanding and solidarity between the two communities. In 2016 with partnership of American Jewish Committee and several

prominent Jewish and Muslim leaders here in the US, we launched the Muslim Jewish Advisory Council which focusses on the rise of Hate Crimes.

These achievements in the understanding of our own faith in a pluralist society have tremendous implications for the Muslim world. The books, electronic materials are of utmost importance for giving hope and confidence to our new generations around the globe.

In 2015 we took the step to take the values we as American Muslims cherish to our International counterparts, with the help of King Mohammed the Sixth of Morocco we were able to bring the leaders of OIC and leaders of Muslim Majority Communities together and recreate a Madinah Charter like statement which came to be known as Marrakesh Declaration. The leaders of these countries and institutions proclaimed the protection and promotion of minority religions in their home countries.

Our American Constitution provides us the opportunity for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, the three key elements of human rights. American Muslims have thrived due to the liberties that every American citizen in our great country can enjoy. Now is a time when we need to work together as Americans. The best of America is represented as “love thy neighbor”, and as neighbors, I am always heartened to see organizations like Islamic Relief working directly with government and interfaith organizations alike to solve problems and bring relief. The work of LDS Charities, United Methodist Church, Catholic Relief Services and many more in partnership with Islamic Relief USA – rebuilds our nation’s communities and gives hope. When we work together, across all faiths, America is stronger. Organizations like Guidance Residential which provides American Muslims the opportunity to be compliant in their faith and not have interest in home purchase also allow those of not Islamic faith or of no faith to also purchase homes at no interest.

American Muslims flourish when America flourishes and America excels when all of its citizens excel. For us to make America great we have to reach out to all Americans of all faiths, all ethnicities, all backgrounds with respect and dignity opening up opportunities and prosperity for all.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to be here with you today.

Peace be with you.

Sayyid M. Syeed

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Mr. SMITH. Dr. Syeed, thank you very much for your testimony and leadership.

I would like to now yield the floor to Mr. Hicks.

**STATEMENT OF MR. NEIL HICKS, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION, HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST**

Mr. HICKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and other members of the subcommittee, thank you for convening this hearing to call attention to what we at Human Rights First view as the imperative need to include human rights promotion as an indispensable element of effective policy aimed at countering and preventing violent extremism.

Counterterrorism measures that are not rooted in respect for human rights risk being counterproductive. The recent histories of numerous countries, Egypt being one important example, point to the dangers inherent in counterterrorism responses that are overly focused on military force, repression, and denial of human rights. These approaches fuel grievances, which create escalating cycles of violence between state security forces and violent extremists that become hard to contain.

Human Rights First is concerned that the Trump administration has exhibited a marked preference for close cooperation with authoritarian leaders in the struggle against terrorism and violent extremism instead of emphasizing the need for U.S. partners to end violations and extend human rights protections as an integral part of shared efforts to prevent extremism and combat terrorism.

The clearest example of this approach may be seen in President Trump's speech at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh on May the 21st of this year. Trump spoke of a new chapter and of new approaches, but there is nothing new about a U.S. approach to the Middle East rooted in alliances with authoritarian governments.

By aligning the United States uncritically with a Saudi-led authoritarian regional order, President Trump may hope that he is turning the clock back to a more stable time. But the protracted collapse and inherent instability of the Arab authoritarian order has been one of the root causes of both the spread of terrorism over the last 20 years and of the region's many unresolved conflicts, which have provided hospitable territory and recruitment opportunities for violent extremist groups.

One of the few specific policy proposals in the Riyadh speech was a call on all nations of conscience to isolate Iran. President Trump is right to point to destabilizing activities of the regime in Tehran, but a one-sided position in the regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has taken on an increasingly inflammatory sectarian tone in recent years thanks to the policies of both sides, will only escalate violence and instability.

In Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi seized power in July 2013 on a promise of restoring order and defeating extremism and terrorism, but his methods have made things far worse. Violence has risen, claiming civilian and military casualties on an unprecedented scale.

The virulent anti-Sufi propaganda of ISIS was a clear contributory factor in the recent mosque attack in Sinai. This sectarian hate speech is propagated by the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia and put into bloody practice by ISIS. After this latest atrocity, President Trump should be urgently in touch with his friends in Riyadh to end the incitement to violence against Sufis in Saudi religious teaching.

A secondary way the U.S. Government can exert influence is through its military and intelligence cooperation on counterterrorism issues with countries like Egypt. The Congress has been raising concerns that President Sisi's counterterrorism approach is exacerbating the problem, but much more needs to be done.

The Senate version of the 2018 appropriations bill includes some strong and specific language imposing human rights conditions on military assistance but specifically exempts funds appropriated for counterterrorism from these conditions.

The Egyptian Government claims success in its fight against terrorism because it is killing terrorists and denying ISIS control of territory. But killing and destruction are not deterring Egypt's terrorists. Sisi's government is badly in need of a new plan, and the U.S. Government should be forthright in urging Cairo to look beyond a failed security-centric approach.

Absence of state control over territory has been a factor in the development of violent extremism in Syria and Iraq. The devastating conflict in Syria and Iraq has been fueled by sectarian incitement exacerbating divisions between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia has heightened the sectarian character of the conflict and thereby made sectarianism a primary driver of violent extremism in many parts of the region.

The Tunisian context provides a point of contrast. Avoiding falling into the declining spiral of a destructive binary struggle between authoritarianism and violent extremism is something that binds Tunisians together despite abiding political differences, a weak economy, and a fragile internal security situation.

Tunisia is not paradise. Its discontented youth have provided thousands of foreign fighters to ISIS and Syria. In part, this is a product of the lingering harm inflicted by decades of authoritarian rule, notably the weakening of traditional religious power centers, tainted by close association with state authorities. Corruption, youth unemployment, and lack of opportunity fuel grievances, especially among educated youth, who have ready access to the internet and social media.

Tunisia's democratic transition has particular importance to the struggle against violent extremism on a regional and global level. It offers an alternative way that breaks out of the vicious circle of perpetual conflict between authoritarianism and extremism.

To succeed, Tunisia will need the sustained support of the international community. It will also need to continue to implement and practice the maxim that fighting terrorism is not just something that the state does for its people, it is something that people are motivated to do for themselves, in partnership with the state and the security forces, but also through strong, independent civil society organizations.



The United States can do much more to confront violators and, perhaps even more importantly, to reinforce the link between human rights and security. Too many governments continue to view human rights as an obstacle to security-related efforts. It is, therefore, incumbent on the United States to explain why the exact opposite is true.

There are positive human rights objectives to be advanced that should be at the center of bilateral relationships with partners in the multilateral struggle against terrorism.

Closing space for civil society in peaceful political activities facilitates the expansion of violent extremism and terrorism. Conversely, respecting fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of assembly and association, is one of the most important defense mechanisms against violent extremism.

Respect for religious freedom is an essential part of countering violent extremism, as Dr. Farr explained. A comprehensive strategy must address the religious and ideological narratives that lure the vulnerable and disenfranchised segments of society to violent extremism.

To be effective as counterweights to extremist discourse, religious institutions must be, and be seen to be, independent of political control, and governments must ensure that diverse religious views are not only tolerated but encouraged.

One of the primary root causes that must be addressed more vigorously is the proliferation of armed conflicts and of ungoverned spaces that provide opportunity to violent extremist groups.

The United States, because of its unique reach and influence, has an inescapable responsibility to lead and energize multilateral efforts through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to end these devastating conflicts. The absence of effective conflict-resolution mechanisms on both national and international levels is one of the greatest challenges to the implementation of a comprehensive countering-violent-extremism strategy.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hicks follows:]

**Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism**

**Testimony of Neil Hicks**

**Director, Human Rights Promotion, Human Rights First**

**Before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human  
Rights, and International Organizations**

December 6, 2017

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass and other members of the sub-committee:

Thank you for convening this hearing to call attention to what we at Human Rights First view as the imperative need to include human rights promotion as an indispensable element of effective policy aimed at countering and preventing violent extremism.

National counterterrorism measures that are not rooted in respect for human rights risk being counterproductive. When governments stifle peaceful dissent, muzzle the media, and prevent the legitimate activities of non-violent civil society organizations, they are not countering extremism; they are fomenting it.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, we at Human Rights First have focused on the human rights consequences of counterterrorism policies, including those of the U.S. government, as well as many countries abroad. We have spotlighted and campaigned against the tendency of numerous governments—at times claiming to be following the example of U.S. government—to use the climate of urgency and fear around the need to counter terrorism as justification for violating human rights.

Unfortunately, in the aftermath of 9/11, through the use of torture, rendition, indefinite detention, and the use of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, the United States set a damaging and counter-productive global precedent when it reacted to the

threat of terrorism by retreating from the rule of law, violating human rights, and over-emphasizing security-centric counterterrorism measures.

Our experience, and our cooperation with retired generals and admirals, veteran interrogators, and other security-sector leaders, has affirmed that counterterrorism efforts that curtail basic rights are not only immoral and illegal, but also counterproductive.

The recent histories of numerous countries—Egypt being one important example—point to the dangers inherent in counterterrorism responses that are overly focused on military force, repression, and denial of human rights. These approaches have a tendency to fuel grievances, which are in turn exploited by extremist groups. This dynamic creates escalating cycles of violence between state security forces and violent extremists that become hard to contain.

We welcome the subcommittee's emphasis on the link between advancing human rights and preventing violent extremism. The previous administration's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiative was based on the premise that promoting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law calms the grievances on which violent extremism feeds. The UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006, which built on a flurry of largely U.S.-led activity after 2001, emphasized the need "to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism." Since then, many governments have paid lip-service to the need to protect human rights in fighting terrorism, but have nonetheless adopted policies that violated human rights.

Regrettably, in U.S. foreign policy, a short-term interest in cooperation with authoritarian governments has too often prevailed over the long-term imperative to end the oppressive governance that has been a major driver of violent extremism.

#### **Trump Administration Policies**

Human Rights First is concerned that the Trump administration has exhibited a marked preference for close cooperation with authoritarian leaders in the struggle against terrorism and violent extremism, instead of emphasizing the need for U.S. partners to end violations and extend human rights protections as an integral part of shared efforts to prevent extremism and combat terrorism.

The clearest example of this approach may be seen in President Trump's speech at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on May 21 of this year. Trump spoke of "a new chapter" and of "new approaches," but there is nothing new about a U.S. approach to the Middle East rooted in alliances with authoritarian governments. United States policy in the Middle East has largely been based on this model for the last seventy years, with a few short intermissions. The results of this approach speak for themselves.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the refusal of authoritarian Arab states to respond to the aspirations of their growing populations has presented a constant challenge to the United States. Successive administrations have struggled with crises, from Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1991, to the 9/11 attacks ten years later, to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq that followed. The Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 showed again the instability created by unreconstructed authoritarian rule in the region.

Alarmed by the tide of change sweeping away entrenched authoritarian rulers, Saudi Arabia and other GCC states have spent the last six years trying to shore up the rickety authoritarian state order, with distinctly mixed results. A Saudi-led military intervention in Bahrain has succeeded in pushing back popular demands for more representative government on the island, and the Saudis, together with other GCC states, have been the major backers of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's restoration of military-backed authoritarian rule in Egypt, but these countries remain deeply divided. A major Saudi military intervention in Yemen has embroiled the country in a prolonged war and caused a humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, the devastating war in Syria continues, spreading instability throughout the region and beyond. Conflicts also continue in Iraq and Libya.

By aligning the United States uncritically with a Saudi-led authoritarian regional order, President Trump may hope that he is turning the clock back to a more stable time. But the protracted collapse and inherent instability of the Arab authoritarian order has been one of the root causes of both the spread of terrorism over the last twenty years, and of the region's many unresolved conflicts, which have provided hospitable territory and recruitment opportunities for violent extremist groups.

In his May speech, President Trump referred several times to the "shared values" of the United States and his Saudi hosts. Yet the president himself tweeted in June 2016 that the Saudis "want women as slaves and to kill gays." Leaders of GCC states proudly assert that they "do not share our values," so it is hard to understand why the president should insist that they do. Despite Saudi claims of moderation and co-existence, they jail non-violent critics, deny women basic rights, forbid religious freedom

and propagate a harsh, sectarian interpretation of Islam around the world that has inspired the ideology of terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qa'eda. Just a few weeks before President Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom used its influence to persuade its allies on the UN Security Council, Egypt and Senegal, to block a move to add the Saudi ISIS affiliate to the UN's list of terrorist groups. Simply put, the values that the Saudi government stands for and propagates are very much part of the problem, not the solution. By pretending otherwise, President Trump is willfully turning his back on reality.

One of the few specific policy proposals in the Riyadh speech was a call on "all nations of conscience to isolate Iran." President Trump is right to point to the destabilizing activities of the regime in Tehran, and we should call out the Iranian government for its abysmal approach to upholding human rights standards. Yet we need to grapple with the fact that many of Iran's actions are perceived in Tehran as defensive responses to threatening rhetoric from the United States, Saudi Arabia and other governments, and to the increasing U.S. military presence in Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq and Afghanistan. Such a one-sided position in the regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has taken on an increasingly inflammatory, sectarian tone in recent years thanks to the policies of both sides, will only escalate violence and instability.

Egypt is a key partner for the United States in the struggle against terrorism. The appalling massacre of at least 305 people attending prayers in a mosque in Rawda in Egypt's troubled North Sinai on November 24 should be a moment for reflection for all

those with the ability to influence the conduct of the Egyptian government's self-declared war on terrorism.

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi seized power in July 2013 on a promise of restoring order and defeating extremism and terrorism, but his methods have made things far worse. Violence has risen claiming civilian and military casualties on an unprecedented scale. Friday's attack was the most lethal terrorist attack in Egypt's history, but it fits into an escalating spiral of violence by the state and violent extremist groups that has claimed thousands of lives in the last four years.

Egypt has experienced spikes in violence before in conflict between the state and violent extremism. In the late 1980s, the state fought a brutal counter-terrorism campaign against Islamist extremists, mainly in Upper Egypt, killing hundreds, detaining tens of thousands and subjecting many to torture. It took a change in tactics, and the dismissal of the abrasive Minister of the Interior most associated with the crackdown to reduce the killing.

Egypt and the world has paid a high price for that episode--some of the leading figures in what became al-Qa'eda were radicalized by their experiences in Egypt's torture cells in the 1980s--so it is especially troubling to see the Sisi government repeating the same mistakes, but on an even bigger scale.

President Trump's tweeted response to the Rawdah mosque killings, as it so often has been after foreign terrorist attacks, was self-serving and unhelpful. President Sisi needs no encouragement to employ more military force in a futile, counterproductive bid to solve his security problems.

In Sinai, and increasingly throughout the country, the casualty statistics tell their own story. The Sinai insurgency long predates the Sisi presidency. Decades of marginalization and underdevelopment have fueled grievances among the population. However, Sisi's militarization of the conflict has greatly escalated the violence, as victims of state attacks have sought to take revenge on representatives of the security forces. The so-called Islamic State, or ISIS, has taken advantage of these grievances, providing fighters with the means and resources to carry out attacks, and injecting their poisonous, hate-filled, sectarian ideology, which explains the targeting of a mosque associated with a Sufi order for attack.

According to reports from witnesses collected by Egyptian journalists defying the government's reporting ban, the masked attackers flew the black flag of ISIS and referred to themselves as Mujahidin. They told their victims that they had defied instructions from ISIS not to engage in Sufi practices and therefore must be killed.

The virulently anti-Sufi propaganda of ISIS was a clear contributory factor in the attack. This sectarian hate speech is propagated by the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia and put into bloody practice by ISIS. After this latest atrocity Trump should be urgently in touch with his friends in Riyadh to end the incitement to violence against Sufis in Saudi religious teaching, but Trump's support for the aggressive sectarian agenda championed by the energetic Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has been so effusive and uncritical that such an approach hardly seems likely.

A second area where the U.S. government can exert influence is through its military and intelligence cooperation on counterterrorism issues with Egypt. The Congress has been raising concerns that Sisi's counterterrorism approach is



exacerbating the problem, but more needs to be done. The Senate version of [the 2018 Appropriations Bill](#) includes some strong and specific language imposing human rights conditions on military assistance, but specifically exempts funds appropriated for counterterrorism from these conditions. Earlier this year Secretary Tillerson denied over \$90 million of previously appropriated foreign assistance and withheld a further \$195 million of military assistance in part out of concern about human rights violations.

The Rawda massacre provides a moment for the U.S. government to urgently engage the Egyptian authorities on the disastrous results of Sisi's efforts to fight terrorism through almost exclusively military means. The Egyptian government claims success in its fight against terrorism because it is killing terrorists and denying ISIS control of territory but killing and destruction [are not deterring](#) Egypt's terrorists. Sisi's government is badly in need of a new plan and the U.S. government should be forthright in urging Cairo to look beyond a failed security-centric approach.

#### **Context Specific Examples**

The human rights discourse has been devalued in practice. The tide of instability that has taken the place of initial optimism after the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011 has paralyzed western policy makers. In the United States, the Obama administration had set as its goal disengagement from conflicts in the Middle East, an approach that has been continued by the Trump administration. In the absence of political will or popular support, the United States government determined that it could not exert sufficient weight or influence to shape events in conflict zones from Libya to Syria, to Yemen and Iraq. This left a void which the U.S. and other western governments have encouraged

their traditional authoritarian partners to fill. Thus the United States has turned a blind eye to the sustained repression of non-violent demands for more representative government in Bahrain, and has abetted the consolidation of power of Egypt's repressive former military leader, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, sustained by massive injections of financial support from autocratic monarchies in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Obama administration's single-minded pursuit of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action deal to prevent the development of nuclear weapons by the Iranian government also had human rights costs. In return for acceptance of the deal by skeptical allies, like Saudi Arabia, the administration gave its support to Saudi Arabia's military operations in Yemen. The priority given to the nuclear deal has meant that less pressure has been applied to Iran to rein in its support for the murderous tactics pursued by its ally, President Assad in Syria, than might otherwise have been the case.

In **Egypt**, severe repression of Islamists and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular has driven elements within the Muslim Brotherhood towards violent confrontation with the authorities. Violent extremist groups have been strengthened by the disastrous political trajectory of the Brotherhood: from being a majority in the parliament, through the Freedom and Justice Party, and having one of its leaders, Mohamed Morsi, elected as Egypt's first civilian president in 2012, to military take-over in July 2013, the killing of hundreds of its supporters in street protests, and the jailing of tens of thousands more in a continuing state-backed campaign of repression marked by disregard of national and international legal standards.

While there is a legitimate debate to be had about the sincerity of the Brotherhood's long-term commitment to open, pluralistic politics; the Egyptian authorities' decision to remove a democratically elected president, and then to subject his supporters to a sustained wave of state reprisals of a brutality not seen in Egypt since the 1960s cannot fail to have fueled the narrative of violent Islamist extremists.

Such extremists point to the plight of the Brotherhood in Egypt and draw two lessons: 1) State structures will never allow a democratically elected Islamist party to govern; and 2) the Islamist project can only be advanced through violent means, such as those advocated by al-Qa'eda and the so-called Islamic State.

In that respect, the lawless repression imposed on the Brotherhood and its supporters in Egypt since July 2013 has been a driver of violent extremism on a national and regional level.

With the Brotherhood's senior political leadership – who had over decades agreed upon and implemented a program of engagement with non-violent elective politics – in jail or in exile, more radical elements, who favor violent confrontation with the state, are gaining influence. Continuing attacks against police and military personnel, and against members of the judiciary are the products of this turn towards violent extremism by some Islamists in Egypt.

The harsh treatment inflicted on Islamist detainees in Egyptian prisons, where use of torture is on the increase and sexual humiliation is common, also fuels grievances that are exploited by violent extremists. The increasing use of secret unregulated detention centers and arbitrary detention removes oversight and facilitates abuses against detainees only exacerbates the problem.

Islamists are not the only victims of state violence and repression in Egypt and yet it is Islamist groups, notably Ansar Beit al-Maqdes which later declared itself to be the Sinai Province of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, that have been involved in most of the violent attacks since the military takeover. This points to the relevance of Islamist ideology as a mobilizing factor in violent extremism. Other persecuted groups, like secular youth activists associated with the 2011 uprising, or Copts, have not turned to political violence in the same way that some Islamists, including some part of Muslim Brotherhood supporters, have.

The weakness of state structures in the Sinai region has facilitated its becoming a focal point of violent extremism in Egypt. A local activist describes it as "a military zone caught in a spiral of terrorism, corruption and violence with thousands detained, hundreds killed and hundreds of houses destroyed."

Oversight of operations by security forces in Sinai has never been strong, but with the imposition of restrictions on press coverage of events in the Sinai, criminal penalties for casting doubt on official accounts of security incidents and a worsening security situation there is effectively no oversight, and little public attention inside or outside Egypt, to an increasingly violent conflict.

Absence of state control over territory has been a factor in the development of violent extremism in **Syria** and **Iraq**. Syria also presents one of the clearest examples of the self-sustaining symbiotic relationship between a repressive government and terrorism. Leaders across the Middle East and Africa often seek to build legitimacy by portraying themselves as engaged in a life or death struggle protecting their nation

against terrorism, in so doing they have an interest in making their opposition appear to be as extreme as possible. Suppressing non-violent political opponents by restricting access to the media, and access to the political process means that the political choice becomes polarized between the authoritarian incumbent and the violent extremist alternative. This fuels violent extremism at the expense of non-violent, pluralistic politics. Syria is an extreme case of the government using terrorism to legitimize violent repression, thereby contributing to the growth of the most visible global violent extremist threat: the so called Islamic State or ISIS.

The massive humanitarian crisis in Syria also illustrates the fact that by far the greatest number of victims of terrorism perpetrated by Islamist extremist groups have been Muslim citizens of majority Muslim countries, notably Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. It is a grim irony that multilateral efforts to end the Syria conflict only moved up the policy agenda after high-profile terrorist attacks in the West, like the Paris attacks of November 2015, and after the mass migration of refugees fleeing conflict in Syria and Iraq into the European Union. This gives the impression that western governments only care about violent extremism when it has a direct impact on them, and that they are indifferent to the suffering of millions of victims of conflict in non-western countries. It is easy to see how this perceived lack of empathy might itself fuel grievances on which violent extremism can feed.

The devastating conflict in Syria and Iraq has been fueled by sectarian incitement fueling divisions between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. These sectarian fault lines have been exacerbated by the strong backing for the Assad regime from the Shi'a government in Tehran, and the deployment of Shi'a Hezbollah fighters, from Lebanon,

and military advisers from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps on the government's side. Sunni powers like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey have provided support to forces opposed to the Assad regime, including highly sectarian violent extremist groups. The proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia has heightened the sectarian character of the conflict and thereby made sectarianism a primary driver of violent extremism in many parts of the region with conflicts in Yemen and continuing tensions in Bahrain and within Saudi Arabia being worsened by sectarian incitement.

The Tunisian context provides a point of contrast. The negative experiences of other North African countries, notably Libya and Egypt where uprising and revolution have produced resurgent authoritarianism or chaotic internal conflict, are a cautionary tale. Avoiding falling into the declining spiral of a destructive binary struggle between authoritarianism and violent extremism is something that binds Tunisians together, despite abiding political differences, a weak economy and a fragile internal security situation.

**Tunisia** is not paradise; its discontented youth have provided thousands of foreign fighters to ISIS in Syria. In part this is a product of the lingering harm inflicted by decades of authoritarian rule, notably the weakening of traditional religious power centers, tainted by close association with state authorities. Corruption, youth unemployment and lack of opportunity fuel grievances, especially among educated youth, who have ready access to the Internet and social media. Like other Arab authoritarian governments, the Ben Ali regime suppressed non-violent Islamism thereby

ensuring that violent Islamists could make the case that they offered the only viable path to advance the Islamist political project.

This type of tactic, which is common to authoritarian regimes of the past and present in the Arab region, provides ideal conditions for the growth of violent extremism. When political dialogue is forbidden and discredited, extremists are empowered and extremist ideology vindicated. Suggesting that all Islamism is inevitably violent is self-fulfilling. It is especially dangerous in states where a significant proportion, or even the majority, of the political opposition to the government identifies as Islamist. By suppressing other types of political expression and organization, squeezing pluralism out of the system, authoritarian states have made this problem worse.

Tunisia's democratic transition has particular importance to the struggle against violent extremism on a regional and global level. It offers an alternative way that breaks out of the vicious circle of perpetual conflict between authoritarianism and extremism. To succeed, Tunisia will need the sustained support of the international community; it will also need to continue to implement in practice the maxim that fighting terrorism is not just something that the state does for its people; it is something that people are motivated to do for themselves in partnership with the state and the security forces, but also through strong, independent civil society organizations.

The United States maintains close relations with many states that are both engaged in active efforts to combat terrorism and engaging in systematic violations of human rights. It should not be a surprise that these two conditions often coincide: states that violate human rights systematically produce violent extremism.

Key U.S. partners in the fight against violent extremism restrict rights and use the rubric of counterterrorism to do so. If the United States is to effectively champion a more effective strategy to counter violent extremism, then it must show its commitment to promoting human rights in its bilateral relationships.

We recognize that the U.S. government doesn't have a magic wand it can wave to bring a halt to these abuses. Even a robust relationship provides the United States with limited leverage over its partners' behavior. But the United States can do much more to confront violators and, perhaps even more importantly, to reinforce the link between human rights and security. Too many governments continue to view human rights as an obstacle to security-related efforts. It is therefore incumbent on the U.S. to explain why the exact opposite is true.

#### **Recommendations**

Human rights violations and the denial of rights and freedoms contribute to the problems of regional instability and violent extremism. Counterterrorism assistance should promote—rather than undermine—the rule of law and human rights. Human rights are not secondary in any strategy to promote stability and counter violent extremism; they are essential to its success.

#### **SECURITY FORCES**

- Human rights are key to achieving security and stability. The effectiveness of security forces will improve as relations with communities improve, which will in turn foster longer-term security. Security efforts rife with human rights violations undermine security and encourage violent extremism.



- The U.S. should upgrade its extensive military to military training programs to instill as a priority respect for human rights, transparency, pluralism, and the rule of law. U.S. security agencies should encourage the establishment of dedicated entities within security services that are responsible for investigating complaints of abuses and for ensuring compliance with the rule of law.
- In situations where other states are involved in armed conflicts with terrorist and/or insurgent groups, governments should include well-resourced training in international human rights law and international humanitarian law as an integral component of any form of military or other security assistance provided to that government.

#### COUNTERTERRORISM/CVE POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

- U.S. embassies should broaden dialogues with civil society and human rights groups in partner countries to include discussion of counterterrorism cooperation, the effects of U.S. assistance and to solicit recommendations for how the United States can advance human rights protections through its counterterrorism assistance.
- The U.S. should offer resources to local civil society figures and other community-based stakeholders to counter violent extremism and develop programming designed and/or implemented by those local groups

#### HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

- A civil society that is free to operate without intimidation or repression is a strong antidote to extremism, and the United States should protect civil society as part of its counterterrorism objectives.
- Protecting and promoting civil society is not just the job of the State Department, but includes the Department of Treasury, Defense, and Justice, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and other U.S. agencies engaged abroad. Senior U.S. officials of agencies, when travelling abroad, should actively seek opportunities to meet with representatives of civil society, especially those who face restrictions on their work and who may benefit from international support and solidarity.
- The U.S. should call public attention to incidents when international media, international human rights organizations and representatives of multilateral organizations that are denied access and call for them to be admitted.
- Senior U.S. officials should publicly urge the immediate release of all jailed human rights defenders and call for the lifting of restrictions on legitimate, non-violent human rights advocacy. Objections to restrictions on independent non-violent civil society activists should be on the agenda of every bilateral meeting until the country's crackdown on human rights defenders is ended.
- Local civil society groups and other community based stakeholders should be free to access resources from domestic and international sources to counter violent extremism and develop programming designed and implemented by those local groups.

#### U.S. EXPORT CONTROL OF ARMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

- U.S. government officials should conduct a comprehensive assessment of American sales of military and law enforcement equipment to ensure U.S. technology is not enabling the repression of civilians and thereby fueling the grievances on which violent extremism feeds.
- The Defense Department should insist that all future training of security force personnel in ethnically and religiously diverse countries should include proportionate representation of minority service men and women.
- U.S. government officials should enhance the export control process by strengthening existing restrictions and providing more funding for monitoring of the use of weapons and other equipment after sale.

#### LEAHY LAW

- The U.S. government should enhance the implementation of the Leahy Law so that it can be more effective ensuring that U.S. counterterrorism assistance does not support security forces engaged systematic violations of human rights.
- U.S. government officials should invest in remediation procedures to retrain, re-evaluate, and eventually restore access to units denied assistance under the Leahy Law vetting process.

#### COUNTER-THREAT FINANCE

- The U.S. government should modernize counter-threat finance to increase pressure on state supporters of violent extremist groups and promote inter-state

cooperation to halt support for those groups from private individuals and institutions.

- Where disclosure would not jeopardize efforts to prevent terrorism or cut off funds to terrorist groups, the U.S. government should confront partner nations with information on their role in enabling or actively financing violent extremists, through U.S. diplomatic channels, and hold partner governments accountable.
- The U.S. government should ensure governments do not use tools to block financing of terrorist groups, like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), as a justification for actions that crack down on legitimate civil society organizations and political expression.

### **Conclusion**

Beyond ensuring that bi-lateral relationships with authoritarian governments do not contribute to increased violations of human rights, thereby fueling grievances that can be exploited by terrorists and extremists, there are positive human rights objectives to be advanced that should be at the center of bi-lateral relationships with partners in the multilateral struggle against terrorism.

Closing space for civil society and peaceful political activities facilitates the expansion of violent extremism and terrorism. Conversely, respecting fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of assembly and association, is one of the most important defense mechanisms against violent extremism. Crackdowns on political dissent and diminishing space for political freedom reinforce extremist narratives and directly contribute to radicalization.

Respect for religious freedom is an essential part of countering violent extremism. The extremist discourse of some religious institutions is part of the problem; independence for those institutions is an essential part of the solution. A comprehensive strategy must address the religious and ideological narratives that lure the vulnerable and disenfranchised segments of society to violent extremism. To be effective as counterweights to extremist discourse, religious institutions must be—and be seen to be— independent of political control, and governments must ensure that diverse religious views are not only tolerated but encouraged.

One of the primary root causes that must be addressed more vigorously is the proliferation of armed conflicts and of ungoverned spaces that provide opportunities to violent extremist groups.

The United States, because of its unique reach and influence, has an inescapable responsibility to lead and energize multilateral efforts through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to end these devastating conflicts. The absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, on both national and international levels, is one of the greatest challenges to the implementation of a comprehensive countering violent extremism strategy.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Hicks, thank you for your testimony and your insights.

I would like to begin the questioning with Dr. Farr.

First, let me thank you. When you testified in September 2014 on the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, which was making its way through Congress, you made a number of recommendations, and they were, largely, many of them, incorporated into the bill, including the training of foreign service officers. So I want to thank you for those recommendations.

On Monday, I met again with Chaldean Catholic Bishop Bashar Warda, who I first met last year in Erbil. He has led the effort to help Christians and the Yazidis with critical humanitarian aid, including food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and spiritual help, because a lot of people were, as he said, unbelievably broken by ISIS, as they lost loved ones and, themselves, were tortured and the women often sexually abused.

We did not have, as I think everyone knows now, any U.S. foreign aid going to assist the Christians and the Yazidis. I went to an IDP camp with 6,000 people without a dime of U.S. support. That is in the process of changing.

But we introduced bipartisan legislation, H.R. 390, the Iraq and Syria Genocide Emergency Relief and Accountability Act. It passed the House last June. I would say, for the record, I am gravely disappointed that the Senate has one hold on it, and it has been released from committee but it still has not made its way to the floor. President Trump has said he will sign it. So it is a concern.

But I bring this up because, on Monday, Bishop Warda not only stressed urgency. It is winter. People are cold. They can get sick. They need humanitarian assistance. If it wasn't for the Knights of Columbus and others that forked over \$40 million, we would have had mass casualties and large numbers of deaths, particularly for children and the fragile elderly.

But he made the point that you made, Dr. Farr, and you said religious pluralism is a necessary condition for long-term stability in Iraq. We have heard that before. I heard it from Ceric, the former Grand Mufti of Bosnia, when I was in Sarajevo. And he said that Christians and the Muslims and the Jews need to work together, and we do. In come the radicals, and they change everything. There is the tipping point toward death and destruction. And he spoke out, I think, very boldly. He was concerned about the Wahhabis coming in and was very clear and open about it, which I found extremely refreshing and encouraging.

I heard the same thing when Bishop Angaelos testified here and talked about what the Coptic Christians do in Egypt. Not only should they live and thrive because they have a right, a universally recognized right, a great, historic faith tradition, but they also help the moderate Muslims in Egypt. And you have made that same point again. I would ask, if you could elaborate on that.

And I would also ask my second question to Dr. Lenczowski.

In your testimony, you spoke of the similarities between Marxism-Leninism and radical forms of Islamic thought. I am a great fan and I have read all the books by Solzhenitsyn, and I remember he talked about Marxism-Leninism being militant atheism. It is a hatred of God, certainly as we see God. And Solzhenitsyn made

that famous statement when he said, why did it all happen? All the mass killings, the attacks on Jews and everyone else—Christians, the Orthodox Church. And he says, because we have forgotten God.

And you have made the connection between these extremists. If you could elaborate on that, I think that would be very helpful for the committee.

And, finally, Dr. Syeed, you talked about no compulsion in religion. These are such wonderful words. There should be a right to believe or not to believe. When we did the Frank Wolf bill, the opening part of that was that it is a right. You can believe or not believe; it is up to you.

How do you convince other Muslims that there should be no compulsion in religion?

Dr. Farr?

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Just to restate, briefly, the question, and that is the importance of pluralism as stabilizing. If history teaches us anything on this issue, it is that, when any government or any state is completely dominated by one religion—and, of course, the history of Christianity and Catholicism helps us make this point. When the Church and the State are in cahoots in such a way that minorities are excluded, bad things happen to everybody, not just the minorities but the state and the majority religion. It is there. Our Founders understood it. This ought not to be rocket science for us today.

And yet we do not approach—“we” being the United States Government—do not approach this problem of Islamist extremism with this very simple, powerful, historical premise in mind that we, ourselves, as Americans, ought—it ought to be part of our DNA that if we do not—if we simply treat this as a humanitarian matter and spend money to return people to their homes but we don’t provide them the opportunity to be integrated into these societies as minorities with equal rights, then we will not have served anybody.

So this is why I put the emphasis on going to the stakeholders in Iraq in the example I gave, the Muslim stakeholders, to make a self-interest argument to them. It is not self-evident to them. They have not learned the lesson of Western history, if you will.

But this isn’t about criticizing Islam or anybody else. It is about making a very practical point: You will never live in peace and security if you don’t get this issue of pluralism right, and we can help.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Thank you, Congressman. You have asked a very interesting question about the relationship between Marxism, Leninism, and radical Islamism.

There are two basic dimensions of this. One is the rather explicit discussion of Marxist-Leninist strategy by Sayyid al-Qutb, who is one of the principal ideologues of radical Islamism, and who was an admirer of Communist tactics and Communist revolutionary practice. So that is one dimension of the radical Islamist agenda which has very much to do with the exercise and manipulation of power.

Perhaps the more interesting question has very much to do with theological and philosophical matters. As you said, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said that the problem is the rejection of God, both by communism and by secular elites in the West who have forgotten

the fundamental foundations that ultimately are the origins of our entire Western concept of human rights.

What is going on in Islam, first of all, with radical Islamists, is that they will take the Islamic doctrine that Allah is pure will and that Allah wills everything. He wills every minute, every second of every day. And that means he wills the cholera epidemic in Calcutta; he wills the rape of the 13-year-old girl.

And so, if he wills everything, then the terrorist can come along and say, well, if I want to kill 60 people in the marketplace in Baghdad and succeed in doing so, then Allah must have willed it. All of a sudden, the terrorist's will is equated with Allah's will. He becomes his own God in his sphere.

As Whittaker Chambers reminds us about communism, it goes back to the Garden of Eden, where the serpent tells Adam and Eve: Ye shall be as Gods. You can reject what the man upstairs is telling you to do and establish your own moral standards.

So this now gets into another very interesting question about Islam, which is the fact that there is no Islamic pope. There is no theological authority who can say that this is what the correct doctrine is. The religion is very much up for grabs, and people from many different sectors of the religion can claim authenticity based on citing their own selective passages from the Koran.

The Koran says, as Dr. Syeed says, that there is no compulsion in religion, but the Koran says other things about cutting the throats of infidels and that this can be done when people are at war with Islam. Well, this gets into the question of, well, is it true that infidels are at war with Islam?

There is a relativism in this which is very akin to the running of Marxist ideology, where you can determine what the proper doctrine is according to circumstances. In Lenin's famous speech to the youth leagues in 1920, he said: There is no such thing as objective moral standards. That is a bourgeois prejudice. The real moral standards are: Whatever is good is that which helps the revolution and whatever is evil is that which hinders the revolution. And so, blowing up a busload of innocent schoolchildren: Is that good or evil? Well, it all depends upon whether it helps the revolution. You can draw circumstances where it could do one or the other.

And so what you have here, when there is this kind of relativism within Islam, is that people can come along and say that the end justifies the means, which is what the Islamists do, and that is uncannily similar to the problem of Marxist-Leninist morality.

Mr. SYEED. Congressman, allow me to make a comment also.

Mr. SMITH. Push your button there.

Mr. SYEED. Oh, I am sorry.

Allow me to make a comment and bring a different comment on this.

He mentioned Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, who is being used and whose writings are being interpreted by the extremists. Sayyid Qutb came to America in the 1950s on a fellowship to Colorado. He stayed here for a year. There were no Muslims there. There was no Islamic center there. His language was very limited. He could not establish connections and communication and understand what is the strength of America, what I have been discussing.



Today, in Colorado, the same city where he came, we have more than a dozen Islamic centers. We have a vibrant Muslim community in Colorado. So you can imagine the difference and the distance of the experience.

Two years ago, we had a guest from Lebanon, Sheikh Abu Zayd. He was invited here to address the annual—this prayer breakfast that we have here in Washington. So he addressed there. Then I invited him to the Congress here on Friday. I am sure that you know that we have Friday prayer congregation in the Congress. So I knew about his orientation and understanding as a scholar, a highly respected scholar, so I asked him to come and give his sermon here. So he was amazed, he couldn't believe it, that there is Friday prayer being held in the Congress. And then he went from city to city addressing various Muslim communities, growing prosperous, and he went back to Lebanon.

Sayyid Qutb had written a book called, "America As I Saw It." And you can imagine what he had seen 60 years ago—very bleak for him, in terms of Islamic presence in America. And here you have Abu Zayd going and writing a book exactly with the same name, "America That I Have Seen." It is amazing how he feels so reassured that this is a country where Islam is flourishing and Muslims are dealing with their neighbors in a very positive and constructive way.

So what I am trying to say is that there are certain very clear declarations which make Islam what Islam is. One of them is "la ikraha fiddin." This is in the second chapter of the Koran, a very clear enunciation of the fundamental value of Islam.

Now, we never saw any deviation from it during the life of the Prophet. Rather, he benefited. He actually utilized his relationship with other faiths. When his people were being persecuted in Mecca, he told them the only people who can understand what I am trying to do here, to bring Islam, faith in one God and relationship with Jesus and Moses and so on, the only people who can help you from getting some help out of this torture and so on is a Christian country in our neighborhood—that is, in Ethiopia at that time. And, actually, a delegation of his followers, these Muslims, he went there and they came there. He gave them asylum. This was the relationship between Islam and Christianity.

But you are aware that during the medieval times the relationship was changed into a confrontational relationship. We had the Crusades for several, several hundred years. So, therefore, perceptions were changed. So that is why, during that period, if somebody abandoned Islam and joined something else, it was not just a change of heart, it was not just change of faith, it was changing alliance, becoming your enemy, and, therefore, it would not be tolerated. So the same verse was not in operation because it did not say "la ikraha fiddin"—"din" is "religion"—so they are thinking that it is actually a political affiliation. So the result is, in every Muslim country, it is part of our legal system there that a change of religion cannot be tolerated.

But for the first time during the last 50 years in this country, we have created these communities and neighborhoods. We have experienced how it is critical for us to benefit from the freedom of

religion. And we have not seen anywhere in the scripture against that.

I have been giving this example. I mean, how do we teach Muslims? It is very straightforward that we help them to understand the context and the Koranic—unqualified Koranic statement. So I wanted to give one example, if you think time will allow.

Ms. BASS. No, it doesn't.

Mr. SMITH. Briefly. I do have a meeting with Mitch McConnell that I have been trying for a month to get on H.R. 390, which is the bill that we are trying to get out of the Senate. But we will then yield to Ms. Bass, and Dan Donovan will take over in the chair.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good luck over there in the Senate.

I wanted to ask a couple of points of clarification.

Dr. Farr, when you were talking about religious freedom—and I agree with you. Of course, we need to have religious freedom. But I think about, in some of the places that we have been talking about today we can have all the religious freedom in the world, but if people don't have food, if people don't have a way to survive, then they are going to go with whatever group, organization, religion is going to provide them a way to survive.

And I think about religious pluralism, and I also think we are talking about Islam, but you can have the same tendencies on the other side too—so the idea that there might be some people that believe that Muslims shouldn't be allowed in Congress or that you should not take the oath of office with the Koran. And there have been sentiments like that here.

And so I just wanted to know if you would speak to that for a few minutes. And then I also wanted to talk about a few other things.

Mr. FARR. Well, thank you, Ms. Bass.

I agree with you in your earlier comments about the holistic approach. I think it is important that you have all of these considerations in a U.S. policy trying to undermine extremism. But it is my view that religious freedom has been the missing part of that policy, which has been the burden of what I have been trying to say. We have been pouring money into many societies for many years, with the intent of helping economic development, with the intent of helping civil society. All of these things I support. I think they are good. But religious freedom, as an aspect of this, I think, has been missing.

With respect to our need to—if I can rephrase slightly what you said—in our own country, to model religious freedom, I couldn't agree more. It is very important that, as we have done historically, never perfectly, but we have all agreed to the aspiration given to us by our Founders in the First Amendment that everyone in America has religious freedom, everyone has a voice. And I think that this is under siege, personally, from both sides—

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. FARR [continuing]. Of the aisle. I think we have a big problem in our country about religious freedom. And as I say in my testimony, it is very difficult to sell a product in which you no longer believe or which you are confused about.

So I think I am agreeing with you, Ms. Bass. I think this is very, very important that we talk about all of these things, them and us.

Ms. BASS. Exactly. And I worry about the individual in the Senate that we might confirm and then not give him the tools to actually do his job.

And I also worry about the vilification of Islam, that we collapse sometimes the distortion of Islam that has taken place with the religion itself.

And so some of your comments about—and I am sorry, I don't want to mispronounce your name—about Marxism-Leninism and ideology and all, I wanted you to expand on a little bit. Because you are making a comparison, I believe—and please correct me if I'm wrong—between Marxism-Leninism and radical Islam. And Marxism-Leninism, in terms of how you organize a society, the economic foundations of Marxism-Leninism, I just don't understand that comparison at all.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. The point that I was making has not so much to do with economic matters at all. Marxism-Leninism is a theory of knowledge, it is a theory of history, it is a theory of economy—

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. And all of that stuff. It is many, many things. But at the heart of it is a fundamental materialistic philosophy—

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. Which means the rejection of God, the rejection of any spiritual matters—

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. And the rejection, therefore, of objective moral standards—a transcendent, objective, universal moral order that either inheres in nature or comes from God. Objective moral standards of right and wrong can only come from those two places.

And the Marxism-Leninism—

Ms. BASS. Can only come from what places?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Objective standards of right and wrong can only come either by inhering in nature somehow or they can be given to us by God, by some higher moral intelligence that infuses them into the human heart. Either way, this is what the philosophers call the natural law.

Ms. BASS. Uh-huh.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. C.S. Lewis called it the law of decent behavior.

Ms. BASS. So if one under Marxism-Leninism does not subscribe to God, how does that relate to Islam—

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. It relates to Islam—

Ms. BASS [continuing]. That does believe in God?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. Because, first of all, under Marxism-Leninism, people choose what is right and wrong according to circumstances. In my little example of blowing up that school bus of children, if you blow it up and the result is that the people of the society reacts with sort of a police state reaction, huge new security measures, all kinds of people could become alienated from a police state environment and develop a revolutionary consciousness against the state. This will be good for the Marxist revolution.

Ms. BASS. We fight wars—

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. So that is one——

Ms. BASS. We fight wars——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Sure. But that is——

Ms. BASS [continuing]. To get rid of an ideology.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. That is one example.

But, alternatively, blowing up that school bus may awaken the sleeping giant of a complacent society to be more vigilant against revolutionary forces that blew up that bus. And so, people do terrorist acts as the “propaganda of the deed.”

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. It is to promote their political agenda. And so the radical Islamists perform these “propaganda acts of the deed” because they believe that it is morally correct——

Ms. BASS. So——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. Which means they are rejecting the natural law——

Ms. BASS. So let me——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. View of this, and——

Ms. BASS. Let me just explain to you what I am concerned about, because—and I am not sure, again, if you were saying this, and if you weren’t, tell me.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Yes.

Ms. BASS. If we view this from the perspective that the way we should proceed is the way we did during the anti-Communist period, and if you take the continent of Africa, for example, we made some pretty bad decisions because we were fighting communism. So we chose some bad sides. We supported apartheid, we supported colonial powers, because we were trying to defeat communism instead of addressing the main point, which is why people were driven toward one ideology or another. It was because people were trying to survive, and they were trying to address their socioeconomic conditions.

So when I hear you, I feel like you might be saying that the way we need to approach this time period is a battle over ideologies and that we need to convince the Islamic world that our ideology is better, as opposed to looking at some of the root causes that drive people toward one ideology or another.

So I would just ask you, is that what you are saying, that we need to fight this ideologically?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Yes, we do need to fight it ideologically. Poverty has existed for centuries. I visited all the countries in the Middle East back in the 1960s. I saw desperate poverty there, beggars everywhere—desperate, desperate poverty. And my heart went out to those people. The problem is that they weren’t generating terrorists the way terrorists are being generated today.

And, yes, Harry Truman said in his famous Truman Doctrine speech that Communist revolution can be kindled in the soil of poverty and strife.

Ms. BASS. Okay. Let me——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I agree with that.

Ms. BASS. Excuse me. Excuse me. Let me move on, because I would like to ask Dr. Syeed, do you see a comparison between Marxism-Leninism and radical Islam?

And then I would like to ask Mr. Hicks to respond to this dialogue.

Dr. Syeed?

Mr. SYEED. It is very difficult for—

Ms. BASS. Can you put your microphone on?

Mr. SYEED. Historically, it is Islam that ultimately brought down communism. You remember, in Afghanistan, when they occupied Afghanistan, and we were able to help the local Muslims to fight against them, because it was a religious duty for them. So, in that sense, I cannot see any comparison between the two.

What I see, basically, is that in the Muslim world, because of, as you were mentioning, dictatorships, because of extremely difficult situations where people were tortured, tormented, it has created a very strange kind of psychology. And they are using appeals to Islam to fight against something that they believe is evil and something that has to be destroyed.

Ms. BASS. Okay.

Mr. SYEED. So—

Ms. BASS. Mr. Hicks?

Mr. HICKS. Thank you, Ms. Bass.

Just to say a few words about this discussion, I think the parallel that Dr. Lenczowski is describing is religion being manipulated to become a totalitarian ideology. And, in that happening, there is, obviously, some similarity with totalitarian Marxism.

What I don't see and where I think I differ with Dr. Lenczowski, I don't see that this is particular to Islam. I think in the past we have seen other religions being manipulated and used in similar ways and having totalitarian ideologies. Arguably, we are seeing now in Myanmar Buddhism being used as a totalitarian ideology to commit ethnic cleansing and genocide against Muslim inhabitants of Myanmar. So, yes, religions are susceptible to this kind of totalitarian interpretation, but it is not uniquely Muslim.

If I could just say a few words about how I think my testimony differs a bit from some of the testimonies we have heard today. I was trying to focus on what I see as being the push factors for violent extremism, and they include factors like authoritarianism, sectarianism, conflict, and ungoverned space. And, unfortunately, I see all of these problems not being remedied by current U.S. policy and, in fact, being exacerbated, in certain cases.

And there are certain remedies, which I briefly mentioned in my remarks and which I go into in more depth in my longer testimony, which include religious freedom, so I completely agree with Dr. Farr, but also promoting other types of human rights and basic freedoms.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

And before I turn it over to you, Mr. Chair, let me just wrap up by saying that I just believe that we need to have a comprehensive approach. I mean, I support religious freedom. I know it is ideology. I know we shouldn't vilify Islam. And I know we need to look at the human rights issues. But I do think it is really important for us to learn from history and to go back and to look at some of those past periods, which is why I was taking issue with it just being, you know, an ideological fight. We need all of the above.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. DONOVAN [presiding]. Thank you, Ranking——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Congresswoman, I just wanted to say, lest you misunderstand, I focused on the ideological issue because it has been the one hugely neglected part of all of this. I totally support the comprehensive approach that you are talking about.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Ranking Member.

Before we continue, I would like to enter into the record a statement by Qamar-ul Huda, director of security and violent extremism at the Center for Global Policy.

Hearing no objection, so ordered.

At least two of our witnesses have a hard stop at 12 o'clock, so I would ask the members if they could keep their questions shorter than they have been, just so everybody gets a chance.

The Chair now recognizes Ambassador Rooney.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, all the talk about faith and the role of faith in God in human behavior and the dialectical materialism of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology that tried to expunge it reminds me of Pope Benedict's famous quote, that the notion that there is a God gives rise to the concept of human rights and of individuals taking responsibility for their own behavior, which was kind of paraphrasing Saint Augustine. And I think that thread runs through a lot of this, is having individuals take responsibility for their behavior because they truly believe in the dignity of each human being.

With that said, there is a question here going back to the Marrakesh Declaration and the protection of religious minorities. And I would like to get all of your opinions of how the declaration can really be meaningful in the context of the existence of blasphemy laws and sharia law applied in a civil context.

Dr. Syeed introduced me to the great line one time of we need a Nostra Aetate from Islam. And so I think that we have lofty goals, but how do we square those with what is really going on in the world right now?

Whichever one. Each one of you have touched on the Marrakesh Declaration and sharia law and blasphemy laws.

Mr. SYEED. We believe the Marrakesh Declaration was a result of our efforts here. We were able to convince them that in the light of the Medina, this covenant, we need to do something on the same lines at an international level. Because the issue was how Muslims are committed through Islam to make sure that the minorities living in Muslim-majority countries are a trust from God and they have to be given full freedom in their religion, safety, and security.

But the new approach that we had developed as American Muslims is this reconnecting with the Medina Declaration, with the Medina state, living in a pluralist society. So that gave it some new sense of direction, and the participants were very excited about that. That is why I believe that we have, collectively, a responsibility to watch and see that the Marrakesh Declaration is being implemented and followed up.

Mr. ROONEY. So would the declaration call for the elimination of blasphemy laws and sharia law applied in a civil context?

Mr. SYEED. It sets a stage for that. Because I was giving the example here, how, as American Muslims, living so closely and hav-

ing developed our institution in collaboration with people of other faith, it has helped us directly to address these things.

So I was giving one example about this freedom of religion. We have in American Islamic centers people coming in from time to time and they say that we have studied Islam and we would like to convert.

I remember one example that I would like to put on record here. Years ago, in the Islamic Center of Bloomington, Indiana, a student came, and he said, I am doing a Ph.D. in philosophy, and I am taking a course in Islam, and I would like you to help me to understand Islam more. So we told him that you are welcome, you can come and visit the Islamic Center whenever you want. So he continued to come, and after about a year he said, I have studied Islam, I have seen you guys, how you pray and fast and so on, I am convinced I want to become a Muslim.

So this is happening in America because we have freedom of religion.

Mr. ROONEY. Right.

Mr. SYEED. And he became a Muslim.

Mr. ROONEY. And we don't have blasphemy laws and sharia law, except for a couple of Federal judges have allowed it.

Mr. SYEED. Right.

Mr. ROONEY. We also would like to get, if we still have time, to get Tom and John to make a comment about this as well.

Mr. SYEED. But let me take it to its conclusion.

We had a job, the director's job, in the Islamic Center, and the next year he applied, and he became our director of the Islamic Center.

Mr. ROONEY. Great.

Mr. SYEED. But within 3, 4 years, we found him getting slackened in his socialization with Muslims and in his Islam and so on. So, after 4 or 5 years, he renounced Islam.

So the American strength of freedom of religion—on the one hand, we will accept people to come, and, on the other hand, without any problem, we let them go back. And I am convinced that there must be many, many. I am aware of many. But that doesn't bother me.

But what excites me is that, today, if we make a list of top 50 Muslim leaders, a large number of them were not born Muslims. So that is what strengthens.

But this cannot happen in other countries—

Mr. ROONEY. Right.

Mr. SYEED [continuing]. Because over the centuries—

Mr. ROONEY. Right.

Mr. SYEED [continuing]. Different interpretations have been made which are extraneous to the Koran and do not actually—

Mr. ROONEY. Oh, good. So we can get a declaration that blasphemy laws are extraneous from the Koran, as is the application of sharia law in a civil context.

Mr. SYEED. We have books and books—

Mr. ROONEY. No, that is real progress.

Mr. SYEED. We have produced enough literature, if you want. I gave you last time a couple of those books—

Mr. ROONEY. I have read them. They are very good.

Mr. SYEED. So I am not saying out of nothing.

Mr. ROONEY. Right.

Mr. SYEED. I am saying that these 50 years have been a rich experience and productivity. We have, by now, Web sites, discussion, conversations, fatwas about these issues.

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Dr. Syeed.

John and Tom? I know we don't have much time, so you say—okay.

Mr. FARR. Thank you for the question, Ambassador.

If we could get Mr. Syeed's views accepted throughout the Middle East, it would be a gigantic step forward. And, indeed, the problem with blasphemy laws, as he knows and as you know, it is the use of the state to prevent religious speech. It harms non-Muslim minorities, but it also prevents Muslims who wish to speak out about their own religion from speaking out. They are charged with blasphemy if they do so.

The Marrakesh Declaration does not deal with this, but it is a realistic step forward. It is from the heart of Islam.

And I leave this weekend to go to Rome for a week of discussions with Middle Eastern Muslims about this very issue. They recognize that, as Dr. Syeed does, this is a serious problem that can't simply be waved away by passing a law. It is a deeply cultural issue that has to be dealt with. But it is important enough, they believe, to get on with it, and we want to help them do that.

And one of the things that we are going to do is present to them an understanding of the Catholic development of doctrine. The way the Catholic church came to its understanding of religious freedom was reaching into the deep part of its own doctrine and allowing it to work with history.

And, hopefully, even though John is correct, there is no pope, there is no magisterium, this is more difficult in Islam, but, nevertheless, it is vitally important, and we want to encourage this. So I think this is getting right at the issue, the nub of the issue.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Congressman and Ambassador, I just would like to say in this connection that this is one of these issues that points to the need for greater capacity in public diplomacy and foreign information.

A huge part of the battle against radical Islamism and in any political warfare involves anathematizing that which is evil. It involves isolating it from its potential population support base and recruitment base, separating it from its allies and so on. That is the basic principle of political warfare.

So what this means is that we have to anathematize the radical Islamists. We have to point out their corruption. We have to point out their use of slavery, of sex slavery. You have to point out the many features of totalitarianism that exist under radical Islamist orders, whether it is the Islamic State or the quasi-totalitarianism in sharia-grounded Islamist states. We have to talk about their active collaboration with criminal activity, including narcotics, kidnapping, human trafficking, smuggling. We have to talk about the systematic violation of human rights, the treating of religious minorities as "dhimmis." The blasphemy laws are part of all of this.

Now, who is going to do this? We can do some of it. The problem is that there are loads of politically moderate Muslims who believe



in religious liberty, who believe in tolerance and pluralism, and many of those people are subjected to fatwas to kill them when they want to talk about these things.

Mr. ROONEY. Like Pakistan last week.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Yes. Yes. And so these people need to be given a megaphone. They need physical protection. And the megaphone can be through various information media.

Some of this stuff requires not only overt public diplomacy capabilities in what ought to be a new public diplomacy agency, but it requires a covert political action capability in our Central Intelligence Agency where people can be funded and there are no American fingerprints. They can get support, whether it is physical support, where there is no association with intelligence activities. They may get support from some foundation somewhere. Where did that money come from? Well, who knows?

Mr. ROONEY. It sounds like Poland in 1983, doesn't it?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. You bet.

Mr. ROONEY. Yeah. Thank you.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. You are welcome.

Mr. DONOVAN. We have four more members that wish to ask questions and about 20 minutes, so I would ask the members to keep their questions to the 5 minutes.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Suozzi.

Mr. SUOZZI. I want to thank everybody for their testimony today. It has been a great education.

Every person of faith wants to try and persuade other people to join their faith. We are told to evangelize, in my religion, to convince other people to join our faith. And the problem, of course, with Islamists is that we are finding that some people are using violence and oppression to try and persuade people to join their faith.

So, in practical terms, there are 2.5 billion Christians in the world. There are 1.5 billion, 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. There are 900 million Hindus. There are 300 million Buddhists. There are 40 million Sikhs. There are 14 million Jews, of which 6 million were killed during the Holocaust.

And we need to figure out how to focus on Muslims of different majority-Muslim countries that are on board with our agenda of trying to stop violence and extremism from being used.

So Dr. Farr made reference to the importance of the Middle East. Of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, according to the Pew Research report, 986 million of the Muslims are in the Asia-Pacific region, there are 317 million in the Middle East, there are 248 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 43 million in Europe, 3.4 million in North America, and less than 1 million in South America.

So we need to, I believe, focus a lot of our attention on those places that have not gone over to the dark side, so to speak. I am concerned about Indonesia, which has historically been a very tolerant place, and there have been efforts to try and radicalize the people in Indonesia.

As Americans, our country should be working to try and foster this tolerant behavior of Indonesia in other places in the world. One of the second-largest countries in the world with the Muslims

is Pakistan. And we see what we have been trying to do in America to try and rein Pakistan's behavior in on certain things related to their relationship with Afghanistan and behavior in that region. We need to figure out what we need to do more to focus our energies there.

India is a great opportunity for us to have a tolerant community with Muslims and what we can do to foster, similar to Indonesia.

So I want to ask each of you, in very practical terms, what is the one thing for each of you—you each get one thing, because I only have 3 more minutes—one thing you think we should be focusing on to try and protect those folks that would normally be our allies in this effort, that we don't want them to be pushed over to the dark side, so to speak, or the one thing that you want to do to try and reverse the trend in places where it has gone bad.

Everybody gets one thing, practical terms, what we should be doing to try and address this issue.

Mr. FARR. We should be empowering, for lack of a better term, the moderates in each of these communities. They do exist, especially in Indonesia, as you said. They exist——

Mr. SUOZZI. So how could we do that in Indonesia?

Mr. FARR. We can help to support the civil society organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama.

I would add to what Dr. Lenczowski said, that, in addition to the United States public diplomacy and covert action that he recommends, we should be encouraging private groups, civil society groups, there and here to do this.

So my one thing is go to each of these groups and encourage them to make arguments that are based on their own interests. They already get it. We don't have to wag Article 18 of the U.N. declaration—which is fine, but we have been doing that for years. It doesn't work. What might work is self-interest.

Mr. SUOZZI. Okay. Thank you.

Doctor?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I would like to second Dr. Farr's comment. I believe that if we had both a public diplomacy agency and a covert political action capability, we could be doing our own information programs in order to ensure that the politically moderate populations in the Islamic world are amply warned about the full implications of the dark side, so to speak.

Mr. SUOZZI. Where is a good place to focus our intentions other than Indonesia and Pakistan and India?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I think that all—I mean, all of these places.

Mr. SUOZZI. Well, we can't do all these places.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I know, but we need to have a capacity to do it. We broadcast in 50 languages at the Voice of America, which successive administrations, for example, have been busy destroying.

Mr. SUOZZI. So is there a particular place——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. We stopped the Arabic service of the Voice of America and replaced it with a rock-and-roll station. Is——

Mr. SUOZZI. Is there a particular——

Mr. LENCZOWSKI [continuing]. That serious public diplomacy?

Mr. SUOZZI. Is there a particular place that you think is more tolerant now that we are worried about losing? Or is there a par-

ticular place that you think is going over to the dark side that we have to stop it from happening?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I think that Indonesia is moving in a wrong direction.

Mr. SUOZZI. Well, Indonesia is a very big focus.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. It is really moving in a wrong direction. I have some sources that tell me that the Indonesian military and higher authorities are going to let it get worse and worse and worse and finally crack down on it, violently, in order to stop it, the way it has been done there before.

And so it is not good, and it is because the war of ideas is not being fought as stoutly and vigorously—

Mr. SUOZZI. You are not playing nice with the time limits, though. I have to keep it moving for my colleagues.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I understand.

Mr. SUOZZI. Okay. Dr. Syeed?

Mr. SYEED. Congressman, we have this thing in mind because Muslims in America who have been able during the last half a century to create a new reality, whatever questions there were, this is the only place where we have experimented with them and found that they are the heart of Islam.

So we have reached out, particularly the German, and even British and French, they recognize that. That is why they have been sending, from time to time, their leaders to visit and participate in our conventions and programs—not as much as we should have.

So, similarly, I have taken delegations, interfaith delegations, from here to Indonesia. Because we know in those countries how we would be able to support and reinforce those elements at least who are very clear about these issues.

Mr. SUOZZI. Yeah.

Mr. SYEED. And it gets reinforced when there is this exchange. So we need more help—

Mr. SUOZZI. We should work with the Pakistani Americans to work on Pakistan—

Mr. SYEED. Definitely.

Mr. SUOZZI [continuing]. Specifically, as well. That is a good idea.

Mr. SYEED. Yes. Yes.

Mr. SUOZZI. Okay. Mr. Hicks?

Mr. HICKS. Two very specific things.

Firstly, Saudi Arabia has been propagating extremist ideology—

Mr. SUOZZI. Right.

Mr. HICKS [continuing]. Around the Islamic world for decades.

Mr. SUOZZI. Yep.

Mr. HICKS. And if they are—

Mr. SUOZZI. They are way ahead.

Mr. HICKS. If they are our best friends, in terms of fighting extremism, then they need to start behaving like that.

Mr. SUOZZI. Yeah.

Mr. HICKS. And there are a lot of specific things that can be raised by the U.S. Government and should be raised more firmly.

And, secondly, I mentioned Tunisia. And Tunisia is a very important counterexample. On this issue of blasphemy we were talking about, the religious leadership in Tunisia has specifically said that

blasphemy is not something that should be punished by the state. And they have made many compromises with the civil government to move forward the political process in Tunisia.

Mr. SUOZZI. Thank you very much.

Thank you to each of you.

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Congressman, I just wanted to say in reference to Mr. Hicks' comment, I believe that the U.S. Government ought to be considering a little bit more some policies of reciprocity.

If the Saudi Government is permitted to build all sorts of mosques, bring their money, and get rid of politically moderate imams who run here in American mosques by bringing in their money and say, "You can have our money, but you have to take our Wahhabi imam to go with it," and where you can come right out here to Route 7 and buy books in the Islamic center that talk about how you can properly beat your wife, and you can buy these things on Amazon, well, you know, if the Saudis can do all of that kind of stuff, maybe with a little diplomatic reciprocity we ought to be able to build—you know, any religious group in the United States ought to be able to go build its church or synagogue or temple somewhere in Saudi Arabia.

I believe that diplomatic reciprocity is something that should be part of this.

Mr. SUOZZI. Thank you.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Suozzi.

Thank you, witnesses.

I am going to reserve my time in case there is no time at the end and recognize Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

And let me just note that Mr. Lenczowski is one of the heroes of the Cold War and heroes of ending the conflict with Soviet Communism in a way that didn't cost millions of lives. So this is a man who we owe a great deal of gratitude for.

And I might add that, during his time at the White House, when I worked with him in the White House, he was under vicious attack by numbers of people who supposedly believed in freedom. And this is the man who saved us.

That same is true, Mr. Hicks, when we talk about el-Sisi. El-Sisi saved Egypt, and his coalition saved it from becoming a dictatorship based on Islam. And the fact is, yeah, he has some—the el-Sisi regime is not a perfect regime, and that is for sure. It has its faults. We have our faults, as well.

But, like during the Cold War, there were people who only could criticize those governments that were standing up against the onslaught of Marxist-Leninism. And, as Mr. Lenczowski was trying to point out, Marxism-Leninism was to, for example, socialism what radical Islamic terrorist groups now are to moderate Muslims.

And we didn't attack socialist regimes during that time period. In fact, I remember some things we were working with some socialist regimes, at that time. We need to work with moderate Muslim groups and not try to nitpick them to make them weak so they can fall to radical Islamic regimes. And that is as simple as that.

So, with that said, I would like Mr. Hicks to have his chance to refute what I just said.

So go right ahead.

Mr. HICKS. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. Yes, I think I do strongly disagree with what you just said about President Sisi and his role in Egypt.

I have been professionally involved with human rights conditions in Egypt for over 30 years, and I can definitely say that the human rights conditions today are far worse than anything I have seen over that whole 30-year period. What we have now is possibly comparable to the Nasserite period, but I am too young to remember that directly.

Nor do I think it is working. And I don't think it is nitpicking to point to the thousands of people who have died in political violence, many of them at the hands of the Egyptian security forces, and call that nitpicking. That is not nitpicking. That is a huge escalation in the level of violence in Egypt.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Now, as long as you have, at the same time, been—see, here you are testifying today focusing on that, as compared to all these other regimes that are monstrously worse than what you are talking about.

And that is why I refer to Mr. Lenczowski's comparison to the Cold War, to Marxist-Leninism, and that battle that we had. There are people who, during the Cold War, spent all of their time complaining about governments that were on the front edge. And because they were right on the battle line against communism, yeah, things get—you can't be a perfect, idealist libertarian when you are confronted with that type of a challenge.

Mr. HICKS. Where are we headed—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We are faced with that kind of challenge today—

Mr. HICKS. Where are we headed—

Mr. ROHRABACHER [continuing]. In the world.

And one last point, because I know I only have a couple minutes, and that is, how do we make sure that Muslims throughout the world understand that we are on their side and that this 10 percent of Islam that has decided that they are going to superimpose their radical beliefs on everyone else by terrorizing the world into submission—because that is what this is about. How do we make sure the other Muslims know we are all human beings and we should work together against whether it is Marxist-Leninist tyranny or Islamic radical tyranny or whatever their kind of tyranny.

We need to make sure in countries where the oppression of Muslims is clear, like with the Rohingyas—which we passed a resolution yesterday about what is going on in Burma, where the Muslim population is under severe attack and being brutally murdered. Yeah, we spoke out yesterday, and I am proud to have been part of that.

I was also proud that, when the Kosovos were denied their right of self-determination and they were being brutally, again, suppressed and slaughtered by Christian Serbs, we stood up for the right of self-determination of the people of Kosovo, even though they were overwhelmingly Muslim.

So, with that, that is the type of thing, we have to send that message, that we are a principled country here, and that is how we do that.

I will leave that and—Mr. Lenczowski, I have mentioned you several times. Would you like to add anything to that, as you added to my efforts when I was writing President Reagan's speeches?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. Congressman, you are very generous, and I can only say that I don't deserve those kind of encomiums, but I was very honored to be one of the cooks in the kitchen in the Reagan White House. And it was a great pleasure and an honor to work with you, because you and your colleagues in the speechwriting shop were some of the greatest articulators of the philosophy that the President represented and wanted to bring to the world. I don't want to be patronizing, but I could return the compliment to you in a similar way. So thank you.

I just would like to say, when one is at war with major totalitarian movements, sometimes you have to you make alliances. When we were at war with Hitler, we allied ourselves with Stalin, who, in some respects, may have been even a greater monster than Hitler in terms of the death toll that he inflicted upon humanity and the genocide of tribes and little nations within the Soviet Union.

Sometimes you have to choose the lesser of evils. Indeed, as you suggested, we had to ally ourselves with some countries like Iran. During the Carter administration, human rights activists were attacking the Shah's Iran relentlessly because he had a terrible secret police and because he was an authoritarian ruler and all of this kind of stuff. The Shah was the most liberal of all of the realistic political alternatives in Iran at that time.

The Soviet Union was hugely active in penetrating Iran and controlling and financing the Tudeh Party, which was their Communist Party. There were two major attempts to take over Iran: In 1921, when they tried to set up the Republic of Gilan in northern Iran; and in 1945-1946, when they tried to set up the independent Republic of Azerbaijan in northern Iran as instruments to take over that country.

And so we undermined the Shah. We helped delegitimize him. We pulled the rug out from him because he wasn't perfect. And then what did we get? We got radical Shiite, revolutionary, quasi-totalitarian Islamism in Iran.

And so I appreciate the problem of human rights violations in authoritarian countries, and I appreciate the problems that Mr. Hicks has raised about Egypt. I don't know enough about Egypt to comment on this. But I believe that the greater evil here, rather than traditional authoritarianism, is a totalitarian movement that is metastasizing around the world.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DONOVAN. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Garrett.

Mr. GARRETT. I am curious when you came up here and looked at my notes, because you provided a very good segue. I am going to take the form more of a soliloquy than a colloquy because of the time constraints and point out that the exchange between Congresswoman Bass and John was really informative, that I wrote this down at the time: Marxist-Leninism and radical Islam or radical, intolerant anything are similar because both are antithetical to the natural state of humanity, that the Lazarus—

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. The natural law.

Mr. GARRETT. I have very little time, with all due respect. And I have a great deal, based on what Mr. Rohrabacher said. Let me keep going.

The line from the Lazarus poem referencing "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" comes to mind. If you tell someone what they cannot do, they will inherently wish to try to do that, because that is the natural state of man.

And so I look to an illustrative piece of text from this country, and I will omit the first word and simply say: Shall not make laws respecting the establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech or press or the right of people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances. I submit that this should be our standard for the world.

However, your statements as it regards to Iran, I think, are illustrative of the reality in which we in the West all too often oversimplify things by suggesting that perhaps it is either black or white. The deposition of the Shah was, in no arguable sense, a reaction to a lack of atrocities on the part of the secret police in Iran, but what it begat was bloodshed on a scale not seen in that region for years that began in 1979, and then it punctuated with an exclamation point in 1988 and then again during the Green Revolution just less than a decade ago.

With that, I would ask that we enter into the record the cover, title page, and preface, which is a total of 7 pages, of "Iran: Where Mass Murderers Rule."

And I would point out also that I think that we oversimplify the issue of Islam. I will submit candidly that, despite my Christian faith, I am delighted to say that there are many Muslims who I count among my friends. Having said that, I will decry and condemn radical Islam vehemently and full-throatedly, as should everyone here, as they also should with any radical, intolerant practitioner of Christianity or Judaism or any other faith that seeks to impose upon others against their natural-law right to determine for themselves how they choose to worship or if they choose to worship. And that should be where the United States stands.

While I take exception with Mr. Hicks' comments as it relates to some of the circumstances in Egypt, I would submit that, as it relates to Saudi Arabia, if we are to engage in arms deals amounting to trillions of dollars in trade, I don't think it is too much to ask that they stop publishing texts to the entire Islamic world, in their various languages, adhering to a strict Wahhabist standard.

And I would also point out that the Sufis massacred in the hundreds not so long ago were, in fact, Muslims who believed that they should be able to believe differently as Muslims, and they are just as dead as any Jew or Christian or atheist who ever died at the tip of a religious-motivated spear.

So diversity is strength so long as that diversity is tolerant of diversity. And diversity that you can see how we worship, who we love, how we look is important. But the diversity that we can't see, that exists between our left and right ear, and a world where we make human rights paramount is equally, if not more so, important.

So I just wish we had more time on this subject matter. I would call upon my colleagues to take a step back and understand that condemning radical Islam is not condemning Islam and that you should be equally willing to condemn radical practitioners of any faith, whether they are pushing the Rohingya from their ancestral lands; that the American role, in order to have credibility, is not to be the parent who tells their child not to drink while buying a bottle of liquor, but who says, we are tolerant of others here, it works well here—and, Mr. Syeed, your comments have been very appreciated to that end—and it will work well for you too.

I apologize for my soliloquy, understandably because of time. And I didn't mean to cut you off or be disrespectful, but this is what happens when you are the junior member.

God bless. Thank you all.

Mr. DONOVAN. And, without objection, your offering is entered into the record.

I am going to take 1 minute because I waited for everybody else to ask a question.

Many times, it is debated about the United States' role in foreign resources, giving moneys, resources, having people on the ground in places where it is very dangerous and experiencing some of the matters that we are speaking about today.

Could each of you just give me, like, 30 seconds on what happens if the United States fails to have an influence in these countries or starts pulling back and who fills that void that might be created if the United States doesn't continue with its current activities in some of these countries where we are seeing this extreme behavior?

Mr. FARR. I will just say that the United States is the country where religious freedom has reached its apogee. If it is lost in this country, where can it be regained? These are the stakes that we are talking about today.

Mr. DONOVAN. John?

Mr. LENCZOWSKI. I can only see a worsening of the situation because I think that so many of the radical Islamist movements have an enormous amount of momentum on their side.

One thing that concerns me a lot here is what is going on in Europe: The establishment of separatist enclaves, where sharia law is dominant, that have become de facto no-go zones for people to travel. You can buy an app now to put on your iPhone that tells you whether you are in a no-go zone in Paris or not.

Are these enclaves within Europe going to try to be part of a system of religious pluralism, or are they going to try to set up systems that are in complete contravention with Western concepts of human rights?

I am very concerned about this dimension. It is not simply a dimension of terrorism; it is—I call it in my written testimony “resettlement jihad” and “sharia supremacism.”

Mr. DONOVAN. Dr. Syeed?

Mr. SYEED. Yeah, I have tried to make a point that the emergence of Muslim community in America, in this pluralist democracy, is an asset not only for America, not only for Muslims, for the whole world. So we are going to provide a model to Europe, and eventually we should be able to fight those evils which are bothering us in the rest of the world as well. So it is just a wonderful



resource, and you need to recognize that—we need to recognize that.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Doctor.

Mr. Hicks?

Mr. HICKS. I think we have a good example of what happens if the United States withdraws when we look at Syria. The powers that have moved into that vacant space have been authoritarian powers like Russia and sectarian powers like Iran, and that, of course, is terrible for human rights, it is terrible for religious freedom, and it is terrible for U.S. interests.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you.

I thank you all for your testimony. I thank you all for appearing here. I thank my colleagues for their pointed questions.

The record will remain open for 10 days in case any member wants to submit a question that we would ask that you do then respond to in writing.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations  
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman**

December 5, 2017

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Wednesday, December 6, 2017

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism

**WITNESSES:** Thomas Farr, Ph.D.  
President, Religious Freedom Institute  
Director, Religious Freedom Research Project  
Georgetown University

John Lenczowski, Ph.D.  
Founder and President  
The Institute of World Politics

Sayyid Syeed, Ph.D.  
Senior Advisor  
Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances  
Islamic Society of North America

Mr. Neil Hicks  
Director  
Human Rights Promotion  
Human Rights First

\*NOTE: Witness has been added.

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5921 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*

# COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations HEARING

Day Wednesday Date December, 2017 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:03am Ending Time 12:01pm

Recesses ☐ (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ )

Presiding Member(s)

*Smith, Donovan*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☐

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☐

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

*Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Donovan, Garrett, Bass, Suozzi*

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)

*Rooney, Rohrabacher*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)


*-Rep Smith: Official Comments to the House Foreign Relations Committee on the Topic of "Human Rights and Countering Terrorism" by Qamar-ul Huda*

*-Rep. Garrett: Iran: Where Mass Murderers Rule*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED \_\_\_\_\_

  
Subcommittee Staff Associate

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,  
A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTER-  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



Center for Global Policy \* 2001 L Street, N.W. Suite 500 \* Washington, D.C. 20036

December 5, 2017

**Official Comments to the House Foreign Relations Committee on the  
Topic of “Human Rights and Countering Terrorism”**

**SUBMITTED TO:** Piero A. Tozzi, House Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and  
International Organizations

**SUBMITTED BY:** Qamar-ul Huda, Ph.D., Director of Security & Violent Extremism at  
the Center for Global Policy, and a former Senior Policy Advisor to the U.S. Department  
of State.

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Almost eight weeks after ISIS militarily lost strategic territory in Iraq and Syria, there have been  
ISIS-inspired attacks in Egypt, Spain, Niger, the Philippines and Afghanistan.

Throughout Africa, governments have feared that the fall of ISIS in Syria would contribute to a  
kind of renaissance among local militant Islamists who would welcome ISIS fighters and use  
their strategies and tactics.

However, the opposite is occurring in Africa. Al Shabaab and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb  
are rejecting Daesh funding and support and robustly fighting ISIS to suppress its presence in the  
Islamist market. Libyan tribal militias have contained the ISIS affiliates there to areas in  
Misurata. Even the deadly Boko Haram in Nigeria has splintered into two rival factions: one  
aligning with ISIS and the other insisting that any alignment with foreign militant groups will  
compromise local grievances.

Since the fall of ISIS it is critically important to examine counterterrorism as a strategies, and  
especially after the military victories there is a critical need to reflect upon a more nuanced  
human rights approach.

President Trump announced a “comprehensive Afghanistan strategy” steeped in conventional counterterrorism (CT) approaches. He emphasized a CT strategy including increased military aid and military training for Afghanistan, with the aim of enabling and encouraging Afghan military decision makers to carry out CT strategies against the Taliban and al Qaeda based on the conditions they face and not on a specific time limit. The overall goals of this strategy are to effectively eliminate all designated foreign terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to diplomatically neutralize Pakistan and Iran's growing influence in Afghanistan.

While not a new counterterrorism approach, it is the standard application of what most analysts refer to as DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic) efforts to combat insurgencies or terrorist organizations.

However, only prioritizing a military CT approach to deal with terrorism will not address violent extremism's appeal to non-state actors as a means to resolve conflicts or create change. In the past 15 years, CT policy makers and practitioners have recognized that one cannot and will not defeat terrorism with pure kinetic and military strategies. A CT policy based on military approaches using the “crushing retribution of American might and arms” could, in the short term, decrease the number of visible terrorist fighters Africa, the Middle East and on the Afghan-Pakistani border, but in the long run, the real test is to tackle the institutional power and sheer attractive presence of radical extremist movements and the mini-societies they construct for their fighters.

Global and regional efforts to destroy terrorist organizations with military might will not eliminate the ideological, cultural, social, political and psychological remnants of their ideas.

To confront terrorism at its core, what is needed is a society-wide approach to addressing the drift toward extremist ideologies and the appeal of racial, religious and ethnic supremacy. Countering violent extremism (CVE) activities involve tackling radical ideologies by engaging a wide spectrum of stakeholders -- namely law enforcement, researchers, educators, social service providers, civic activists, psychologists, faith leaders, public officials, students, business owners and thought leaders. A CVE framework built on human right will yield long-term positive results.

By using locally produced human rights educational and training modules, the network of civil society practitioners could identify effective ways to intervene, interject and generate awareness of radicalization recruitment efforts in communities.

Many U.S. allies such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Australia and Singapore, to name a few, have national CVE strategies in place with a human rights-centered approach to put a stop to radicalization activities with prevention and intervention programs.

A human rights-based approach to eliminating extremism means engaging a wide network of civil society members to build resilient communities to prevent radicalization and recruitment.

While it is imperative to focus on disrupting the global network providing ISIS with fighters, financing and the ability to churn out propaganda, it is also crucial for multinational organizations fighting ISIS to develop robust reintegration and rehabilitation programs.

Research shows that violent extremists are attracted to extremist ideologies because of a complex interplay of social, psychological, economic, political and identity factors. Counterterrorism strategies with half-hearted efforts to counter violent extremism will not diminish the lure of extremist ideologies.

For example, in Mali or Chad, programming to counter violent extremism programming by making communities resilient is futile if there is no attention to pre-existing conflicts, divisions between and within communities, mistrust between state and citizens, and increased ethnic sectarianism.

Countering violent extremism with a human rights-approach must take all of these factors into account, or the feelings of exclusion and other grievances that drive recruits into the arms of ISIS and its affiliates.

The United States is only complicating its struggle with terrorism and violent extremism by neglecting human rights approaches.

---END---

Possible Questions:

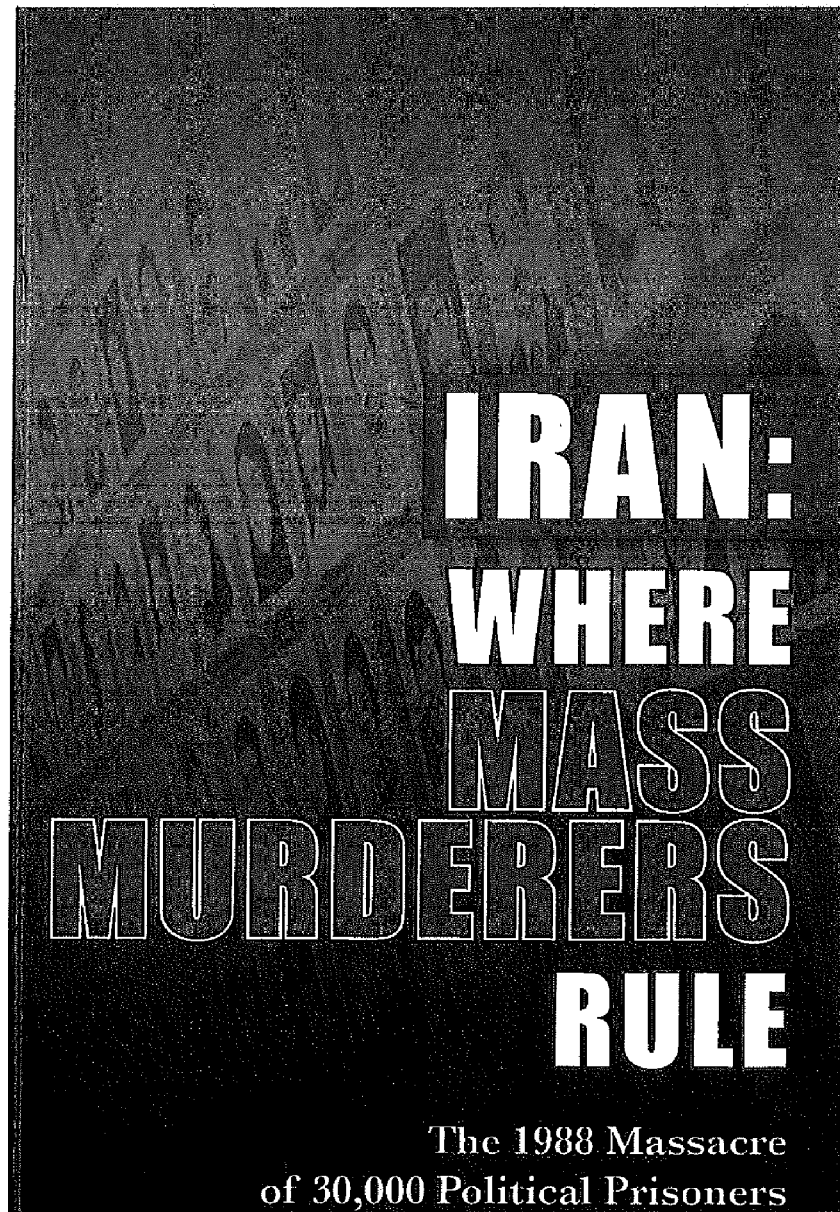
- Can we identify case studies that utilizes human rights approaches to prevent the growth of radicalization?
- How do societies that emphasize the protection of human rights and the protection of the civil liberties maintain a low level of extremism?
- What are the best lessons and best practices from current counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism approaches that illustrate a decline in the attraction toward extremism?
- Which leading civil society-government partnerships exemplify positive approaches in applying a human rights approach to their CVE programs?
- Within the US, are there an existing working relationship with the human rights community and CVE practitioners and policy makers? If so, what are the examples?
- Is an independent Congressional Committee needed to examine the advantages and disadvantages of CVE vs. CT policies, and the gaps that are imbedded in each approach?



*Qamar-ul Huda, Ph.D., is the Director of Security & Violent Extremism Program at the Center for Global Policy, and a former Senior Policy Advisor to the U.S. Department of State. He is the editor of the book *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*.*

*The views expressed in this statement are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Center for Global Policy.*

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS A. GARRETT,  
JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



Iran: Where Mass Murderers Rule, The 1988 Massacre of 30,000 Political Prisoners and the Continuing Atrocities

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## PREFACE

Late in July 1988, as the war with Iraq was lending in a truculent truce, prisons in Iran crammed with government opponents suddenly went into lockdown. All family visits were cancelled, televisions and radios switched off and newspapers discontinued. Prisoners were kept in their cells, disallowed exercise or trips to the infirmary. The only permitted visitation was from a delegation, turbaned and bearded, which came in government BMWs and Mercedes to outlying jails: a religious judge, a public prosecutor, and an intelligence chief. Before them were paraded, briefly and individually, almost every prisoner (and there were thousands of them) who had been jailed for adherence to the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK). The delegation had but one question for these young men and women (most of them detained since 1981 merely for taking part in street protests or possession of "political" reading material), and although they did not know it, on the answer their life would depend. Those who by their answer evinced any continuing affiliation with the MEK were blindfolded and ordered to join a conga-line that led straight to the gallows. They were hung from cranes, four at a time, or in groups of six from ropes hanging from the stage in an assembly hall; some were taken to army barracks at night, directed to make their wills and then shot by firing squad. Their bodies were doused with disinfectant, placed packed in refrigerated trucks and buried by night in mass graves. Months later their families, desperate for information about their children or their partners, would be handed a plastic bag with their few possessions. They would be refused any information about the location of the graves and ordered never to mourn them in public. By mid-August 1988, thousands of prisoners had been killed in this manner by the state — without trial, without appeal and utterly without mercy.





## IRAN: WHERE MASS MURDERERS RULE

That was my judicial conclusion about what happened in Iranian prisons in 1988, based on evidence and interviews. And of course, the regime having killed the MEK members, then went on and killed thousands whose religious views or non-religious views were regarded as atheistic. Families still are not allowed to know where the bodies of their loved ones are buried. This too is contrary to international law, yet still the "Mullahs without Mercy" (the title of my book about these atrocities) deny their people the right to grieve.

Without any reasonable doubt, these are crimes against humanity. It has been a crime to kill prisoners for over 400 years. The rules during the wars in Europe were always that a prisoner once surrendered could not be killed without trial and could not be tortured. In my opinion, the state of Iran has committed four exceptionally serious breaches of *jus cogens* rules of international law which entail both state responsibility and individual accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity:

**1** The arbitrary killing of thousands of male and female prisoners pursuant to a *fatwa* that held them collectively responsible for "steadfast" allegiance to the Mojahedin, notwithstanding that they had been in prison and *hors de combat* for years, serving fixed term sentences for relatively minor offences. This was not the execution of a lawful sentence, because there was no trial, no charge and no criminal act other than adhering to a particular ideological group. The right to life, guaranteed by customary international law, by treaties to which Iran is a party and by the Geneva Conventions, was quite deliberately and barbarically breached, and all who bear international law responsibility for this mass murder should be prosecuted. An obligation to prosecute may also arise from the Genocide Convention, since the reason why MEK members were condemned as *moharebs* ("warriors against God") and exterminated was that they had adopted a version of Islam which differed from that upheld by the State.

**2** The second wave of apostate killings was also a breach of the right to life, as well as the right to religious freedom. Prisoners were executed for a crime of conscience in that their only offence was to refuse to adopt the religious beliefs, prayers and rituals of the state. They were not, as the government later alleged, spies

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**2** The second wave of apostate killings was also a breach of the right to life, as well as the right to religious freedom. Prisoners were executed for a crime of conscience in that their only offence was to refuse to adopt the religious beliefs, prayers and rituals of the state. They were not, as the government later alleged, spies

or terrorists or prison rioters. They were executed to rid a theocratic state of ideological enemies in post-war circumstances that could not possibly give rise to a defense of necessity or to any other defense.

**3** The beatings inflicted on leftist women and on other men who were regarded as capable of religious compliance satisfied the definition of torture, which is absolutely prohibited even if it is consonant with national law. The only object of the beatings was to break their will and their spirit and to make them more amenable to the state's version of Islamic governance.

**4** Finally, the rights to know where close relatives have been buried and to mourn their deaths, have been and still are being denied by the state. What is being denied, almost three decades after the deaths, is the right of parents, spouses and siblings to manifest their feelings of devotion in respect of the memory of a family member. Further, the refusal to identify mass graves implicitly involves a refusal to allow DNA testing (which has proven reliable in war crimes investigations as a means of identifying the remains in mass graves) and, in consequence, the prevention of a proper burial.

The individuals against whom there is a *prima facie* case for prosecution for crimes against humanity, torture, genocide and war crimes, are those "who bear most responsibility" in the chain of command. The members of the Death Committee are well known, as are the senior prison officials who organized and authorized the executions, and no doubt those Revolutionary Guards who acted as hangmen, firing squad members and gravediggers can also be identified. Different ministries would have had to give approvals and directions, most importantly the Ministry of Information whose officials conducted interrogations, set questionnaires and kept tabs on every prisoner. There is evidence that, at some prisons, warders were supplanted by Revolutionary Guards who carried out the killings.

A list of individuals can be identified to have been directly responsible for approving the death and torture sentences that they must or should have known to have been contrary to international law. On the well-known principle established by the Nuremberg case of *US v Joseph Altstoeter* and

others (the "Justice Case" dramatized in the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*) judges who contribute to crimes committed in the guise of legal process cannot themselves escape prosecution: as the Nuremberg prosecution put it, "men of law can no more escape... responsibility by virtue of their judicial robes, than the General by his uniform." Moreover, in considering the complicity of professionals in crimes against humanity, there is no good reason to exclude diplomats who, knowing the truth, nonetheless lie about it to UN bodies to whom they owe a duty of frankness.

The situation in Iran today illustrates the consequences of impunity for crimes against humanity that have never been properly investigated or acknowledged. Some of the perpetrators remain in powerful positions in the judiciary and the state, whose Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has called upon the Revolutionary Guards to use violence against peaceful protests with the support of Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who threatens that "[a]nybody resisting against the ruling system will be broken."<sup>1</sup> Those staged television show trials of the 1980s, with televised "confessions" by leftist prisoners wracked by torture and fear for their families, re-emerged in 2009, this time featuring 'Green Movement reformists' confessing to participation in an international conspiracy devised by the US and the British Embassy in collaboration with the BBC, Twitter, Facebook, George Soros, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Evin prison, scene of mass murder in 1988, remains a brutal environment for blindfolded prisoners picked up for no more serious offence than attending student demonstrations or contacting NGOs concerned about human rights. There have been many casualties, and many ironic reminders of 1988, the year of impunity. The brutal treatment of Nazanin Ratcliffe, a charity worker sentenced to prison and parted from her baby on bogus spying charges, is just the latest case in point.

One of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri's very last acts was to call on Iranians to accord three days of mourning to Neda Agha-Soltan, the young woman student shot dead by forces loyal to Ahmadinejad; and to support other victims of the repressive state which he helped to create, but then came to condemn.

1 'Meet the Ayatollahs', *New Statesman*, 10 August 2009, 30.

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*"Neda: An Martyr", New Humanist, 18 August 2009, 30.*

It would be more sensible to impose sanctions for the crimes against humanity that occurred in 1988, so long as they go uninvestigated and unpunished, than it would to impose them for alleged moves towards uranium enrichment. Given the evidence of international crimes, including one which the 1948 Genocide Convention imposes a duty to investigate and punish without limit of time, the Security Council would be perfectly entitled under its Chapter VII powers to establish an international court with a prosecutor who can quickly collect the incriminatory evidence and obtain access to the relevant state witnesses and records. After all, the most reasonable objection to Iran developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes is the fact that it is a regime that has already granted itself impunity for mass murder, and may do so again.

Many obvious suspects are still alive and well. They were men in Khomeini's inner circle; ministers and diplomats who knew what was happening; judges who betrayed their calling by zealously sentencing prisoners to death and torture without trial; prison governors and intelligence officers who shepherded the blindfolded victims to the queue for the gallows. There are many more who have been identified by survivors and are listed on dissident websites. Although most of those judges and officials worked at Tehran's prisons, Evin and Gohardasht, where the main massacres took place, it is evident that there were hundreds and possibly thousands of prisoners killed in the provinces: Shiraz, Dezful, Tabriz, Qazvin, Arak, Khorramabad, Qom, Rasht, Esfahan, Mashhad, to name but ten local prisons. All would have had their trio of implacable judges, their willing executioners from among the prison officials and intelligence operatives and Revolutionary Guards.

In the annals of post-war horrors, the killings compare with the 1995 massacre at Srebrenica in terms of the vulnerability of the victims, and they exceed it when measured by the cold-blooded calculations made at the very pinnacle of state power. As long as the graves of the dead remain unmarked and relatives are forbidden from mourning, Iran will continue to contravene the rule of international law, which its leaders so brutally defied in 1988.

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