

Fighting Terror: Comparing Notes Across the Atlantic



DECEMBER 4, 2018

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

Washington: 2019

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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>.

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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held at 4:04 p.m. in Room 340, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC, Alex Tiersky, Senior Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Panelists present: Hon. Richard Hudson, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Alex Tiersky, Senior Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Visiting Senior Fellow for Counterterrorism and Homeland Security, Council on Foreign Relations; Leanne Erdberg, Director, Countering Violent Extremism, United States Institute of Peace; and Makis Voridis, Member of the Greek Parliament and Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.

Mr. TIERSKY. Ladies and gentlemen, if I could ask you to take your seats, we're going to begin.

Great. Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to start with a few words from a member of the Helsinki Commission, Congressman Richard Hudson.

Sir, thank you for being here today.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you so much. And I'd like to welcome everyone here today to this U.S. Helsinki Commission briefing, "Fighting Terror: Comparing Notes Across the Atlantic."

I think before we begin, though, I think it would be appropriate to acknowledge that while we meet here in the Cannon House Office Building, just over in the Capitol Rotunda, President George Herbert Walker Bush lies in state. And just want to acknowledge what a life, what an example of public service, a true patriot, family man, but also a diplomat and someone who was able to build international consensus, someone who operated on the international stage for many decades. We are just so thankful for the life and the service of President Bush.

It's great to see this distinguished audience come together for what I believe is a very crucial discussion on cooperation across the Atlantic to counter the threat of terrorism.

I want to welcome our panelists. We have excellent panelists here today.

Bruce Hoffman from the Council on Foreign Relations, appreciate you making time to be here.

Leanne Erdberg with the U.S. Institute of Peace, thank you.

And last but certainly not least, my good friend and colleague Makis Voridis, a distinguished senior member of the Greek Parliament, who is here representing the Parliamentary Assembly for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Mr. Voridis has traveled all the way from Greece to be here for this briefing. He is someone who has really mentored me and been a real role model for me in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. He's a real leader on this issue of combating terrorism, and really someone who has done a tremendous job bringing all sides together, finding consensus, looking for ways that we not reinvent the wheel, but that we as parliamentarians from Europe and other places can really add value to this fight to combat terrorism.

So thank you, my friend, for being here.

As many of you know, as a proud member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, I've focused my engagement in a number of areas, including combating religious persecution, anti-Semitism, preventing human trafficking, and promoting economic cooperation and free speech. As part of my role as a Helsinki commissioner, I'm regularly called upon to represent the United States at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which facilitates inter-parliamentary dialog among the 57 participating States. This assembly is a valuable forum where my congressional colleagues and our counterparts from countries ranging from Canada to Russia get together to have frequent discussions about the issues of the day and try to find common solutions that benefit all of our citizens.

In recent years, I've been really pleased to see that the assembly has responded to our citizens' needs by paying increasing attention to another of my absolute priorities, which is tackling terrorism. That's why I was so humbled and delighted to be appointed as a vice chair of the assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which was created in July 2017. I recognize that the committee offers us an important opportunity to make a difference in the international effort to address a principal threat to international peace and security.

Today's event is part and parcel to our engagement and the committee's good work and it represents one of the many lines of effort to ensure that the best expertise and experiences are available to the committee and the assembly as a whole as we tackle this important work.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the terrorist threats have multiplied in their scope and scale, the 57 OSCE members play an increasingly central role in facilitating the international efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, including addressing conditions that create fertile ground for terrorist groups to recruit.

Today's event will, I hope, shed some light on where OSCE participating States converge and diverge on policies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. It will also highlight the positive work of the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in this area.

I'm looking forward to the discussion on the state of transatlantic counterterrorism cooperation and to hearing what policy responses and best practices emerge from this conversation today.

However, before I hand it over to Alex and the Helsinki Commission staff to moderate, let me say thank you to the OSCE staff for all the work you've put into this trip,

helping organize meetings for Mr. Voridis, as well as this briefing today. I really appreciate the time and effort you put in every day.

But, Mr. Voridis, in your capacity as chairman of the OSCE Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, I have appreciated your leadership, energy, and enthusiasm, and really looking for ways that we can add value to this discussion. One of your most concrete and innovative proposals—and I'm sure you'll say more about this in your presentation—has been a questionnaire that the assembly disseminated in September, focused on how effectively governments are sharing information on individuals crossing borders, who may be a security risk.

I'm really pleased to be able to present to you today an official response from the United States delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I'm confident that you'll find it fully responsive to the intent of your initiative. Our report shows you that we have a strong record in making contributions to border control and information sharing in the context of preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Our response also highlights a number of U.S. practices that may inform the policies and practices of other OSCE participating States, including crucially in the protection of relevant human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We have also sought to be fully transparent by highlighting areas in which the United States continues to face challenges in optimizing its implementation of, for example, full biometric confirmation for all passengers. These challenges described in our report are important lessons learned that may benefit other OSCE participating States.

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. I look forward to continuing to actively engage in our common work and to ensure that the efforts of OSCE participating States to address this challenge are making the greatest possible difference in the lives of our citizens.

And so at this point, Mr. Voridis, I'd like to present to you our response so that we are fulfilling our obligation, and to thank you for your leadership.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thank you, Congressman Hudson, for your leadership in the work of the Helsinki Commission and your participation in the work that we do and your, really, your drive and your energy and your creativity and wanting us to find ways to engage with our international partners. Thank you very much.

Colleagues, Mr. Hudson has asked me to serve as a traffic cop, so I'll try to keep my own statements very, very brief.

I wanted to, in addition to the distinguished audience in the room, welcome our audience on Facebook and those who would like to engage in our conversation on Twitter, which, of course, is always running—@HelsinkiComm is our handle.

I will introduce each of our speakers prior to their remarks, but really only telegraphically. Their incredibly distinguished biographies are in your packets.

We'll begin our conversation with Dr. Bruce Hoffman. He is a tenured professor at Georgetown. He's served in senior leadership positions at RAND. Most importantly, I think, in this context, he's served in a congressionally appointed position on a commission related to the 9/11 attacks.

We have asked Dr. Hoffman to provide an assessment, essentially, of the evolution of the threat of terrorism that we're all facing, and also his perspective on how we're doing in addressing that threat together.

Dr. Hoffman, please, if you would.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Thank you very much, Alex, and thank you, Congressman, for convening this meeting.

Let me just briefly discuss where the threat is today as setting the stage for Leanne and Member of Parliament Voridis' comments.

Last January, Secretary of Defense James Mattis announced that fighting terrorism would no longer be the pre-eminent national security concern of the United States and that instead great power competition, particularly the rising challenge from China, from Russia would be the primary focus of U.S. national security. This is, of course, being repeated by CIA Director Gina Haspel when she spoke a couple of months ago at her alma mater. It was also encapsulated in the very important National Strategy for Counterterrorism that was released by the National Security Council (NSC) in September.

But when people talk about relegating terrorism to not quite the prominence it has had for the past 17 years, I'm often reminded about what then General Mattis said in Afghanistan some years ago when he said the enemy always gets a vote. And in that respect, I think, at the risk of stating the obvious, ISIS clearly is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future, and, just as problematically, al-Qaida hasn't gone away.

The reason I say this is that if we turn back to the national security strategy to counter terrorism, released in September, I think remarkably, even though the physical manifestation of ISIS was defeated on the battlefield in Iraq and in Syria, somewhat astonishing to read in that document that, despite that defeat, ISIS still maintains eight official branches scattered across North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia as well as Southeast Asia. And in addition to that, still maintains some two dozen active terrorist networks. So from a variety of different sources, one I think can safely assume that there are still 25[,000] to 30,000 ISIS fighters out there. They are obviously regrouping and reorganizing to carry on the struggle that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the group's founder and leader, declared 4 years ago. In fact, just the other weekend, we had further evidence of this when in the fighting near Deir ez-Zor in Syria, upwards of a hundred members of the Kurdish defense forces were killed by ISIS fighters.

Al-Qaida has been quiet, but al-Qaida's quiescence doesn't mean that it has ceased to be a threat. I would argue that al-Qaida has been quietly rebuilding, actually taking advantage of the past several years and being almost entirely preoccupied and transfixed by the threat of ISIS.

And al-Qaida, even though it's much more in the background, still, I think, presents a formidable threat to international peace and security.

Al-Qaida today is present in twice as many countries as it was a decade ago—that's over two dozen. It has upwards of 30[,000] to 40,000 fighters. Just last year, it created a new branch, al-Qaida that was dedicated to the liberation of Kashmir.

So from the two main terrorist organizations, we still face, I think, formidable challenges. And I think that's underscored by, really, one of the most important threats we face today, and that's the surviving foreign fighters, particularly from Iraq and Syria.

I think according to the most authoritative figures that I've seen, which are being produced by the National Defense University, just down the road at Fort McNair, some 40,000 individuals from over 120 different countries gravitated to Iraq and Syria to fight under ISIS's banner. Only about a quarter of those, only about 10,000, perished on the battlefield, which means that at least 15,000 were able to flee Syria and Iraq, approximately 7,500 or so have returned to their home countries or were deported to third coun-

tries. Fewer than half of that 15,000 have been imprisoned anywhere. Turkey, I think singularly, unhelpfully, deported about 5,000 foreign fighters, but never informed the countries of which those fighters are citizens where they were deposited, so you have this mass of individuals that have just basically disappeared. About 2,500 foreign fighters migrated to the Sudan where they have not laid down their arms and where they are continuing to prepare for battle. And upwards of about 3,000 migrated to other conflict zones. So one way or the other, foreign fighters still present an enormous challenge, not least because 8,000, approximately 8,000, are still in Syria.

Bringing that down to more comprehensible terms, one could select any country—I happen to know the United Kingdom the best because I've lived there, lived there for over a decade and have particularly close ties with security and law enforcement personnel there—and it's fascinating to look at the problem of foreign fighters just from the British lens.

About 800 British nationals went to fight with ISIS; half that number, 400, returned to the United Kingdom. Only a quarter of that number, so 100, are actually in prison. Turkey is known to have deported 100 British nationals to third countries, Malaysia amongst them. They've just disappeared, their whereabouts are completely unaccounted for. Britain has revoked the passports of another 150, leaving them stateless persons. And roughly, I would say, that leaves 100 to 150 completely unaccounted for.

Now, one reason why this is so dangerous is that ISIS's practice when it welcomed foreign fighters into its ranks over the past 4 years was to force them to turn over their passports. So ISIS, in essence, somewhere has tens of thousands, in many cases, completely legitimate passports, which they can now mix and match and assign to individuals who are—especially if they're not biometric passports—assign to individuals with roughly the same physical characteristics, which makes them even more difficult to track.

Another snapshot, I think, that is useful to put the foreign fighter threat in context—and also to underscore Congressman Hudson and what Member of Parliament Vioridis will talk about—is the difficulty in tracking foreign fighters across Europe. And here, last February, at least for my money, there was a particularly interesting case. An individual was arrested in Denmark. He was born in Somalia, he had previously lived in the United Kingdom, he carried a Finnish passport, had gone off to fight in Syria and then ended up in Denmark. In Denmark, he was a member of an ISIS cell that was involved in the planning and execution of the May 2016 attack on the Ariana Grande concert venue in Manchester, England. If you recall that tragedy, 23 persons were killed, 143 were injured; nearly half that number were children.

So very briefly, to wrap up—where do we stand in countering these threats? I mean, one could argue that we've been very effective on the battlefield. We've deprived ISIS of its caliphate, but that the threat from both ISIS as well as al-Qaida remains because the ideology and their belief system sustain this struggle.

In terms of how we counter them, well, I was particularly taken aback by a comment that the former secretary general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, made immediately following the Ariana Grande-Manchester bombing when he said NATO could do much more to fight terrorists and prevent international terrorism from spreading and persons from traveling across borders to carry out these attacks. So at that point, 15 years into the war on terrorism, it was a stunning statement and it underscores why international organizations like the OSCE have so much to contribute.

I think what one sees in recent years in the aftermath of the killing of bin Laden, in the destruction of ISIS's caliphate, it's—I wouldn't say it's a sense of complacency, but rather an easing up on the struggle against terrorism, to the extent that we find that international responses to terrorism have become much more fractionated and countries have become much more self-serving in focusing on protecting their own borders and not undertaking absolutely critical transnational and international cooperative efforts that are needed to counter terrorism, especially as that individual arrested in Denmark underscores.

And let me stop there.

Mr. TIERSKY. Dr. Hoffman, Bruce, thank you so much for setting the table for us. I think if anyone was complacent prior to your presentation, I think you've shocked us all into a sense of urgency here quite directly.

Our next speaker is going to be Leanne Erdberg, who is the director of countering violent extremism at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). There, as you will see in her biography that we've included for you, she directs all three of research, practice, and policy of the USIP's work on countering violent extremism. Her background includes impressive stints at a panorama of Washington agencies who have been trying to track this issue and work on it, from the NSC staff to the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau, the Department of Homeland Security, and the private sector.

We've asked Leanne to talk about her thoughts on countering violent extremism efforts by the United States, what a productive approach is, what is a counterproductive approach, and who is doing what well.

Leanne, you've heard about the formidable challenges, some battlefield successes. I think the rest of this maybe lies in your court. Please.

Ms. ERDBERG. Well, thank you so much for having me.

Thank you, Congressman Hudson, for organizing this.

And for Member of Parliament Voridis, for being here.

As mentioned in my bio, I direct the USIP's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program. I would like to note that the views that I am expressing here are my own and not necessarily those of USIP, which does not take any policy positions.

So we heard from Dr. Hoffman how fluid and complex today's terrorist landscape is. And the threat has evolved—so, too, must our methods to address terrorism.

A recent Center for Strategic and International Studies report found that 17 years after the U.S. declared the global war on terror, that today in 2018 there are nearly four times as many Salafi jihadi militants as there were on September 11, 2001. And there was an article several years ago in The New York Times that really struck me, that was doing profiles of various terrorists and said they have backgrounds so diverse that they defy a single profile, making it impossible to predict the thousands of paths that might lead to terrorism.

As we recognize that security measures alone cannot combat this threat, the U.S. and the international community have scaled up efforts to counter violent extremism or, as the United Nations calls it, address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. While this work probably started 17 years ago, it was really in 2014 and 2015 that the U.S. substantially scaled up its efforts to address violent extremism, as did the international community.

I'll take just a few seconds to talk a little bit about, what is countering violent extremism?

The term encompasses many types of efforts, such as the preventive aspects of counterterrorism. It's why the new national counterterrorism strategy of the United States refers to terrorism prevention. Additionally, it also includes interventions that are seeking to undermine the attraction of joining an extremist movement and the ideologies that promote violence. CVE also tends to cover addressing grievances and building the resilience of communities with efforts to prevent conflict, strengthen the rule of law, promote peace, inclusion, diversity, pluralism, and tolerance.

So as international CVE efforts are happening, they're happening against the landscape of profound vulnerabilities that are facing governments, particularly in the most fragile states on the planet. And when I say fragile, I'm referring to places where there is a breakdown or an absence of a social contract between people and their government. So we see, where fragility and violent extremism mix, there is a consistent challenge to stability of that country, to security, to capacity of building the capacities of the governments and of communities, as well as resilience.

In part, that's why the Congress has charged USIP, an independent, bipartisan leader in reducing and preventing conflict, with convening a task force on extremism in fragile states. This initiative will recommend early next year a comprehensive approach for U.S. policy to prevent the underlying causes of extremism in fragile states in the Sahel, in the Horn of Africa and the Near East that complements and builds off of proposed U.S. existing programs and partnerships.

From where we stand today—and that's what I'll focus the rest of my remarks on—is that any strategy for success must explicitly go beyond fighting today's terrorists and do more to prevent tomorrow's young people from ever joining in the first place.

From where I sit at USIP, I believe that the peacebuilding community has a lot to offer the counterterrorism community. Peacebuilding allows us to develop a more expansive understanding of violent extremism and its causes, I think, in three main ways, the first being that it prioritizes a locally and contextually specific type of information. The second is that it includes community members beyond just governments to have a stake in addressing this challenge. And the third is that it's long term and sustainable as communities don't have an end state, but they're there for the steady state.

So the peacebuilding practice allows us to also draw upon a wide variety of disciplines. Everybody is allowed under the tent. It allows us to emphasize specific types of input—those that promote inclusivity and strengthen community relations or security actors, those that bridge divides and build resilience. Practically speaking, the peacebuilding community helps work and build the capacity of civil society actors who are engaged in efforts to prevent violent extremism, as communities are often on the front lines of prevention, as well as the related challenge of rehabilitation and reintegration.

And so with that in mind, I'll talk about three themes that I think will contribute to this comparison of notes across the Atlantic and hopefully expand our conceptions about how we understand violent extremism.

The first theme is that, at its core, violent extremism is a deeply human problem. And we can easily forget this because today's terrorists are so violent and so intolerant and so vicious. But ultimately, it's important to remember that ISIS or Boko Haram or al-Shabaab or al-Qaida only exist as long as people join them. Terrorists are incredibly

adept at making the case for violent, radical change and recruiting aggrieved individuals to be part of that change. They are able to manipulate others. They dehumanize in-group and out-group, they give easy solutions to really complicated grievances. They prey upon victimhood and make it all locally and culturally specific. Recruiters use concepts like trust and belonging and empathy and identity to form really strong group bonds.

Each one of these tactics has significant neural, emotional, and psychological components. And these deserve greater value in our international strategies to prevent terrorism from happening in the first place.

The second concept that I think helps us expand our understanding and hopefully expand our toolkit is that too many international efforts that combat terrorism have oversimplified the challenge into an isolated, compartmentalized manifestation of grievance. We've all heard it's about poverty, it's about religion, it's about messaging. If only it was only—it was so easy to be about one thing.

Communities and societies, as we all know, are complex systems and that means many people and the environment are interacting with each other in unpredictable ways. So this way of thinking challenges our natural instinct to find X diagnosis and Y cure. And so I think that a lot of times our plans are developed at a single moment in time and designed for a multiyear period of time with limited agility to change for those dynamic interactions on the ground. They're also often measured for single output rather than a collective outcome.

So a complexity frame really allows us for interactivity and non-sequencing of efforts by both government and nongovernment actors, those led by civil society. And they could show impacts beyond any one effort.

The third area that I'd like to highlight is the focus on action. At USIP we're partnering with neuroscientists and behavioral psychologists to help better explain those physiological and cognitive dimensions that I earlier mentioned. We believe that this better understanding of the psychosocial factors that motivate individuals to participate in terrorist activities coincidentally may be the same factors that drive participation in nonviolent, resistant movements, and that this would help generate more creative policy options.

If you think about it, if group identity and the perception of power are part of what makes terrorist groups attractive, then alternatives to give young people vehicles to fill these needs can be something that's also good for society overall. To put it more bluntly: We cannot message away the attraction of belonging to a community that is on a shared mission to resist injustices.

What we can give people is an opportunity to be part of a larger cause, create meaningful social bonds in service of a good mission and the dignity of ownership via nonviolent resistance. This allows us to showcase the hypocrisy of terrorists in a really interesting way, because while terrorists provide agency and power to their recruits, they don't deliver on that promise. Nonviolent movements, on the other hand, tend to have flatter organizational structures and they deliver on the concept of people power—that is, that power is shared amongst people instead of allowing very few to exert power over many others.

Beyond that, nonviolent resistance has been shown empirically to be significantly more effective than violence in challenging major injustices, such as highly repressive authoritarianism. So knowing that participating in a nonviolent struggle is a more effec-

tive way to get what you want offers additional motivation. Everyone wants to be part of the winning team.

So in conclusion, on both sides of the Atlantic and around the world, this field is rapidly evolving. I think that that really calls upon us to have more reason to share and to collaborate and to connect, as we're all in this generational struggle together. I am hopeful that we have a collective ability to plan and to work together, and understanding the ways to harness that productively is key to populating a much more comprehensive approach to preventing violent extremism.

So maybe I'll stop there and we'll continue the conversation.

Mr. TIERSKY. Leanne, thank you. Thank you so much. I think if anyone thought that a solution to the challenge of violent extremism would be amenable to a silver bullet by either one actor or in one particular variable, I think you've put that straw man to rest, certainly. Among the many elements that you put on the table, certainly a whole-of-society approach, civil society as an absolutely crucial actor, the psychosocial factors that are involved in radicalization—all of that, and, of course, the point that you ended on, sharing and collaborating, brings us clearly to our next speaker.

And so at this point, I'd like to ask Mr. Voridis if he would say a few words about the formidable challenges that he's been hearing about and that we've been talking about.

If I could just say a personal word, I had the great honor to accompany Mr. Voridis this morning to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City. And, Mr. Voridis, I would like to thank you for making the time to participate in that activity and for insisting that we go there. It was an extremely meaningful time for you to be there.

You'll recall this morning that we were together looking at one of the exhibits that had to do with the real-time tracking of the movements of the 9/11 hijackers. And as we were looking at these lines and dots moving back and forth to various cities, we noticed together that the hijackers had traveled from Munich, from Prague. What a stark reminder of the need for, and a clear demonstration of the need for, transatlantic cooperation in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Voridis, as you've heard, was appointed as the chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorisms of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in July 2017. I would only note from his biography also that he served as the leader of the international election observation mission to the United States in 2016. He's been incredibly active as chairman of this group. He's had a great many activities that's he led since his appointment.

Mr. Voridis, thank you very much for coming from Greece. And please, the floor is yours.

Mr. VORIDIS. Thank you. Thank you, Alex.

And at the outset, let me express my deep gratitude to Congressman Richard Hudson who helped organize this meeting and this visit. He's a great friend. It's a great honor to have him as a vice chair in our ad hoc committee. And we deeply appreciate his contributions, his value, and the work that he is doing.

I will come to the work that this ad hoc committee is doing, but I must say from the beginning that whatever value this work has is actually because people like Congressman Hudson are working hard on this issue and they're trying to do their best.

I must also thank Chairman Wicker because he's also leading the U.S. delegation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. And the work that the U.S. delegation is doing, especially in general, but also in the subject of counterterrorism, is very, very important.

And, of course, Mr. Hoffman, it was quite exciting to hear your views. I must say that after hearing you, the need for international coordination and work in this issue becomes very, very clear. And everyone who doubts that, I think he should come to one of your lectures; then he will know why we should take this thing so seriously.

And, of course, Ms. Leanne Erdberg, that was indeed an insightful presentation showing us the complexity and also the need to have a comprehensive approach when we're dealing with this issue.

I must thank also Alex Tiersky and his team and his colleagues for putting all this together. Thank you, Alex, for everything and for the great concern and care that you've shown in organizing that.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, what I must say is the following. One question that always we were asking ourselves being in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—and let me make here a parentheses—the OSCE is actually the bigger regional organization for security, grouping together 57 different countries and 13—I think 13 or 11—11 partners for cooperation. So it's quite a big group. And the Parliamentary Assembly actually has delegates, 323 delegates coming from 57 different national parliaments.

I'm saying that because OSCE has, in its core, that's why we are saying that there is something special and different for OSCE than any other international organization because it's thematic, it has specific subject, which is security. It's a security organization.

So when we are talking about security, and especially at the aftermath of terrorist attacks that created a great concern for the citizens—and we're talking about Bataclan, we are talking about Brussels, we are talking about Spain—so actually, all over, we had, after 9/11, a number of very, very murderous attacks, blind attacks, with innocent people being killed and severely injured.

So there was a growing concern in the Parliamentary Assembly—what could we parliamentarians do in order to contribute to the international fight against terrorism? And as we responded to that, our Parliamentary Assembly decided that we would create an ad hoc committee that is going to work on that issue.

Now, creating a committee, maybe someone would think it's not so efficient. But again, the question is what the Parliamentary Assembly can do. Because the parliamentary assembly for an international organization, it's not a legislative body. I mean, we don't have legislative powers. We're not parliaments. We are—it is consisting of parliamentarians, but it's not a parliament.

So normally, what do parliamentary assemblies do? They raise awareness on the work being carried out by international organizations. And that's why, actually, international organizations wanted to have all of them, parliamentary assemblies, because at a certain point, international organizations were considered to be something a bit obscure—you know, ambassadors and executives, people from the executive branches came together taking decisions, but no actual accountability of what they were doing. So they wanted to be connected somehow with society and the idea in order to achieve that was to create the parliamentary assemblies. Okay.

But one must know that the parliamentary assemblies are not legislative bodies, so we cannot adopt legislation. So what are they? They are international fora for parliamen-

tary dialog. So creating a committee would want to say, Okay, do we really need another committee talking about terrorism, and what's the added value in that? Is it the best thing that you can do about that?

Now, in order to tackle the thing, the issue of terrorism, there are some things that have to be understood and have to be explained to the people. And one of it is that we cannot deal with it at a national level. This must be understood. Because when something happens to Bataclan in Paris, then French people go to the government and they say, Why don't you do something, why did you let this happen? And they expect the government to deal with that. So one first answer that must be provided and explained to the people is that this is not—there is no national solution.

And why there is no national solution? Because the people Dr. Hoffman was speaking about, they come all over the world. They travel from different countries. They are joined in very peculiar and strange ways using the internet and all types of connections. They are being financed internationally. So if you try to stop them when they've passed your borders, then it's too late, you cannot. You cannot. And the example Alex used concerning the terrorist—the horrible terrorist attack on 9/11 is exactly that one, because these guys, they traveled from Europe, but they had origins elsewhere. So, I mean, this is the situation, so there is no national answer to international terrorism. So the answer to that, the efficient answer to that, is international cooperation, and this leaves a specific role to international organizations, to the international community.

Now, the second thing is there are—and this is, I think, one of the credits that we must give to the international community—there are quite comprehensive responses to that if you want to go into that, because we have U.N. resolutions that describe exactly what the states must do. And there are Security Council resolutions coming from the U.N. There are directives coming from the European Union. They specifically say what the national states must do in order to address the issue. And these resolutions, they are mandatory, so they have been voted by the states, the states have accepted, they have taken commitments, so they must fulfill their commitments.

So this is where parliaments come again. Parliaments come into play because there are things that have to be legislated, but not only legislated—there are things, there are policies that have to be implemented. Because many times, what we do, what we politicians do, is that we make the legislation and then the legislation stays there without any further steps, so it's not being implemented.

So what we intended to do, having this committee, is, of course, raise the awareness of what's happening and why the need for international cooperation is needed. But the second thing is also to try to push for legislation according to international commitments where this has not been done. And where it's not been done, it has not been done by the states, then start the parliamentary control. That means asking questions to the governments why they have not done that so far. So I think that now by saying this, this is a very specific and distinctive role for parliamentarians. And that was the idea behind the creation of this committee.

Because, Alex, imagine the power of 323 parliamentarians from 57 different parliaments going back to their governments and asking specific questions of what they have done on specific international obligations that their governments have undertaken. This is, I think, the added value of the work that we are doing. And this is something which goes much beyond international parliamentary diplomacy or even just raising the awareness. This is something very specific.

And, let's say, one very, very specific example of this work is exactly the work that has been delivered by Congressman Hudson to us and that we are going to give now further afield to the Transnational Threat Department of OSCE in order to be processed and to come back with further policy recommendations. So this is actually what we'd like to do.

Now, in order to arrive to that, in order to assess real needs and also see what's happening, we had to make some—and we do make and we try to extend experiences and we are making what we call field visits. Now, for example, the idea is to identify loopholes in counterterrorism framework.

For example—and this is something for Leanne—Belgium has suffered a lot and they are trying to deal with it. Also, Belgium has a growing number of FTFs, of foreign terrorist fighters, returning. So their main concern is that. They are trying to create what they call local integrated security cells. That means mobilizing municipalities and even, at a certain level, families which may strike some, you know, as a bit strange. But families, the families of the terrorists are the first to suffer, because the terrorists, the radicalized terrorist, leaves the family, but also trying to influence brother, sister, the whole environment. So the father and the mother there, they are very, very worried of the path being taken by their son or daughter. Okay. So you try to use them in order to control, use them in the good sense, to cooperate with them in order to control what's happening at the local level. So that's the Belgium experience.

But on the other hand, one last thing, as we don't have very—although they're working hard, we don't have very concrete results on that, so that's a problem. I mean, we—and if you ask them, Okay, you are doing all this work and you have social workers and you have psychologists and you have people in the community working and you have the municipalities with you, but at the end of the day, do you get a specific result, does someone change? Is the environment, is it more secure? They don't have, so one must think more about that issue.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, we went there, another very difficult case. Why? Because they have migration, they don't have really an efficient border security management and they have FTFs. We went to a prison there and we tried to talk with one of these terrorists who are being kept into prison. One of our members, who is from Norway, a member of parliament, of I think Pakistani origin, a Muslim himself, he tried to talk to the guy. Very, very disappointing. I mean, this guy, actually what he said to this member of parliament from Norway is that, normally, I shouldn't be talking to you because you're an infidel and you should have been killed. So I don't know what ideas you have of how we can approach these persons.

And the answer being given from the Bosnia and Herzegovina security services is actually they do nothing about that, but they just try to control them when they get out of prison. So they monitor them and they try to control in order not to have any further terrorist acts. But that's the answer they give. They think that it's a waste of time and money to try to change the mind or deradicalize these persons. But, of course, again, policies into prisons in order not for having others being radicalized by such prisoners, then, again, this is another issue.

A visit to Morocco, that was very interesting because there you see how crucial the education and especially the religious education becomes and how, by having people who do not connect religion with violence and the total rejection of other religions or other cultures plays a crucial role in avoiding radicalization.

Another thing is actually that—and that’s a quite new one what I’ve told you, we’re trying now to get the answers from the parliamentary control that’s already being asked by our members and we will process them. And now we think that, besides working with the executive structures of the OSCE, which have the capacity of doing it, we’d like to have a better cooperation. And we had meetings yesterday about that with the United Nations, and I think these went quite well, so we’re going to be working closely to that.

Now, the final thing I’d like to say is we do think that we must engage more with other parliamentary assemblies, in fact the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the International Parliamentary Union, so we broaden the scope of cooperation on that issue.

And a final point. Normally, parliamentary assemblies, what do they do, they make resolutions. So they vote for that. And that has a certain value, but, of course, it’s not, like, resolving the problem. What we did—and I must say that, because I think it stresses the importance of the work being done, but also the sensitivity on that issue. Now, the Austrian chairmanship of the OSCE had prepared a document—in our view, a very comprehensive document—which was dealing with all those issues that actually you’ve raised: border security, passenger name records (PNRs), advance passenger informations (APIs), biometrics, aviation, return of FTFs, deradicalization, victims and how you work with victims in order to relieve tensions, to try to deal with possible tensions that could be created if you don’t deal with that. So all those issues were very inclusive. It was negotiated at the OSCE executive structure and it didn’t pass. And it didn’t pass because there they have the unanimity vote, so all 57 states must agree. One disagreed, not because they didn’t like the text, but for other political reasons.

So what did we do in the Parliamentary Assembly? We took the text, we gave it a parliamentary perspective. We pushed it in our Parliamentary Assembly. And I must tell you, again, there it’s 57 different parliaments, but also from different ideological and political groups.

And in our assembly, this was passed unanimously, which I think was very impressive because it shows that on that issue you could build a tremendous consensus that you will not see probably in the governments, but parliamentarians could achieve this consensus. And by mobilizing parliamentarians, then, I think, we could be optimistic that we are going to have an important and major contribution in fighting terrorism, this horrible menace that really threatens the security of our people.

Now, thank you very much. That is all of my time.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thank you, Mr. Vouridis. Thank you for your excellent remarks. I take away first the point that you started with, that this is a challenge that cannot be dealt with at the national level. I take away your very strong words on the role of parliamentarians and the implementation of commitments that have been made elsewhere and in pushing efforts that may not succeed in other fora. And I really appreciated the word of mobilizing parliamentarians, and I think that’s exactly what you’re doing in your role as chairman.

I would like to take the moderator’s discretion to ask a question of each of our panelists.

I’m eager to get to our audience questions, so please gather your thoughts, colleagues, in the audience. I’d like to ask each of you one question before I go over to the audience at this time.

Bruce, you've given us your threat perception, the Bruce Hoffman view of where we stand on countering terrorism. And certainly, I subscribe to that view completely. I also have the sense that perhaps that threat perception is not universally shared across the OSCE space or across the world. So I'd like you to give us some thoughts on how the national threat perceptions from—I'll take some countries at random—let's say, Turkey, you raised Turkey, how does their threat perception differ from our own? How does the Russian threat perception differ from our own? And how does that inform their approaches to countering terrorism?

Leanne, I'd like to ask you, if I could, to give us some thoughts on counter-violent extremism approaches that are counterproductive. You've given us some examples of the right path. But clearly, the right path is not always followed or else this would be particularly straightforward. So if you can talk to a bit about what should be avoided in this space, that would be helpful.

Mr. Voriadis, I'm asking, in a sense, the other panelists to talk about ways in which the countries that we're all trying to get onto the same page differ. Your job is unity and finding the consensus among these countries. I'd like to have a sense from you where you think there is this kind of weight of agreement that allows some forward movement in some specific areas cooperatively across the OSCE space.

So, please, Dr. Hoffman, if I could ask you to start.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, I think one of the main problems is that the longer the war on terrorism is dragged on, the greater the desire is not to have terrorism be a preeminent threat. I mean, it's perfectly understandable. The expenditures that enhanced security measures have cost all countries, for example, is not—is not declining at all, but at a time when national economies and the international economic system is more unstable than it's been than in the past, so there's a desire, in some respects, to declare victory or to say that we've turned a corner and to relegate terrorism to a lesser priority.

I mean, unfortunately, I've now been studying terrorism, amazingly, for 42 years, since I first went to graduate school, and the problem has only become more intractable. But one of the patterns that I've seen is, in the absence of spectacular terrorist attacks, we tend to relax our vigilance, to lower our guard and, therefore, create the circumstances where terrorists are emboldened and feel that they can strike. So that's why I think international cooperation is so critical.

The problem, too, is I think that the really astonishing or remarkable worldwide unity that existed in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks 17 years ago has consistently eroded. And the two countries that you cite are cases in point. Turkey is a member of NATO, obviously, but bears an enormous responsibility for the conditions that gave rise to the civil war in Syria by allowing the passage of foreign fighters, both al-Qaida and ISIS, through its borders and only laterally taking action against them. Even today, I think Turkey is very selective in that the groups that it—and this is a national problem, it's not just unique to Turkey—the groups that it designates as the most serious terrorist threats—for instance, the Kurds—receive the lion's share of its attention, but then other entities that we would judge as very serious threats, like Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, for example, in Idlib province, couldn't exist without at least some tacit connivance or permission of Turkey.

And I think the problem is, is that groups like al-Qaida, especially in contrast to the deprivations of ISIS, consciously style themselves now and use this term of “moderate

extremists,” and, therefore, appeal to certain countries as a more palatable or acceptable alternative to groups like ISIS. So this is very dangerous.

Insofar as Russia concerned, I mean, their priority, I think, is completely different from ours. Their priority is to keep Assad in power, which has not been that of the West, which has been to arrive at some sensible solution, which I think, unfortunately, the time is long past in Syria, but nonetheless it’s still very different than buttressing the Assad regime, and also deflecting attention away from the Caucasus and away from Russia’s southern border, which means cooperating with Iran, in maintaining Assad. So right there, you see this tremendous divergence and interests that would address, at least in this case, the core generator of refugee problems of economic and political instability amongst many of the United States’ Western European allies and what has become the crucible for terrorism today, which is the civil war in Syria, which shows no sign of letting up and is exactly why we have these 40,000 foreign fighters that answered the call to join ISIS—I mean, an astonishingly high number—and why there’s still roughly 20[,000] to 30,000 out there.

Mr. TIERSKY. That’s not going to make international cooperation any easier.

Leanne, would you give us some thoughts on ways in which countering violent extremism efforts would be counterproductive, please?

Ms. ERDBERG. Sure. So maybe I’ll split it into high crimes and misdemeanors. [Chuckles.]

So in the high-crimes department, counterproductive behaviors that abuse human rights, have significant civilian casualties—the research is just starting to bear out more and more that these are incredibly radicalizing factors. And so that when the state takes away human rights—and we’re talking about the highest type of human rights abuses—it just plays directly into the terrorists’ hands in terms of recruitment and radicalization.

The other thing is painting opposition political groups as terrorists and closing civil society space. This is another way in which you’re just playing into the terrorists’ hand. If you crack down on nonviolent political actors, then you are basically sending a message that the only way to see change is through violence. And so those are, I think, some of the most counterproductive behaviors we can see by states.

In terms of the misdemeanors, I think that there’s a lot of space in the both academic and practitioners that are, for the first time, as you were saying, measuring and trying to figure out what works and what doesn’t. I think that there has been a lot of new study into what things are wholly replicable from one community to another. And so what worked in our house is not going to work in Athens, and that is one of the challenges of cooperation because there is such an ability to learn from each other. But you have to learn and then tailor, and I think that tailoring is really incredibly important to not being counterproductive, because there’s different cultural histories, different religious dynamics, different socioeconomic dynamics, and a lot of national places that need that level of specificity.

The last kind of misdemeanor, I would say, is that this fact/counterfact is persuasive. And so a lot of messaging that just basically says the terrorists are wrong, ISIS is wrong, they are bad, what was known as the “counternarrative,” is just not persuasive. It doesn’t tap into the same reasons why somebody was open to the message in the first place. So I think a focus away from the message itself and into the reasons why they were open

to the message in the first place could have a lot more productivity than just trying to think of it as a competition for ideas.

Mr. TIERSKY. Leanne, thank you.

Let me underline a point that really is central to the mandate of the Helsinki Commission. When you talked about the behavior of governments toward their own citizens as a major contributing factor to radicalization and violent extremism, as everyone here will recall, the basis of the Helsinki Commission's mandate, the Helsinki Final Act, was a groundbreaking agreement that, among other things, for the first time ensured that the human rights of the citizens of any given country were not an internal matter of internal concern, only for the government of that country, but for all of the participating states, and that all the participating states would hold each other accountable to their commitments in these areas. So clearly this is an issue that the Helsinki Commission, the OSCE, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly hold dear to their hearts.

Mr. VORIDIS, how can we come together, given these divergent viewpoints?

Mr. VORIDIS. For example, one very practical thing: border security and aviation control; APIs, PNRs, biometrics. This is not just something abstract. If we had them properly implemented, we could trace the movements. For example, there was one guy who left Syria. He did not travel directly to Europe. He went back to [inaudible]. He stayed a while there. And then he traveled to Berlin, and he organized the attack to the synagogue in Berlin.

So why didn't we find this guy? He was on the computer. But why didn't we find this guy? Because we were not monitoring [inaudible]. So [inaudible] was not considered a place that you should monitor, because it was out of the question. No one would come from there to—it was not considered to be dangerous.

Now, if we had implemented PNRs and APIs, then we would trace this guy and his movement around. So that's why it's so important to have this. This is a particular area where we're trying to push to implement the specific thing.

But I'd like to add something, which is, in our view, in the way we approach things, is very important. Sometimes raising the security level and trying to have efficient counterterrorist policies seems to be contradicting with human rights.

Now, if we accept that thing, we've already lost the battle, because what is being asked by the citizens from us policymakers is to guarantee the security. The security is closely connected with their way of life and their liberties and their freedom. So when we start to jeopardize their freedom in order to guarantee their security, then we are already lost. I mean, the terrorists have won.

Now, I must say that especially, for example, with the PNR, where you have personal data—because that's what the PNR is about is personal data being kept and being cross-examined in order to find the possible threats—now, you do have challenges. And you must find ways that this personal data, which is being collected by practically almost everyone, is not going to be misused. Now, there are different levels—I don't want to go into the details of that because it's becoming quite technical and quite legal, but there are different levels of guarantees that safeguard that this personal data collection is not going to be misused.

So if you want—if someone wants to go into that, there are different legal issues that we use that protect, actually, persons by their misuse of personal data by security agencies and others. But there are ways that we do these things, and these are challenges

that can be addressed. And again, if we decide to share information, if we decide to come up with our international obligations, if the states decide that—understand that this cannot be a national issue, I'm quite optimistic that we're going to win this war.

Mr. TIERSKY. What a wonderful way that would be to end our briefing today, but we will not do that, because I've not given the audience a chance to ask questions they might have for our distinguished guests here. Perhaps as they gather their thoughts, I'll ask the panelists if they have anything they wanted to react to that they've heard from the other panelists. Anyone in the audience or any of the panelists, anything you'd like to react to?

Great. Please, in the back.

QUESTIONER. Hi. Thank you. I'm Erika Schlager with the Helsinki Commission staff. And I want to start by saying how much I really, really appreciated this presentation. For me, as someone who doesn't work closely on this issue, it was extremely informative and I think makes a great record for us to be able to share with others, trying to understand this issue better.

By chance, I happened to read an article this morning that said, according to the University of Maryland's global terrorist data base, Americans living in the United States are more likely to be killed or injured in a terrorist attack carried out by a U.S. citizen than a foreign terrorist.

And so I'd like to ask you a question about what are often described as domestic terrorist cases, and maybe the Breivik case in Norway or the attacks on Roma in Hungary between 2008 and 2010. What's the difference between an attack on a synagogue in Berlin where someone has crossed borders or an attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh or a church in Charleston?

So I don't know whether I understand. We're talking about transnational components because we're grounded in a multinational organization, so that's the logical thing for us to focus on. Is there a difference between domestic-terrorism issues and international or transnational? Or is it simply just that people have crossed borders?

Thank you.

Dr. HOFFMAN. Certainly all the examples you gave I would classify as terrorism. I mean, there's no doubt about that. Certainly they've existed for decades. I mean, the causes that give rise to terrorism on the right are xenophobia, for example; anti-immigrant sentiments; a longing for this intense embrace of a very populist form of nationalism. And I think, you know, countering violent extremism has to address that nonreligious dimension as well as the religious dimensions that obviously, when we're talking about threats from ISIS and al-Qaida, is the main wellspring for that kind of violence.

I would say—and I testified, actually, before the 22d of July Commission in Norway some years ago in the Breivik case—and I would say the same thing that I said then is that it's all terrorism, but one has to understand the consequences of domestic-terrorist threats are almost always addressed by law enforcement and by legislative remedies, quite appropriately so. The problems with transnational threats, at least in the 21st century, is they've often required a military solution and often a cooperative military solution, for the simple reason that there's no police force in the world that could confront 30,000 terrorists in al-Qaida or ISIS, for example.

Second, too, I think there's a difference between these types of movements is that with the rise of ISIS and with the emergence of al-Qaida, we've seen terrorism organized

on a grander scale than ever in the past; the fact that despite the loss of its caliphate and despite the serial military setbacks that ISIS has suffered, that it still has eight official branches that function and that exist in some form of coordination.

And that's what one sees, fortuitously, and thank God, with a lot of domestic incidents of violence is that they're outbursts from generally, as we call them, lone wolves or single actors. It's rare that they're part of some sustained, organized, orchestrated campaign. Definitely there's an orchestrated hate campaign.

What I'm talking about is when you jump from the actual encouragement of violence to the commission of acts of violence. And I think that's what separates the two is that the commission of acts of violence, often by these lone actors, have been one-offs. Once the person is arrested, there's no organization or movement giving them orders or deploying them. And that's why I think the threat from al-Qaida and ISIS is being much more of a strategic challenge and much more intractable.

But I think the fundamental question you're asking is, you know, is one worse than the other or equally as bad? They all claim the lives of innocent people. They all victimize individuals because of their ethnicity or their religion or their nationality. And they, within them, carry the seeds of exactly the forms of intolerance and hatred that gives—that if it's not addressed on an individual basis by these lone wolves, gives rise or has the potential certainly to give rise to more sustained and more organized manifestations of violence.

Ms. ERDBERG. I don't have very much to add, but maybe I'll highlight one point, which is the group dynamic versus the nongroup dynamic of some of the examples you gave. And there are examples out there of domestic-terrorism incidents that are more highly group dynamics and they're part of more organizational structures. But from the prevention perspective, it's different to try and find lone wolves than it is to try and address group dynamics and the need for belonging and identity and the ways in which groups form together.

And so in the much larger terrorist groups around the world, we see different dynamics as being part of a group than what somebody's individual motivations are. And so I just think it's something that, in the law-enforcement realm, makes it really difficult to find lone wolves is partly because there is less of a group dynamic.

Mr. VORIDIS. But again, I think this is the main difference and possibly difficulty here, because, for example, lone wolves we did have in Madrid. In Madrid you didn't have something which was directly connected to ISIS. You had one guy who was actually 20, 21. And this guy came from a very integrated background; father was a doctor. He had a relationship with a girl who was Spanish, a Catholic girl. And he was attending a very moderate mosque; so no, let's say, signs of anything. And he just got into a car and he started running into people.

So this is an example of a lone wolf. Now, if you ask me why this is happening, then probably you would have to go to the pattern that Leanne was using, you know, for general reasons, because he was radicalized on the internet, because whatever. It's very—you don't have a very straightforward answer to what happened to him in this particular case.

But this thing should be differentiated, because, on that, what can you do? You should raise the awareness. You should try to make general policies. You should have a comprehensive strategy against the violent extremism and radicalization that possibly lead to terrorism. So you do have that. And this is described in two U.N. resolutions.

But, of course, this is something completely different to having organized groups, for example, that they have been financed and that the one resolution that now is promoted in OSCE by the Italian chairmanship, by selling antiquities and cultural heritage, that's how they make money in order to finance terrorist activities. This is a different type of situation.

So the lone wolf could exist for many reasons. And we could ask why the Norwegian case, why this happened, and we could come up with some answers. But, of course, this is a different thing from ISIS and the al-Qaida, which are organized groups, with what happened 9/11; 9/11 it was not some guys that woke up one morning and they decided to do that. They were planning that, you know, years. And they were preparing themselves and they were being educated to do that. They were training. So it's a completely different story.

And, of course, as you know, the threat is much bigger. But on the other hand, it's very difficult to deal with lone wolves from a security point of view, because a lone wolf could be anyone. I mean, if he's coming out from his couch and he could start killing people.

So there are terrorist attacks. From the legal point of view, these are terrorist attacks. But on the other hand, you could have different—you need to have a different approach to deal with that.

Mr. TIERSKY. Thank you all.

I'd like to do one more thing with this briefing and challenge at least two of our panelists to use their imaginations now. We're going to imagine that Mr. Voridis has gone to sit next to Mr. Hudson and he is now a member of our audience. And to the two other panelists that I have at the table here, I'd like to close our briefing by giving you the opportunity to maybe distill your messages to some recommendations that you might have for Mr. Voridis in his capacity in trying to wrangle 57 member states in making a difference on this challenge. And you also have Mr. Hudson, who is a key leader in that context, but, of course, he's also a Member of Congress.

So if you have recommendations for these two crucial lawmaking bodies and policy coordination bodies on this set of issues, this would be the time to offer them if you would. And forgive me, we haven't coordinated this in advance. But you're with me in imagination. Mr. Voridis is no longer a panelist. He is now an audience member.

Can we start with you, Dr. Hoffman?

Dr. HOFFMAN. Well, it's easier, I think, to identify the issues than to specifically zero in on the legislation.

First and foremost, whether it's in Europe or the United States, I mean, there is no complete military solution to terrorism. But that doesn't mean that you can afford to neglect using military force to address what is one of the main generators and what sustains terrorism, and that's access to sanctuary and safe haven.

So obviously invading countries has not worked. But by the same token, ignoring the problems and allowing these branches of, whether it's ISIS or al-Qaida, to continue to multiply ensures that the terrorism problem isn't going away. So it's addressing these problems, learning from the lessons of the past two decades, and using military force prudently and effectively. And I think that's a collective endeavor. It's not something that the United States should be doing in isolation. There's regional and local partners that

have to be built into it. That's the first thing; so making sure that the military aspect isn't neglected.

Certainly we're confronted by a world with a multiplicity of threats that are both kinetic ones and non-kinetic ones. But it means that I think always not neglecting terrorism as well and not forgetting that many of the problems we see today in terms of state-sponsored terrorism means that this kind of violence isn't only the purview of non-state actors. It's becoming more acceptable and more common for states to be involved in the sponsorship of terrorism. So it's appropriately sanctioned.

Fortunately, we have the right legislative tools in the United States with the foreign terrorist organizations. I would argue, in response to the question that we had, is that there has to be a similar approach, too, in countering domestic terrorism. And that's one of the problems that we have. We often differentiate between hate crimes and terrorism. I mean, they're both equally odious, but there's different legislative authorities that allow for the designation of international or foreign terrorist groups as terrorists, but we lack that capability domestically.

And then, very briefly, I think Member of Parliament Voridis has talked about the importance of tracking travelers and tracking terrorists. I mean, this is absolutely critical; not only foreign fighters after they've been trained or after they've been bloodied in battle, but we have to be much better at preventing terrorists from converging at a cynosure of violence like Syria became, like Libya is today, like parts of South Asia remains.

And then, finally, I would say that we were very effective in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 in stanching the flow of money to terrorist organizations by cracking down on charities.

It's an entirely different world today. And this is also where I think international cooperation has frayed. There's still a thriving market, for example, in antiquities that have been looted from Syria, from Palmyra and other places, that are being trafficked across Western Europe and the Balkans.

So once again, we're relooking at how foreign terrorist financing has changed since 9/11 and what new measures need to be put into place to counter it, because ISIS wouldn't have been allowed to emerge and to flourish if it didn't have a source of revenue and income. And it wouldn't continue to exist today without those sources.

Ms. ERDBERG. So I'll align myself with the first thing he said, which is identification of the issues is much easier than the legislative fixes.

On the safe-haven question, I think that violent extremism acts differently in fragile states than it does in the United States or in Western Europe. And so I think that, you know, we're really pleased at USIP to be hosting this bipartisan Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States. But really stay attuned to the ways in which you can address in the places where the government does not protect the citizen and the places where, in fact, there are so many governance challenges that it's really difficult to think about violent extremist groups and terrorist groups as being a legitimate political actor in these spaces. And so that requires a different type of toolkit than in places where you have a real legitimacy. You may have challenges to legitimacy, but for the most part you have a legitimate government-citizen contract.

The second thing I think that I'd love to do a plug for is academic and empirical research about violent extremism and terrorism, and so not those who are self-invested in being part of the industry of counterterrorism, but from universities around the world

really studying this from an academic and empirical perspective. They can see things. They can test hypotheses in ways in which a lot of times those who have a zero-risk tolerance for failure cannot always see it. So that would be probably the second place in talking about governments. No governments can fail on this.

The third—and Mr. Voridis mentioned this a little bit in some of his examples throughout Europe—but the rehabilitation and reintegration imperative is coming. The 35,000 folks that Dr. Hoffman referred to, not all of them have a lifelong conviction to be part of these violent extremist groups for the rest of their life. There are some that have voluntarily defected from the groups. There are some that just don't—no longer want that to be part of their lives.

There have to be ways in which, it's both prosecutorial, alternatives to incarceration, but also in the rehabilitation and reintegration, and to not forget the communities. And you mentioned the communities. But what does reconciliation look like in those communities that have to welcome back somebody who has committed—who has been part of a group that has committed horrible atrocities. And so that level of community health and understanding is also part of it.

And the last part is, there is such an incredible importance in the API and PNR and the information sharing. What the job for those of us in the prevention field is, is to make sure that those lists aren't getting longer every single year. And so we don't have to be hiring more and more border-security guards and folks in every single country, because the lists are exponentially growing. And so we have to still keep that focus on prevention, even as we put resources toward the very legitimate law-enforcement ways in which we're addressing the problem today, and focus on preventing tomorrow's list from growing.

Mr. TIERSKY. Mr. Voridis, Mr. Hudson, your to-do list is long. It is challenging. And I thank you both for your leadership in making progress on this to-do list and on fighting this challenge.

I would like to thank our panelists for informing the work of the Helsinki Commission, our commissioners, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in this critical area of work that sadly does not appear to be going away any time soon. But I think it was Mr. Voridis who said this is a battle we can and must win.

Thank you all for being here. With that, I will conclude this Helsinki Commission briefing.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 5:30 p.m., the briefing ended.]



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