

Countering Radicalization: International Best Practices and the Role of the OSCE



OCTOBER 26, 2017

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Washington: 2017

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
234 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1901
csce@mail.house.gov
<http://www.csce.gov>
@HelsinkiComm

Legislative Branch Commissioners

HOUSE

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY
Co-Chairman
ALCEE L. HASTINGS, FLORIDA
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT, ALABAMA
MICHAEL C. BURGESS, TEXAS
STEVE COHEN, TENNESSEE
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
RANDY HULTGREN, ILLINOIS
SHEILA JACKSON LEE, TEXAS
GWEN MOORE, WISCONSIN

SENATE

ROGER WICKER, MISSISSIPPI,
Chairman
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND

Executive Branch Commissioners

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]. The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

Countering Radicalization: International Best Practices and the Role of the OSCE

OCTOBER 26, 2017

	Page
PARTICIPANTS	
Alex Tiersky, Policy Advisor, Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe	1
Peter Neumann, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism	3
Seamus Hughes, Deputy Director, Program on Extremism, The George Washington University	6
Matthew Levitt, Fromer-Wexler Fellow and Director, Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, The Washington Institute	9

Countering Radicalization: International Best Practices and the Role of the OSCE

October 26, 2017

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held at 2:04 p.m. in Room 385, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Alex Tiersky, Policy Advisor, Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Panelists present: Alex Tiersky, Policy Advisor, Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Peter Neumann, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism; Seamus Hughes, Deputy Director, Program on Extremism, The George Washington University; and Matthew Levitt, Fromer-Wexler Fellow and Director, Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, The Washington Institute.

Mr. TIERSKY. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the U.S. Helsinki Commission's Chairman, Senator Roger Wicker, and the Co-Chairman, Congressman Chris Smith, I'd like to welcome everyone to today's briefing on "Countering Radicalization: International Best Practices and the Role of the OSCE." I would like to welcome the members of the distinguished audience. I'd like to specifically recognize Ambassador Hrle who is here with us, and Ambassador Strohal. Thank you for joining us from Vienna.

Ladies and gentlemen, as terrorist threats have multiplied in their scope and scale, the 57 participating States Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the OSCE, have sought to play an increasingly central role in facilitating international efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, including addressing conditions that create fertile ground for terrorist groups to recruit. The extent of the problem, of course, is in many ways before us every day. I happened to notice a headline about a week ago from Reuters. The headline read: "Germany says worried about new generation of Islamic State recruits. Germany's domestic intelligence agency said on Thursday that minors returning from war zones in Syria and Iraq could grow into a new generation of recruits in Germany for the Islamic State group." This demonstrates how relevant an issue this is for us to be discussing today.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me first introduce our guest of honor, as it were, who has flown here from London to be with us. Dr. Peter Neumann was appointed as the OSCE

special representative on countering radicalization and violent extremism by the OSCE's Austrian chairmanship for this year, represented by Ambassador Strohal. As a part of Dr. Neumann's mandate, he published an expert report on the 27th of September on the OSCE's activities to prevent violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, describing both best practices and possible areas for additional efforts.

I can't tell you how thrilled I am that Dr. Neumann has readily agreed to fly transatlantic and present his report in the United States here with the Helsinki Commission. His extremely impressive biography is your packets. Let me briefly tell you that Peter directs the International Center for the Study of Radicalization, which he founded in 2008, at the Department of War Studies, Kings College, London. He's a regular commentator across the media and academic landscape, the very definition of a thought leader on this subject matter.

I can also say, now that I've introduced the guest of honor, that equally honorable are two Washington-based commentators and scholar-practitioners who we have asked to join us to reflect and react to Peter's report. A first reaction will come from Seamus Hughes, to my left. Seamus is the deputy director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University. He formerly served at the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, and as senior counterterrorism advisor for the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. It's always a great pleasure to welcome back a Hill staffer.

I will add that Seamus is not just a former Hill staffer. He has testified in front of a number of committees and on a number of occasions as an expert on this subject matter. I have challenged Seamus to provide a kind of a counterpoint to Peter's report. Peter will, rightly, focus on some of the best practices that he's discovered in his travels. I've asked Seamus to talk to us in some sense on worst practices and what those practices might have for the fight against radicalization.

Our third speaker today is Matthew Levitt who serves as Fromer-Wexler fellow and director of The Washington Institute's Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. Matt formerly served as deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, as a State Department counterterrorism advisor, and as a counterterrorism intelligence analyst at the FBI. He's extremely well placed to give us an overview of where U.S. policy is on this issue and how it evolved from the last administration to this one.

Let me just point out an excellent report that Matt edited. It was a study group at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Matt led this bipartisan report on defeating ideologically inspired violent extremism; these were policy notes for the Trump administration. I'll be very interested to hear to what extent he thinks his policy notes have been followed thus far.

Let me set one ground rule for the speakers; this is a subject that can rapidly become technical, particularly among the experts that are gathered here. If there's terminology that I think may not be clear for the audience, I might interrupt you. I will only flag, for the audience, one of the favorite acronyms that I have discovered since joining the world of work in the OSCE, which is VERLT, which may be thrown around on this panel. It is "violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism." But of course, this definitional issue and the issue of terminology is one that Peter covers quite well in his report and I think will come up today as well.

So now I look forward very much to hearing from Peter a presentation of his expert report on countering radicalization and the OSCE. Peter, please.

Dr. NEUMANN. All right. Well, thank you very much, Alex, and thank you to everyone who's taken time to come here to listen to me and to listen to all of us debate.

I'm not going to read out the executive summary of the report. This is something that you can download and read at your leisure. What I want to talk about briefly is how this report has come about, what it represents, and perhaps what it recommends. And perhaps this will give enough meat for discussion.

This report came about because late last year, the Austrian chairmanship—by the way, it is Austrian National Day today, so happy Austria—the Austrian chairmanship approached me and asked me if I wanted to be a special representative. And I found this remarkable because for any Austrian politician, it is a very brave thing to appoint a German to any position, and a risky endeavor. And they did it nevertheless. So thank you, again, for giving me the pleasure of working with you for nearly a year.

And the idea of the Austrian chairmanship was to make this issue—countering terrorism, countering radicalization in particular—to make it a focal point of their presidency. And that meant that I attended, of course, a lot of meetings and conferences and workshops. But they also asked me to produce a report which would contain recommendations on what the OSCE can do better, and perhaps what the specific niche of the OSCE is to contribute to countering violent extremism.

In the course of doing my research I visited 15 countries, from Kyrgyzstan to the United States. I engaged with all the executive structures of the OSCE. And, as I said, I attended lots of events and workshops, including two in Sarajevo in Bosnia. Before I start telling you what I came up with, I think it is important to emphasize how good the timing was. And it is, of course, also important to point out that the OSCE is opposed to all forms of terrorism, whether it is coming from the far right, from the far left, or, indeed, ethnic separatists. But one concern that is shared by all member states of the OSCE, the 57 of them, is, of course, jihadist terrorism, particularly right now in the form of ISIS.

What we've been witnessing, of course—and this is nothing I need to brief you about—is the end, the destruction of the territorial projects of the so-called Islamic State, the so-called caliphate that was declared in 2014. And you can never say often enough that this end of the physical caliphate is not an end of terrorism. It does not signal an end even of ISIS. It is really the end of phase one. And what exactly phase two will consist of is something that experts like ourselves are debating vigorously right now. No one can say exactly what it is going to entail. What's certain is, is that by definition because of the destruction of the physical caliphate, this movement that sits behind it—the jihadist movement—will be less concentrated. To some extent, it will spread out.

And that means that at least in the short to medium term, and perhaps paradoxically, this means actually that the threat from terrorism may increase, in particular for countries that were not part of the physical manifestation of that so-called caliphate, including all 57 member states for the OSCE. So, in a sense, the physical destruction of ISIS could actually, in the short to medium term, entail more threats from terrorism rather than less. And so it is a good point at which to think about what the OSCE can do and how member states can prepare themselves for what is going to preoccupy us, probably for many years to come.

What I want to do now is to first of all tell you very briefly about the conclusions that I came up with, and then perhaps also express some of the reservations and concerns that I still have. First, the conclusions. It is important to recognize, of course, that the OSCE is a complex organization consisting of a lot of different members. And despite its name, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, it actually includes Russia, all the former Soviet states, and of course also Canada and the United States. The numbers are very large. Politically it is a very diverse organization. And it has field operations, I think, in 13 different countries.

So on the one hand, you could say this is a mess in the making, you will never be able to get this kind of organization to do anything, it is too complicated, in many ways too political. And it's certainly true that no one in their right mind, not even anyone at the OSCE, would think of the OSCE as the sole or central actor in counterterrorism or in countering violent extremism.

But a lot of the things that I've just talked about, a lot of the things that seem like weaknesses can in fact also be strengths. And this is what my central conclusions were. The diversity of membership means, of course, that the OSCE includes a lot of countries that have a lot of experience with fighting terrorism and some countries that do not have very much experience with fighting terrorism. It includes countries that have very high capacity when it comes to countering violent extremism and a lot of countries that do not.

In a sense, the OSCE could be a hub for exchanging best practices, experiences that countries have had, and helping other countries to build up their capacities perhaps more quickly. And one of the central recommendations in the report is to boost and to bolster and to make more sophisticated the Action Against Terrorism Unit [ATU], which is one of the units at the OSCE, which is specifically charged with facilitating the exchange of best practices. I'm in fact happy to report that shortly after my report was published, the Austrian chairmanship confirmed that it was ready to contribute to making the ATU more important and to precisely pursue this idea of building that unit into a more sophisticated and perhaps the most interesting and innovative hub for exchanging best practices across the 57 member states. So there's momentum behind that idea.

The second recommendation, or central recommendation that I made, was to strengthen the field operations. And this is particularly important because a lot of the countries that I've traveled to, especially in the Balkans—for example, in Bosnia when I went there, a lot of people told me that they were quite fed up with the fact that a lot of international organizations were engaged in this field, they were coming to Bosnia for a couple of days trying to run workshops, were leaving after workshops and were never to be seen again. So the engagement was often duplicated, and it was also in many respects quite superficial.

Now, the advantage of the OSCE is, of course, that it has these field operations. It is on the ground. If you go to Bosnia, for example, you will see this is an organization with 250 people on the ground who know local conditions, who know what's going on within that society, who know the key stakeholders who are really important within that society. I do believe that, especially in the Balkans and Central Asia, two areas and two regions that are strategically important when it comes to countering violent extremism, I do believe that the OSCE could play a lead role in facilitating international engagement on countering violent extremism. It has a unique position, value added, that no other organization can deliver, because they simply do not have the presence on the ground that the OSCE has.

So these are my two central recommendations. And when it comes to these best practices, in fact, I've made an effort in my report to highlight existing best practices, showing that it's not something that needs to be invented from scratch. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. If countries like, let's say, Kyrgyzstan or Macedonia do want to have a disengagement program or a program that engages women and mothers encountering violent extremism, they do not have to invent that. There's plenty of programs that exist across the OSCE. And to be able to tap into those experiences could be something that could be very useful. And in fact, the report lists a lot of these best practices—by no means an exhaustive list but one that could perhaps inspire some of the work that I hope will be done.

Now, to conclude, I want to highlight some of my continued concerns. I think it is important not to underestimate the difficulties that are involved. This one year of engagement with the OSCE for me has been a one-year journey into international diplomacy in which I've learned a lot, including a lot of the difficulties and obstacles that exist, especially in this area. I've found, especially at many meetings, that it is very easy for countries to talk about the problems of other countries. It is very easy to point fingers. It is much more difficult to talk about your own problems.

One narrative that I've discovered is that when it comes to speaking about the causes of terrorism in your own country, countries always like to talk about ideology and like to talk about external influences that have somehow come to materialize, typically by foreign countries, in their own country.

When it comes to other countries, they're very quick to identify structural causes, injustices that exist in those societies, inequalities. There's a funny discourse where everyone points the finger at others and is very good at identifying problems in other countries, but very bad at speaking about their own problems.

There is, of course, also a fundamental difference of approach. There are some countries that are very open to, quote, unquote, "softer approaches" towards countering terrorism and radicalization, that are very open to involving civil society, very open to also talk about things that are perhaps wrong in their own countries. There are other countries that are very much focused on intelligence and security agencies and who probably believe that much of what my report talks about is basically a waste of time. That is a real divide within the OSCE that cannot easily be bridged.

And there's no doubt that—of course everyone agrees that terrorism should be countered. Everyone agrees that ISIS should be defeated. But once you get beyond these statements, once you get to the nitty gritty, you realize how difficult it is. One example—perhaps the most obvious example—is that everyone is against ISIS, but we do not have a joint coalition fighting ISIS in Syria, because fighting ISIS in Syria is ultimately tied up with the conflict in Syria. And the ideas about what caused that conflict and how it can be fought are very, very different, depending on whether you ask people in Paris or Moscow or in Washington, D.C.

So while it is true everyone agrees about fighting ISIS, everyone agrees that it would be a good idea to be against terrorism, once you get into the nitty gritty there are a lot of problems. And I think it is almost astonishing that an organization like the OSCE can do anything at all if you consider all the different assumptions and different ideas that are floating around.

The important thing to keep in mind is, of course, that terrorism will not be defeated ever by one thing. There's lots of instruments that will be used. The OSCE is one instrument of many instruments that can be used to make a contribution to that. No one ever claimed that the OSCE would become the sole or central or major actor in this field, but I do think that there are useful things that the OSCE can do, and I hope my report makes a contribution to explaining what they are.

Thank you.

Mr. TIERSKY. Peter, thank you. That was an excellent overview of some of your findings. I want to highlight a couple of things that I hope we'll come back to. I think it's very important to talk about that diversity of views, which includes a diversity of terminology and definitional diversity. But also, I think, crucially what you highlighted for us is a differing of approach. And I think the softer approaches versus the harder approaches—I hope we'll get into that in the discussion a bit more.

I also appreciate your highlighting towards the end that the OSCE is only one instrument. Perhaps we'll be able to get into the OSCE as opposed to other instruments and the other instruments and the benefits of using one versus the other.

Finally, you mentioned in your report and again today the importance of field missions and the potential that they have to really be key players and unique players because of their presence on the ground. I'll take the opportunity to trumpet the fact that the Helsinki Commission will be having another event specifically on the field missions, concentrating on the western Balkans, on the 1st of November at 10:00 a.m. in the Senate Visitors Center. So the information on that event is on our website.

Let me turn to Seamus, please, for a merciless critique of the report. [Laughter.]

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you very much. It's hard to do that as a fellow with Peter's center, but I will try.

First of all, let me first commend Peter and OSCE for a very comprehensive report. I mean, we're talking about visiting 15 different states, a dozen conferences, six field trips. This is the kind of hard work you need to do in order to determine what we talk about when we talk about counter-radicalization, countering violent extremism.

So let me first commend that. It's one of the best reports I've seen on CVE in recent memory, Matt's report excluded.

I was asked to talk a little bit about countering violent extremism, or CVE, and some potential areas to avoid, or be aware of, as one develops the program. A little bit of background on myself: prior to being at the program on extremism at George Washington, for about three and a half years, my main job was to do community engagement in the U.S. on these issues—going to a mosque and community center and talking about radicalization, terrorism, recruitment, and ways the government and community partners can partner together to try to prevent this. After the Boston Marathon bombing, the imam of the mosque calls me and said, you know, Seamus, two of my guys just did a horrible thing. Can you come and talk to my congregation about preventing the next two guys from doing this?

And these are very difficult and hard discussions to have with community partners. So when I'm thinking about developing CVE programs, I'm always kind of framing it in those conversations I had in the field in the U.S., in every mosque and community center you can think of, in the last three years.

With that said, I thought we'd talk a little bit about the nature of the threat very quickly and then move on to nine points to be aware of, things to look at as you're developing the CVE program. I think Peter was right, that we're actually in a new phase of terrorism with ISIS losing its physical space at a pretty rapid clip. But just this week, we had a new report out from the Soufan Group of 2,000 returning European foreign fighters in the last few years. In the U.K.'s context, you're talking about some 400 people have returned to the U.K., but of that, only about 50, 52 people have been charged with criminal offenses. So those 350 are kind of out in the wind—concerns for law enforcement but also an opportunity for some counter-radicalization and countering-violent-extremism programs, because it's one thing to know a guy went to Syria; it's another thing to prove it beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. And I think there's a lot of things that these countries are trying to grapple with.

And again, we're talking a lot about foreign fighters, but if you look at the attacks happening in Europe, particularly in Europe, only 20 percent of the 60-plus attacks in the last three years, since the announcement of the caliphate, have been committed by returning foreign fighters. It's primarily homegrown violent-extremism attacks. About 70 percent are committed by citizens of their own country.

I put that in context as we look at this, and I would encourage everyone to read the report pretty thoroughly. There's 22 different best practices, and I particularly like the fact that they had case studies to look at from around the world.

A few things to be aware of as we're kind of developing a CVE program. I think—and the report actually does a very good job at acknowledging the shortfalls on these things—but first and foremost is this idea of essentially securitizing the relationship. I said I used to go to mosques and community centers and talk about these issues, and the first question would be, "Why is an intelligence officer talking to me? I'm not a threat." And you have to kind of push through that conversation and make sure that your first line of communication with community partners is not, "Hey, I'm worried about three girls from Denver jumping on a plane to Syria and Iraq." And trying to phrase that in the right way, I think, is important. The report also says rightly that in some ways heavy-handed counterterrorism efforts can feed into a larger narrative or grievance that's out there. We have to be aware of that.

The other thing—and I think rightly said—was the lack of solid definitions. It's pretty easy to define terrorism, give or take. It's a little bit harder for extremism, and it's quite hard for counter-radicalization. And trying to get 56-plus countries to agree on these definitions is something, I think, that is worrisome but also something you have to do if you want to create programs that you can then transfer that one best practice to the others.

A few other points—we talk a lot about returning foreign fighters, but there's been a series of different waves of returning foreign fighters. The guys that left in 2013 and then came back home are much different than the men and women—and particularly minors—that are going to be returning in the coming months. And how we address those threats, I think, is important for this.

Additionally, there's been, frankly, a lack of funding for countering-violent-extremism programs in general. With some notable exceptions, it's usually an afterthought. Counterterrorism is the big gorilla in the room. So if we want to get to a point where we're talking about prevention, we have to put our money where our mouth is on these things.

The report also talks a lot about prison radicalization, rightly so. And I guess in the U.S. context, our concern is, we've arrested about 600 people for terrorism charges. We've had about 50 to 100 people being released. I've interviewed a number of them. Most of them have moved on with their lives and are productive members of society, but that's of their own volition. We haven't provided a systematic approach for individuals getting out. This is particularly important in Europe, where we're talking about shorter prison sentences than the U.S., where we're looking at 20 or 30 years. In Europe, you know, two to seven is a good day. What does that actually mean for not only what's happening in prison radicalization and whether to separate so-called radical individuals from the general population, or whether to kind of spread them out so they're not planning? These are all things we need to grapple with.

A few final remarks on this is this idea that community policing is important. My concern is sometimes community policing gets blurred quite quickly. And LAPD has a model of community policing in the states that works with community engagement and things like that, but it's also run by the counterterrorism division of the Los Angeles Police Department. What does that mean in general when you're doing the engagement? They might be the subject matter experts, but there's also kind of a dynamic playing in there.

There was a discussion, and I think it's very important, this concept of—and the U.S. Government, I think, is going to be moving on into this—away from broad-based engagement of what I used to do, which was 300 people in a mosque, talking about terrorism, towards more targeted interventions. I've got a kid Johnny, Johnny seems to be on the wrong path, and what's the kind of safety net we can develop around that? And I think especially in the U.S. context, you're going to see that shift away from countering violent extremism in the broad-based sense to what they would term as terrorism prevention.

Two final points to look at is in terms of internet radicalization—I thought the report did a very good job of this, but I want to highlight it. Governments are relatively lazy when it comes to terrorism content on the internet. Content removal is actually pretty easy. You can force Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube to enforce their terms of service with a pretty good press release or a gentleman in Congress standing up in the well of the Senate talking about this. It's a little bit harder to do alternative or counter-messaging. You have to actually roll up your sleeves and figure out what messages work, how to target this. And so I would hope that we don't just revert back to content removal as being the low-hanging fruit and focus on other things.

And the final point I think is important for all CVE programs is this concept of reciprocal radicalization. We've been seeing this play out not only in the U.S. but also the U.K., that far right feeding off of the attacks of ISIS. So, a man drives a van outside of a mosque and kills a number of people. And this reciprocal radicalization feeds off of each other. If we want to address the issues of ISIS, we're also going to need to address the larger issues of extremism in general, because if we don't, we're going to be in this cycle of violence.

With that, I'll stop there and give it to Matt.

Dr. NEUMANN. Merciless. [Laughter.]

Mr. TIERSKY. Seamus, thank you. You put a lot on the table for us to collectively chew over. I would flag that we've mercifully not used the terminology VERLT specifically, but we have definitely flipped between talking about violent extremism, radicalization.

We've used the term CVE in the U.S. context. You've talked about counterterrorism. You've talked about a terrorist prevention approach. We're already getting into a definitional—not a morass, but at least I'd like us to be clear in terms of what exactly we're addressing.

You also mentioned the potential challenge that heavy-handed counterterrorism efforts—I think was your phrase—could feed into radicalization, which I think is an extremely important point and one that I hope we'll come back to, so that we have a sense of exactly what it is we're talking about when we're talking about heavy-handed counterterrorism effort. What does that look like, and what specifically are we trying to avoid in that respect?

With that, let me turn over to Matt Levitt for his views on how this all looks in the U.S. context.

Thank you.

Mr. LEVITT. Well, thank you very much. It's very risky to go last when you're sitting on a panel with people like Peter and Seamus, but I'm very glad to be here. And I want to thank the OSCE and the Helsinki Commission for the work you've done and for making this possible.

I'm going to focus my comments on preventing or countering violent extremism or terrorism prevention here in the United States, not only because that was the focus of this report, this bipartisan study that I led in advance of the election. It ended up being a report for the Trump administration, but it was intended for whoever would win the next election, which is something that Washington does every four years. We're a nonpartisan institute, but every four years we bring together smart people from both sides of the aisle to think through some complicated issues. And this year, one of the things we did was thinking about preventing and countering violent extremism.

And it's an important time to think about this because the Trump administration has not yet really articulated what its position on this is going to be so much as it's articulated through action what its position probably will not be. And that is going to force us to think about what it is that we're actually trying to achieve. Are we trying to simply prevent the next terrorist attack? Are we trying to move the needle as early in the process as possible to prevent the next person from being radicalized? Are we going to focus on all forms of radicalization, including far left and far right, or are we most interested in what some in the administration, including the president, tend to refer to as "Islamic extremism"? We in the report take issue with that and prefer the term "Islamist extremism." It might seem like a very, very subtle distinction, but "Islamic" as a phrase—you know, a little bit of grammar would refer to the religion, its adherents and its basic practices. And our argument is that this is not anyone's particular religion. An Islamist is taking that into a political ideology.

And we argue very much that we should be focusing on all ideologies, not only because violence from whatever -ism is still violence and we should be interested in public safety but also because from our bipartisan perspective—and it's not clear the new administration agrees with this at all—from our perspective, the earlier you can move this into the process and the farther out of Washington, out of the Beltway bubble, you can move this into communities, whether that's Montgomery County, Maryland, where I live, or L.A., or anywhere in between, the more effective your efforts will be.

And they will be more effective because you can treat them in what you might describe as a public-health style of a model. In public health, we try and prevent a disease from being able to penetrate a community at all. Then if we find parts of the community or individuals that for some particular reason are particularly susceptible, we address them. And then if we find people have actually gotten sick, we really address those particular individuals. We deal with it at a community level, and we deal with it at an individual level. And if you do that, if you're working in the first instance at a very macro community level, then you are going to be able with the very same tools to take action that will effectively counter extremism from whatever type of ideological background it's coming from.

We think this is very important, and to me it's not at all clear that the administration is going in that direction. There are several indications that the administration is moving away entirely from the term "countering violent extremism." Now, some would say that that's long overdue. And frankly, most people involved in this field in communities will be quite happy with that, because for them the term "CVE"—it's too securitized already. There's a perception among some that it's just a cover for spying on people in the local community. So I challenge anyone here in the room or on Facebook Live to show me an example where local communities—yeah, that's done—where a local community is using the term "CVE."

Some would say moving away from that term is no big deal. And in fact, in our report, we use the term "PCVE," "preventing and countering violent extremism." The term that the administration seems to be moving toward—and you can see this from recent Department of Homeland Security testimony and from the renaming of some of the government events that are going on within the Beltway—is "terrorism prevention." And the only issue I have with that is the basic question, would all of the absolutely necessary things that we have to do to truly build cohesive societies, to build resilient communities, to move the needle earlier in the process so this is not only a law-enforcement effort, so that the departments of health and human services and education and others can use the pots of money and programs that they have and have been using for years to great effect—there is tremendous money and efforts and effective programming within HHS, for example, in public safety—would those types of programs and efforts still fit under the rubric of terrorism prevention, or are we taking this and putting it wholly on the security, law enforcement, intelligence side of government? I would argue that would be a big mistake if only because it would be a poor way to organize ourselves to use our existing resources and to address the full gamut of issues that we need to address.

Don't believe Matt Levitt on this. What does he know? Listen to U.S. law enforcement. If you talk to U.S. law enforcement, they will tell you, they will beg you—I started my career in FBI—please help us. They are drinking from the fire hose. We have reports of over 900, at this point about a thousand, Islamic State cases alone—that doesn't include al-Qaida or someone not involved with the Islamic States—across all 50 states in this country. Law enforcement is desperate for there to be someone who's going to start dealing with people who are going down the wrong path before they break the law, before they become a law enforcement problem.

And we don't want FBI dealing with that. We don't want FBI dealing with people before they've broken the law. But I sure hope someone's going to, not as a law-enforcement issue but as a cohesive-society issue. The same way we do counter-drug and counter-

gang, we should be doing this too. And the way things are going to be structured now, it's not clear we will effectively be able to do that.

Recently I came across a publication called Sheriff and Deputy, arguably a little bit law-enforcement-centric. And they specifically talk here—and this is a recent publication from July and August—about the community-based threat assessments and their role in prevention, about the need to understand mental health symptoms and stressors. These are themes that most people in Federal Government now in the Trump administration are less comfortable with—that's something someone else should be dealing with. And I would argue this is something we absolutely must deal with.

I think the other big cleavage issue is this issue of whether we're only dealing with the Islamic State and other Islamist extremists or all forms of extremism. We've had some very, very, very difficult times in this country recently, some not clearly tied to any type of ideology, at least yet—think Las Vegas—and others absolutely—think Charlottesville. In the wake of Charlottesville, the Military Times did a poll, and they polled 1,131 active-duty soldiers, and they asked them what's the biggest threat to America? And by a small margin, but a margin nonetheless, they said that white nationalists are a bigger threat to America than ISIS in Iraq and Syria. That's current U.S. military. And I think maybe we should take a pause and take a moment to reflect on that, because if we are going to create cohesive communities that are resilient and at the most basic level in terms of mayors' offices—the Association of Mayors is meeting right now—schools, religious institutions, libraries, places where you can actually see what's happening in your community and where local police are doing the real community policing are there, that's where this is going to be effective if it's going to be effective at all.

We have heard for many, many years about the need to have an all-elements-of-national-policy effect—all-elements-of-national-power policy. Let's do that here. And I worry that if it's terrorism prevention, there'll be many elements of U.S. national government power we won't be able to bring to the floor. And second, in this particular area, we need much more than that. We need a whole-of-society effect. We need to be able to work with NGOs. We need to be able to work with grassroots organizations. We need to be able to work with mental health professionals. At the end of the day, to the extent that homegrown violent extremism becomes one of the next big trends, which is one of the ways that the battlefield defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq may play out as the terrorism threat continues, as Peter pointed out in his opening comments—to the extent that that is true, arguably the most important people that will be deployed to prevent the next attack will not be police or FBI agents or intelligence analysts, but they'll be clinical social workers and they'll be clinical psychiatrists and psychologists, working in communities.

I'll give you one last final example, and with this I'll close. We've had several cases—think just about Rahimi in New York, who was just convicted for the bombings in New York and New Jersey; we had Omar Mateen in Orlando; we've had other cases, people who had come across the radar of law enforcement, they were not complete lone wolves, they were known wolves, if wolves at all—but law-enforcement ran down their strange behavior and ultimately decided there was no violation of the law, and so they did the right thing under the law, and they closed the investigation.

Now, to whom were they able to hand over these cases that FBI could not pursue anymore under the law? But they were pretty strange. Omar Mateen was saying at one point, I want to be Hezbollah, I want to be al-Qaida, I want to be ISIS, not understanding that those groups are fighting each other tooth-and-nail, not knowing the differences

between any of them, not being a particularly religious person himself. There was the issue of his flunking out of correctional officer school. To whom could they hand this off, saying, hey, here's a guy who needs help and who's demonstrated disturbing behaviors? This is not our place.

The answer was nobody, and that's not acceptable. But I don't have strong opinions on that. [Laughter.]

Mr. TIERSKY. Thanks, Matt. I think you very powerfully raised some important questions. What are we trying to achieve? Who will be tasked to achieve it? What do we call it? That matters. How do we not exclude critical agents of prevention, for lack of a better term? That was an excellent intervention. Thank you.

I also want to thank you for reminding me that I neglected to mention that we are streaming live on Facebook. And thank you for that. If anyone's tweeting, you are welcome to use our handle, @HelsinkiComm.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to turn it over to the audience for the questions and interventions you might have in a minute, but I will take the moderator's prerogative to ask a first set of questions here.

I would like to ask Seamus and Matt to think through and explain for us, again, this heavy-handed approach that might be counterproductive, because as important as it is for us to be reminded of what it is that we should be doing, we should be reminded of what may be happening that may not be working very well. If I could ask you to think that through and maybe give us some thoughts on things that may not be the approach that you might recommend.

Secondly, what I would ask Peter to respond to is once we've laid on the table some areas where there might be—it comes up again and again, that there are differences in approach, there are differences in definitions, and these things matter. Talk to us a little bit more about how the OSCE can help get over those differences in definition if nothing else in order to engender additional areas of cooperation, or is it possible to cooperate without agreement on definitions, without agreement on fundamental approaches? Are there still things that can happen productively through the context of the OSCE? Or if you'd like to raise a different tool, as we were talking about, please feel free to do that.

So can I turn it to Matt or Seamus? Who might like to begin with my first challenge?

Mr. HUGHES. The first thing that comes to mind, is less the heavy-handed approach and more that we don't have the soft-handed approach, meaning that the fact that in Minneapolis, for example, we've arrested 12 individuals for terrorism charges as it relates to ISIS, but in none of those cases do we try, or at least have a board set up for interventions or disengagement or de-radicalization.

So if community partners are looking at these type of things and they're saying, I have a kid I'm worried about, he clearly likes ISIS, and the only option they have is the FBI and the only option the FBI has in turn is an arrest or takedown, that will then feed into this idea of the us-versus-them narrative.

I think Matt's absolutely right. This idea of off-ramps, this idea of interventions, which to be fair is not novel except for in the U.S.—for some reason we still think this is an interesting case to deal with, but until we get that taken care of, I think it's going to be an issue. And a lot of that has to do with the fact that we have a material-support-to-terrorism clause in the U.S., which for right or wrong is very elastic and broad, which allows for law enforcement to arrest an individual who, say, is driving to the airport to

go to Turkey or going to Syria or Iraq. And so that kind of elasticity allows for law enforcement to intervene in a criminal action in an earlier stage than, say, our European partners may have the options to. And that makes us not particularly creative when it comes to prevention programs.

Mr. LEVITT. Yes, I completely agree. Under material support, it's not just a question of providing money or other types of material. You could be providing material support by providing yourself. So again, you drive someone to the airport, you go to training camp, and the material support was you provided yourself.

The thing is, law enforcement, prosecutors don't want to use that every single time. They want to have other options. Some kid who really was about to make a bad decision and maybe shouldn't spend the rest of his or her life behind bars—the main issue here for me is that if the face of our best community options is law enforcement, there will be some coming from a good place and some coming from a bad place. There's a little bit in this area of “haters gonna hate” who will feel that this is—or fear that it is—a cover for spying.

For example, at one point the FBI had a very, very well-intentioned effort to work with local communities and create what they called social responsibility committees that would involve the clinical social workers and what have you, and that did not go over well because it was FBI-driven. The idea at its core is a good one. But if you can have locally driven, nongovernmental-driven elements to work in society that then could have some connective tissue to law enforcement—as Seamus said, this is not new. You know, in the U.K. and in the Netherlands, many years ago they started these types of efforts, and the deal was that the police would not automatically just open a file on someone who came up for discussion at all.

On the flipside of the heavy-handed approach, I think we need to be just as wary as a hands-off approach because there needs to be not just funding and training support, but there needs to be coordination. So, for example, in Minneapolis where they have more recently had a judge who has taken it upon himself as an effort to try and bridge this gap to bring in someone from Europe to try and do a radicalization assessment, to see if there could be extenuating circumstances either in terms of a plea bargain or sentencing, what have you, and that made prosecutors around the country, even prosecutors who think this type of an idea is a good one, very uncomfortable because it wasn't the same across the country. So you're telling me that in Minneapolis in a particular given situation, you're going to let someone go, or go with six months or one-year probation, but somewhere else in the country we don't have that and so we're going to sentence them to seven years in prison?

We do need to have some very important federal footprint here to help drive this effectively.

Dr. NEUMANN. Before I respond to your questions, Alex, let me just highlight one point that Seamus raised that I think is another good example of where CVE, countering violent extremism, can be really important. One point on targeted interventions that's very obvious, that there is a need for this capability, another area are prisons. Prisons are the single most predictable thing that is going to become more important in years to come simply because of numbers.

As part of my official visit, I went to the Netherlands, and I visited the high-security prison in Vught, which is the place where the Netherlands keeps all its convicted terror-

ists. And 10 years ago, the entire country of the Netherlands had exactly 4 people in that prison, 4 people who had been convicted of terrorism-related offenses. And that's how it stayed for a long time. Last 3 years, 30 people were added to those 4 people. They now have not only 1 wing but 3 wings at the prison that are being populated by people convicted of terrorism-related offenses, and 20 more are likely to be added just this year.

And for the first time, they actually have to systematically think about how to organize the prison, who to house with whom without accidentally re-creating organizational or operational structures, how to deal with people who are disillusioned. What opportunities exist for these people to become de-radicalized within prisons? Always considering what Seamus pointed out, that in a lot of countries where people have not necessarily killed anyone but are convicted of, for example, membership in a terrorist organization, which is a criminal offense in a lot of countries, people have been convicted for three full years and will be out very soon.

In fact, for example, it was announced only a couple of days ago that 54 percent of the terrorist prisoner population in France will be out before the year 2020. This is not something that can be unaddressed, and it is something that will come up as an issue for almost every member state of the OSCE. What are countries doing to prepare themselves for that? To what extent are they learning from other countries that have more experience with organizing terrorist prisoners within prison? What opportunities are there to de-radicalize or disengage people? What opportunities are there for dealing with people after they are being released? These questions basically should arise in every single one of the 57 member states of the OSCE, and that's why it's important to learn from each other.

On your specific question of what scope is there for cooperation without a definition, I don't think it's likely that within the OSCE context or within the U.N. context there will be an agreed definition of terrorism anytime soon. And perhaps that's not necessarily an obstacle. In fact, within the U.N. context, within the OSCE context, countries have worked, collaborated, cooperated with each other on specific groups such as, for example, ISIS on a case-by-case basis. I think there is an understanding, a working understanding of what the groups are that you're trying to counter.

However, the absence of definitions of course then does create problems. To give you two examples—and this is not off the record, but these are well-stated positions—when I went to Moscow, almost everyone I talked to asked me, what is CVE? We don't get it. We don't understand it. Can you explain it to us? And I don't think that was entirely made up. I think they really fail to understand, and they had the firm impression—and to some extent this is the fault of the Obama administration—they had the firm impression that in fact the Americans wanted to replace counterterrorism with CVE altogether. To make them understand that this is not a substitute or a replacement but is complementary to traditional counterterrorism efforts is a point that no one ever made to them.

And I think that's why I spent quite a lot of time in my report on definitions because I think it is important to lay this out and to explain that CVE is essentially identical to VERLT and to PVE, as U.N. calls it. Every organization wants to have its own acronym. And by doing that, they are creating, in fact, a lot of confusion.

The second example I want to give you is perhaps the more poignant one, and it highlights that this is not really a debate about definitions. It's really a debate about political priorities.

When I went to Ankara, when I went to Turkey, they told me, yes, we're against ISIS. ISIS is a threat to our country. They've killed people in our country, so we're happy to collaborate. However, we also have other terrorist organizations that we want to counter. We want to counter what they call now FETO, the Gulen organization, which they push very hard at an international level—they consider them to be terrorists—no one agrees with them, but that's what they do. It's a terrorist organization for them, and America is protecting it, because the leader of that organization sits somewhere in Pennsylvania.

And [they told me] the second group that we are against is the PKK. And in fact, the PKK for us is a more pressing threat than ISIS. They kill a lot more people in our country. And America in its fight against ISIS is, according to Turkey, arming, training and equipping the PKK.

So clearly when it comes to speaking to Turkey, for example, about countering violent extremism, countering terrorism, it's a completely different narrative, it's a completely different set of priorities. And I don't think it's very easy to bridge that. Yes, to some extent they are collaborating on CVE efforts. They are not against it. But the sort of discourse that we're having here in Washington, D.C. is not the discourse that they are having in Ankara, and that makes it difficult. And, yes, you can find areas of collaboration, but ultimately it will always come to the point where these political differences—these are not differences about definitions, they are political differences—will basically make it impossible to go all the way. That's why the OSCE should not be the sole instrument for fighting violent extremism, but it can be useful in some respects.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thank you, Peter.

Another cleavage that seems obvious to me from what's been said by the panelist today is a difference of perspectives on the role of civil society versus the role of the state on some of these questions.

Do we have questions from the audience? Please, if you wouldn't mind using the microphone for our colleagues on Facebook who might be watching. Thanks very much, and please identify yourself.

QUESTIONER. Yes, Ismail Royer from the Center for Islam and Religious Freedom.

I'm wondering if there's something about the difference between America as a society and Europe as a society that results in this very different scale and scope and nature of the threat of homegrown terrorism between these two societies. And if so, obviously we can't re-engineer European society, but are there some lessons to be drawn from that?

Thanks.

Mr. TIERSKY. It's quite a broad question. Would anyone like to begin?

Mr. LEVITT. I think Peter should try and re-engineer European society. [Laughter.]

Dr. NEUMANN. This has often been articulated. There's no question that Muslims in European societies feel more marginalized and that, objectively speaking, they are more marginalized, and that it is more difficult, let's say, to become a true Brit, or true German, or to truly belong to French society if your first name is Muhammad and you are from a suburb of Paris, whereas it is easier, even in the first generation of immigration, to become accepted as an American. And so I do think that we have something to learn from the American experience.

However, at the same time, it is also true that in America Muslim immigration has been perhaps more selective and is more spread out across the country. In fact, the only

area within the United States that is perhaps comparable to the European situation are Somali communities in Minnesota—James can speak with more authority on that—and that’s where we’re seeing a disproportionate number of recruits to first al-Shabab and then Islamic State. But outside of Minnesota, the kind of ghettos that you hear about—Molenbeek in Brussels, the suburbs of Paris, do not exist to the same extent.

So I think, yes, there is something. There is a best practice, perhaps. But, again—and I’m speaking as a European here—this is something that is very difficult for politicians in particular to articulate, to domestic audiences, especially at times when far-right populists are gaining ground. And to say to people that perhaps we have to become more willing to integrate Muslim communities that are blamed for all sorts of things is very difficult.

Mr. HUGHES. I would agree with all those points and I would add a few other things to consider. Just in general, the geographic dispersion, it’s a little bit harder for our folks to get to Syria and Iraq in general. And the fact that the material support for terrorism clause allows you to break up folks probably sooner than other countries.

But probably the most important kind of dynamic is we haven’t seen kind of the in-network, or in-person recruitment that we’ve seen in Europe. We don’t have a sharia for U.S. kind of playing out here. We did in the early 2000s with Revolution Muslim, and once that organization was taken down—for the most part in the U.S. context you’re talking about twos and threes, not fours and fives of individuals going.

So we talk a lot about this idea of online radicalization or online recruitment. Minneapolis is a good example of this dynamic. You know, 12 guys get out of Minneapolis and go try to join ISIS. In Columbus, Ohio, or Lewiston, Maine, or San Diego, with the same kind of similar demographics, it’s zero to one guy, and they all have wi-fi. It’s not really a matter of ease of use of the internet. It has to do with the fact that the first wave of guys left Minneapolis to go to al-Shabab, and their brothers and sisters and roommates then were the next wave that went to ISIS, and they called back their friends. So this in-person recruitment, this in-person network I think matters a great deal. And for the most part, we’ve been fortunate in the U.S. to not have that kind of growing.

Mr. LEVITT. You guys covered all the most important points. I’ll just use this to pivot one little bit, and that is to say you often hear that America’s the greatest melting pot, and therefore that’s the big difference. And there’s something to that, but it’s limited.

I would take this opportunity to say that while border security is an important issue, I think there’s been a little bit too much of a focus on the travel issues and travel bans on that as a counterterrorism issue, because I don’t really see it as a counterterrorism issue, at least a particularly important one. And then here I would cite two Department of Homeland Security and Senate Homeland Security Committee reports, both of which conclude or highlight that at the end of the day, if you look at the cases of people who’ve been radicalized, certainly to the point of violence in this country, to a one, they were radicalized here, including people who came from abroad but were not radicalized before they came here. So it’s not the case, or it’s certainly not just the case, that if we could address the issue of border security we would address a problem of radicalization and radical incidents in this country. It highlights the need for this panel and the need for programs that will be happening, not from the outside-in but inside, because at a minimum radicalization also happens here in the United States—even if our situation is very different from that in Europe.

Mr. TIERSKY. Excellent.

Anybody else would like to take the floor from the audience at this point? Any questions?

Ambassador Strohal, please. If you wouldn't mind using the microphone.

QUESTIONER. Yes, thank you. Maybe just a comment rather than a question, if I may.

Mr. TIERSKY. Please.

QUESTIONER. Simply thanking you—first of all, it is the Austrian National Day, and there is no better place than the Helsinki Commission to spend it, because you are this unique interface between government, parliament, and civil society. And this debate is a great debate among super experts, I think, precisely looking at this interface.

And maybe just a couple of points why we have been bringing this into the OSCE. Peter mentioned a few arguments already. I think the wider picture is that this is an organization where everybody's there, all the 57 governments who make up this organization, but also where we have a very comprehensive security concept. And so where we have been starting is, as Austrian chairmanship, was looking where are the key risks and threats our societies are facing together? And if I simplify a little bit, then we have war, like the one in Eastern Ukraine. We have other conflicts in the OSCE region, not only outside the region. We have also grave violations of international law and international principles which are putting effective multilateralism increasingly into danger. And we have more specifically radicalization which could lead to terrorism, as a specific focus we wanted to create and where we are extremely grateful to not only have found Peter Neumann but to see that he agreed to work with us throughout this year on what became a great report. I think you have created not only attention but a great focus on this issue, and provided a number of very important case studies and recommendations. And we are certainly looking, at the moment, with other OSCE states how we can ensure the most meaningful followup to your report and to your recommendations.

And certainly the main thrust of this in terms of preventing things from happening is bringing us also very much to all our domestic situations in Europe, which indeed are different. And just to give you a couple of figures, Austria is a country of less than 9 million people, but we calculate that there about 300 people who have left for ISIS. Hundred probably are dead, hundred are still there and a hundred have come back. If you take a country like Belgium, the proportions are even higher. So this is a real daily concern in all our countries and all our societies. So the focus we will be creating in terms of exchanging not only best practices but enhancing cooperation across all 57 on these issues has been greatly facilitated by Peter Neumann and certainly also discussions like this one here today. And I hope we can see more of them.

And thank you once more.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, and thank you for this excellent intervention and thank you especially for sharing your National Day with us. That's very much appreciated.

Ladies and gentlemen, I certainly have more questions. I want to make sure there's an opportunity for the audience. I see two in the back here.

Yes, please.

QUESTIONER. Hello. I'm—[inaudible]—journalist from Lebanon.

Well, let me speak about radicalization. You need funding for it. And isn't it a double-standard sometimes to fight radicalization and be friends with nations that are funding

these groups? Okay, there is ideology, we understand. This idea was here we cannot fight it overnight, but can a state fight—nations are funding these groups, like in ISIS, for example, the border, like early days, how ISIS start growing by receiving money and the Turkish border and in Syria—well, of course, the war posed a lot of problems, like ISIS was moving around, selling oil and gas to Turkey. I mean, just an example I'm giving here. Qatar, you know, in WikiLeaks, it was very obvious that they were funding some groups or extremists, and these groups used the money to organize people.

This question probably you can also answer. Do you understand, the state, how they treat if there is racism—probably, you know, some people feel like they don't belong to a society. They try to find groups that can host them. And probably these extremist groups—and U.S. are not going so much into societies, but in France, we know there is a high tension of racism against Arabs. Probably sometimes they feel they're left alone from the community and some groups like extremists like ISIS, that's why they recruited many people from France or also from North Africa, like from Tunis and Morocco. But my major concern here, isn't it a double standard when we're trying to fight radicalism and recruiting young people or poor people from neighborhoods or whatever, and we're not fighting the funding of these groups that are making them become bigger and bigger?

Thank you.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thanks very much.

I'd like to take the next question as well at this time, please.

QUESTIONER. Hi. I'm Erika Schlager with the Helsinki Commission staff, and I'd like to start by thanking everyone on the panel for being here today. This kind of event is extremely helpful for us in informing the work that we do at the Helsinki Commission. So let me start with that.

I work on human rights issues, and this is a little bit outside my box. But when Mr. Hughes mentioned the material support statute, I was reminded how a number of human rights groups in the United States have sometimes been critical of the way the material support statute has been used or have been critical of conspiracy charges in certain instances where some NGOs have said that's really tantamount to a thought crime.

My question is, how do you ensure, when you do the work that you're doing, that you're adequately factoring in the human rights perspective? And I say that mindful that human rights grievances can sometimes itself be a driver for radicalization.

Thanks.

Mr. TIERSKY. I think that the panel is in consensus that Matt will take the first crack.

Mr. LEVITT. I've been thrown under the bus—not the last or first time.

This is a great opportunity to show how things should work when people don't fight with each other to the point of radicalization. Peter and I agree on a great many things, especially on this topic. We have a disagreement on some terror financing issues which we have competing articles in Foreign Affairs, and we've both been, I think, quite proud of how the example we've set on Twitter—which is not known for polite discussion and debate—at how we've handled that. So I'll just say a quick comment and then, Peter, you should feel free to disagree if you like.

Look, the issue of ISIS financing is exceptional and unique. The amount of foreign funding that the Islamic State got from individuals, which happened—or from countries, which happened less—was quite small. The massive amounts of money that it got, that

enabled it to do all the things that we know about, atrocities and more, is primarily from being able to raid banks, somewhere between 500 million and a billion dollars in Mosul alone, and then control of territory. And by virtue of controlling territory, it was able to exploit local resources, whether it was oil or other things, and even just taxation. And they taxed everything that you could possibly imagine.

In that sense, by the way, while the threat from the Islamic State is not over, as Peter pointed out in his opening comments, the Islamic State will have, on the one hand, far reduced economic needs—because it's not running a quote-unquote country, but also have far, far fewer resources—arguably more than enough resources to be able to provide seed money to terrorist attacks—which cost very little money—and maybe it won't even need that because most homegrown violent extremists who are inspired by the Islamic State will finance attacks through crime or their own bank accounts. We're talking small amounts of money.

The issue of the double standard is complicated, and maybe an OSCE event is a good place to discuss that, because the end of the world, we need to be a little bit of realpolitik. And if you want to be able to effect change in what's happening in Syria, you're going to need to work with Turkey.

Turkey was pretty upset when then-President Obama got up in front of cameras after repeated U.S. Government attempts to try and get Turkey to shut down a very large portion of its border that was not shut down. Turkey was very upset when President Obama got up and said publicly you haven't shut down this border and you're effectively facilitating the activities of the Islamic State. They were very upset, but they then shut down, gradually, that border. So partly the double standard; this is how we have to behave sometimes in the real world.

You know, there are some counter radicalization, counternarrative institutions in the Gulf, for example, some of which are doing some quite good work. Many people are critical of that saying, well, hasn't radicalization come, at least in the past, maybe even currently from Saudi Arabia or elsewhere, and the answer is, first of all, there's been some progress and change. And second, we need to work with people. Arguably, Muslims in the region will have more credibility on issues related to the Islamic faith than maybe an American government official. So on the double standard, I would say that.

On the issue of the human rights question, I'd simply say that there is a very large element here of "haters going to hate," and there's also some absolute important truth to this as well. The big issue here is entrapment and whether people are being entrapped into actually doing something, which ultimately is what has to happen for there to be a material support or a conspiracy charge. And I think that law enforcement has gotten very, very good, and there are lots of really specific things put in place to make sure that entrapment doesn't happen. The fact that entrapment defense has not worked in a whole lot of cases, in courts that are not unsympathetic to that claim, I think is telling.

And so I would challenge the idea that ultimately what's happening here is a thought crime, a thought police type of situation. I am very sensitive, however, to the fact that when it gets to CVE/PVE, before someone is charged with an actual material support, that that's the sensitive spot. We don't want, as I said, FBI or other law enforcement to be involved in that pre-crime space because we don't want them to be thought police. But there has to be someone who legitimately, from a nonprofit, from a social cohesion, local community perspective, the same way social workers and high schools will get involved when they see a kid who's got a problem having nothing to do with violation of the law

will be able to get involved. And I am—and I hope others—are sensitive to this issue of doing it in such a way that people will feel comfortable participating and not have to think, well, maybe I shouldn't get involved because maybe this is somehow involved with spying and thought police. That's where I come to that particular issue.

Mr. HUGHES. Maybe one last point on Matt's point. In the U.S. context, I think actually transparency matters a great deal, too. And so when I seek re-engagement, part of that was to kind of explain systematically what the material support of terrorism clause was so people understood what the right and left lines are on it. And then it's especially important when it comes to the online space. You know, the idea of countering alternative messages is great except for if folks don't want to do that because they're worried if they talk to a known or suspected terrorist they're going to hit against a terrorism statute. And so providing some level of guidance for community practitioners on what's OK online I think is incumbent on Department of Justice and others like that to do that.

And then finally—and there are other kinds of low-hanging things that we should be able to do, which is, what is the requirement for—in the U.S. context for a religious leader who tries an intervention but the individual gets arrested. Do they have to be a witness in a terrorism trial? If they try intervention and it goes south, and that young man stabs a bunch of people in a mall, are they civilly liable for these things? These are kind of easy-ish questions to wrap our heads around, that if we got enough lawyers in a room and took away the food, we could figure this out. And I think it's incumbent on us to figure that out.

Dr. NEUMANN. I can briefly particularly respond to the first question. And in fact, I agree with everything that Matt said.

Mr. LEVITT. I'm done. [Laughter.]

Dr. NEUMANN. But I want to add a couple more points. The first is particularly delicate because of course the question that was raised is one that often if not always comes up. I agree with Matt that the direct funding that comes from Gulf countries to organizations like ISIS is perhaps a little bit exaggerated. However, if you go to different OSCE countries, if you travel across Central Asia, you go to Kazakhstan, you go to Kyrgyzstan, you go to the western Balkans, you go to Bosnia, for example, what people will tell you—and I'm not saying I agree or I don't agree, I'm just telling you what people tell me in all these places—they say while at some point Saudi came in and started paying for mosques, and four or five years later we started having a problem. And they believe that this is not a coincidence.

And it is of course true that the Saudi form of Islam—whether you call it Salafism or Wahhabism—the kind of activity that Persian Gulf countries have sponsored is not directly aimed at creating terrorist groups, but you can easily see how some people, a minority of people who then follow these tendencies, then pervert this kind of already rigid form of Islam and then end up supporting terrorist groups. In fact, I'm saying this because that's exactly what the crown prince of Saudi Arabia said only two days ago when he in fact said at a conference that mistakes have been made, that his country overreacted to the Iranian revolution in 1979 and that they want to now return to a more moderate form of Islam. And so in that sense, he confirmed what a lot of people have suspected. That's one problem that has been identified in many OSCE countries.

The second one is related to what's happening in the Middle East. I think sometimes people underestimate quite how tectonic the changes are that are currently happening in

the Middle East. I'm absolutely convinced that in 100 or 200 years we will be reading about this period in history books. And while we are very focused on Islamic State because they are the ones threatening us, the reality in the region is that there are a number of conflicts going on. There is sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shiites. There is a regional power conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. There is a domestic conflict between military authoritarian rulers and the Muslim Brotherhood. And there is of course the rise of jihadism. And all of these things are happening at the same time.

And I think it is obvious that at least at the beginning of the Syrian conflict, there was a widespread view amongst Sunni powers in the region, that they would support whoever was fighting against what was perceived as a Shiite conspiracy led by President Assad supported by Hezbollah and backed by Iran, and that countries were not particularly discriminating, at least at the beginning, when it came to supporting groups, some of which took an extreme turn and ended up essentially becoming jihadist groups. And that's what explains, to some extent, why you can make a connection between some of the support that went into that conflict, supported armed groups as part of that conflict, that ended up with groups like Islamic State.

It was not so much intentional. It was, I think, a case of neglect and carelessness. And I hope that countries in the region are going to be more discriminating and more careful and more considering the consequences of some of the groups that they support, thinking that they are supporting one or the other side in a particular conflict. It is very complex, and I do think that explains to some extent what's been happening in the region.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thanks very much.

We have a question in the back. I think this will be the last question before I ask our panel to provide their concluding thoughts so that we can finish on time. Please.

QUESTIONER. Sherry Hartley [sp], Congressman Hastings' office.

Peter, I'm wondering if you could expand on the OSCE Action Against Terrorism Units and specifically if they're collaborating on counterproliferation. And I'm looking towards WMD dual-use technologies, emergent technologies, if you uncovered any of that aspect.

Dr. NEUMANN. I can answer that very briefly. Yes, it is amongst the list of things that they do, but it's probably fair to say that in the last three or four years that was not one of their priorities. There were not a lot of activities in that area even though it is within their remit. And if there was a lot of interest from member states, they would start doing that again. But right now, there's not a lot of activity.

Mr. TIERSKY. Let me ask our panelists for their final thoughts, and maybe I'll frame this this way: At the risk of asking you for a forecast, I'm going to ask you for a kind of a forecast. What's the best-case scenario for international cooperation on countering radicalization? And what's the worst-case scenario? What are the consequences therein?

Well, we'll have Peter be our final speaker on this, so I'll ask Seamus or Matt, take us to your thoughts.

Mr. HUGHES. OK, so what's the best-case scenario? Best-case scenario, everything works out. No, the best-case scenario is some sort of patchwork of CV programs where what works in Austria can then be translated to what happens in U.K. and having some level of that type of information sharing in a more systematic and comprehensive way.

The worst-case scenario is kind of what I lined out in my opening statement, which is CV becomes the cause of and solution to all the world's problems and it becomes this

catch-all phrase where the issues that Peter laid out in Turkey become tenfold in other countries too, and we see that play out, whether you're looking at Russia or other places like that. And so this question of definitions and this question of kind of all singing from the same sheet of music I think is quite important when it comes to CV.

Mr. LEVITT. The bottom line is that this is not a situation that we can arrest, shoot or kill our way out of alone, and so in a best-case scenario we are brave enough to try and fail, and learn from those lessons and try again. I see many more examples of that in Europe than I do here. And if I can be perfectly blunt, it's largely because on Capitol Hill there isn't much of an appetite on any side of the aisle. It's just not our political culture in this country for tolerance of failure. When our report came out and we briefed all kinds of committees and we briefed the departments, when we briefed the committees in particular, a lot of them said, well, can you show me metrics of success. I said, well, we'd need to actually try something which we could then measure. So, well, why should I fund something that I don't know will work? And I said why do we ever. We do things. And it was a little bit of a circular process, and that funding has not been forthcoming.

And so, to date, what's working is private funding, local funding. And I think it's a big problem that what little federal funding has picked up, has since been cut, the CVE federal grants in particular. But if we did well, we would learn these lessons learned, we would share them, and we would tailor them, because what happens not just in a given OSCE country to another OSCE country, but what happens in Washington, D.C., is not going to be exactly the same as the way it works in Minneapolis, or L.A., or Boston, or what have you. It's not going to be one-size-fits-all. That's if it goes well, and it will be a long slog and a messy process. That's if it goes well.

If it doesn't go well, we decide that it's too complicated or perhaps we say that CVE/PVE, choose your nomenclature, it's just too soft. And our job is to stop terrorists, not to coddle them. And if we find someone anywhere in this field, we should use the material support statute in every single case, and if someone has a problem they should go talk to their mommy. And we will do CT, thank you very much, and the rest of it is not what we do. That would be a colossal mistake, not only from a counterterrorism and violence prevention perspective, but from a perspective of social cohesion and community resilience as well.

Mr. TIERSKY. Peter, final thoughts other than of course the best-case scenario being that we adopt all of your commendations in the report, please. [Laughter.]

Dr. NEUMANN. Exactly. That's what I was going to say.

I do think that there is a case to be made for a more systematic lessons-learned process, exactly as Seamus mentioned. I do think that you can imagine more cooperation, but I think there needs to be an awareness of the limits of what is possible. I think sometimes people working in international organizations are overambitious, and I think we need to recognize—everyone needs to recognize—that CVE is only one part of the puzzle and that the OSCE is only a very small part of the CVE/CT puzzle. As long as we all recognize that, I do think good things can come out of that. But the worst enemy of progress is being overambitious and then failing and then turning in the opposite direction and thinking nothing works. I hope we can have a nuanced, sensible understanding of what works and what doesn't work.

Mr. TIERSKY. Well, I think certainly good things have come out of your willingness to come here and present your report and, Matt and Seamus, your willingness to come

and provide us your expertise. As one of my colleagues have said, this type of event is extremely helpful for us to help staff our members in the broader community here that's interested in the issues that we're all working on together. Thank you all for being here. I'd like to thank the audience for your excellent questions. And if everyone could please thank our panelists in the customary manner. [Applause.]

A transcript of this briefing should be available within a few days on our website. Thank you. This concludes the event.

[Whereupon, at 3:32 p.m., the briefing ended.]



This is an official publication of the **Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.**



This publication is intended to document developments and trends in participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE].



All Commission publications may be freely reproduced, in any form, with appropriate credit. The Commission encourages the widest possible dissemination of its publications.



www.csce.gov **@HelsinkiComm**

The Commission's Web site provides access to the latest press releases and reports, as well as hearings and briefings. Using the Commission's electronic subscription service, readers are able to receive press releases, articles, and other materials by topic or countries of particular interest.

Please subscribe today.