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utilizing good counter-radicalization practices  
from abroad: a policy perspective

Bonanno, Amy Fires

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

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**NAVAL  
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SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**DETECTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AMERICA BY  
UTILIZING GOOD COUNTER-RADICALIZATION  
PRACTICES FROM ABROAD: A POLICY  
PERSPECTIVE**

by

Amy Fires Bonanno

March 2017

Thesis Co-Advisors:

Paul Jonathan Smith  
Carolyn Halladay

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**DETECTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AMERICA BY UTILIZING GOOD  
COUNTER-RADICALIZATION PRACTICES FROM ABROAD: A POLICY  
PERSPECTIVE**

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requirements for the degree of

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(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The problem of violent extremism is approaching a critical point in America. American government and community leaders must find an effective approach to deterring violent extremism immediately. A national and comprehensive approach to deter violent extremism in America is currently lacking. This comparative policy perspective seeks to determine whether the United Kingdom and Australia have good practices to deter violent extremism that can be useful in America. Secondly, this thesis also seeks to determine whether the United States can implement potential good practices to deter violent extremism. After a thorough review of the issue of violent extremism in America, this thesis studies similar background, research, and violent extremism issues in the United Kingdom and Australia. This thesis concludes that a variety of good practices in the United Kingdom and Australia can counter radicalize and deter violent extremists in America. The findings and recommendations from this research include challenges and a way forward to implement certain potential best practices for the United States. The arguments offer viable options and alternatives that the United States should consider when creating a national deterring-violent-extremism strategy. The details and information regarding understanding and implementing good practices to deter violent extremism in America are contained in this thesis.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACTC	Australian Counter-Terrorism Centre
AMF	Australian Multicultural Foundation
ANZCTC	Australia-New Zealand Counterterrorism Committee
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
CAB	community awareness briefing
CONTEST	Counter Terrorism Strategy
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSCC	Center for Strategic Counterterrorism
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CVE	counter violent extremism
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
NCCU	National Cyber Crime Unit
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSC	National Security Committee of Cabinet
NSN	National Strategic Narrative
OCTC	Office of the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
OSCT	Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
RICU	Research, Information and Communications Unit
SAS	Special Air Unit
START	Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terror

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 caught many Americans by surprise, which is the impetus behind the creation of this thesis that seeks to understand the root causes of terrorism and how American government and communities leaders can reverse this trend. The problem of violent extremism is overwhelming in America. A thorough review of the current state of deterring violent extremism and the root causes of terrorism determines that the current American national strategy to countering violent extremism (CVE) is insufficient at best, and at worst, dangerous. However, many local communities around the country are doing their best to create inclusive communities and opportunities to deter violent extremism.

After a careful review of the available research, this thesis seeks to understand the issues and problems facing the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia as they experience similar problems with terrorism as America does. Key takeaways from the UK research finds that the United Kingdom has an approach to prevent violent extremism by trying to deradicalize youth through a program called Channel. The United Kingdom has a whole of government approach to deter violent extremism that includes the use of police officers, educators, and other community members. In addition, the United Kingdom attempts to coordinate various agencies in the fight against terrorism.

The portion of the thesis that studies Australia again understands the history and background of violent extremism there, as well as programs and policies that may contribute to America's fight against violent extremists. Unique about Australia is that it has a Living Safe Together program that seeks to build community cohesion and shares messages of acceptance and tolerance in addition to offering rehabilitation programs to former extremists.

This thesis provides a way ahead for American policy makers by sharing good practices in each of these countries that could be implemented in the United States. Through this research of both countries, this thesis argues that deradicalization is imperative to the fight against violent extremism in America. Next, the messages spread

to counter violent extremism must be effective, meaningful, and consistent. If America hopes to be effective in deterring violent extremism, U.S. communities and government leaders must start messaging and offering training to prevent terrorism from when individuals are young. Understanding that humans are fallible, American policy makers and community leaders must work harder to include all members of society in building cohesion and responsibility. Rehabilitation of former violent extremists would be equally important to the effort to deter violent extremism across the country. The issue of the internet continues to be an issue. While the research contained within this thesis understands the issue, it is important that whatever messages are shared in the open and in the media should also coincide with messages and strategies propelled on the internet.

This thesis concludes that a variety of good practices in the United Kingdom and Australia can counter-radicalize and deter violent extremists in America. The findings and recommendations from this research include challenges and a way forward to implement certain potential best practices for the United States. This thesis recommends that fusion centers be used more resourcefully to implement information sharing and communication methods from the national level down to the community level, through the use of “whole of community” committees. Most importantly, this thesis proffers that the creation of a “CVE Czar” would add a layer and level of importance to deterring violent extremism and how that new mechanism of government would work efficiently in the American apparatus.

Finally, while understanding that some of the recommendations within this thesis are challenging and limiting, more than anything it is imperative to do something soon. No one has taken the lead to counter violent extremism in America and that must change. The status quo to deter violent extremism in America cannot continue. Americans can no longer accept that extremists erode the U.S. way of life and everything for which this nation stands. The proposed comprehensive and effective policies and strategies within this thesis aim to create a new perspective and fresh possibilities to fight violent extremism within this country’s borders.

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of it means. It has already had a profound effect on my thinking and in my writing as I step forward to new ventures. Thank you both very much.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On April 15, 2013, two brothers of Chechen descent placed two backpack pressure-cooker bombs along the crowded sidewalk during the Boston Marathon. The blasts killed three people and wounded 260. The brothers—who were naturalized citizens and members of their community in Boston, and who had, by all accounts, assimilated well into society—had in fact radicalized over the course of some years, both overseas and in the United States. Federal law enforcement agencies had pieces of information on the Tsarnaev brothers but never shared it with the local police forces who could have kept a close eye on the brothers, which could have prevented this shocking terrorist incident from occurring.

Whether or not the interagency process functions optimally, the larger question remains: why did these brothers radicalize and set out to kill and maim scores of people who were attending an athletic event on Patriot’s Day in Boston? Those who climb the staircase to terrorism<sup>1</sup> experience varying levels of frustration, passion, or anger in support of their beliefs, as proposed by Georgetown University Professor Fathali Moghaddam.<sup>2</sup> “In recent decades, rapidly rising expectations, nourished by images of affluence and democratic lifestyles spread by the international mass media have fueled feelings of deprivation among vast populations, particularly in Asia, Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe.”<sup>3</sup> Additionally, “having started from the ground floor, where they share feelings of frustration, injustice, and shame with vast populations, potential terrorists now find themselves engaged in the extremist morality of isolated, secretive organizations dedicated to changing the world by any means available to them.”<sup>4</sup> Individuals who become terrorists oftentimes do so because they feel ashamed, unheard, insignificant, or

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<sup>1</sup> Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration,” *American Psychologist*, 60, no. 2 (February–March 2005): 161–169.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

unimportant, as proposed by Jessica Stern.<sup>5</sup> Still others follow a group or cause that is misguided, which can lead to extremism.

Radicalizing, understanding the root causes of violent extremism, and deterring people from committing violent, terroristic acts continue to frustrate and challenge America's law enforcement, government leaders, and the American public. It also continues to grab headlines across U.S. newspapers.<sup>6</sup> The problem, highlighted by the Boston Marathon bombing, continues to prove that extremists want to terrorize the unassuming populace in places that before were public territory, free and safe. For example, nightclub patrons have been attacked and killed, people in churches have been killed, and college students have been killed. The cycle of violence must stop.

To fix the problem of violent extremism, the kind that exists today, Americans and government lawmakers must first understand the issue:

Terrorism grows out seductive solutions to grievances ... But the techniques of terror- the deliberate murder of innocent civilians-are counter to every mainstream religious tradition. This is why the mission—the articulation of the grievance—is so important. It must be so compellingly described that recruits are willing to violate moral rules in its name.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, countering violent extremism (CVE) is “reducing the number of terrorist group supporters through non-coercive means.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, countering and deterring violent extremism policies should generate a decrease in the number of violent extremists and their supporters and yet violent extremist attacks in America continue to occur. Currently, the approach that American policy makers, law enforcement strategists, and community leaders are taking is not effective enough to deterring violent extremism in societies across the country. Other countries have experience in deterring violent extremism.

This thesis strives to answer the following questions:

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<sup>5</sup> Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>8</sup> Will McCants and Clinton Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 2012, 1.

- Are strategies and policies currently in place in the United Kingdom and Australia that the United States can use to deter or counter violent extremism in America?
- Which of those policies are viable options for the United States to adopt to counter violent extremism? Would the United States be able to implement these potential good practices?

## **A. CVE IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY**

CVE in the United States plays out on several levels, federal and local most notably, in ways that do not consistently connect.

### **1. Federal Level**

The U.S. State Department focuses its efforts on diplomacy, communication, and influence of nations abroad. The public affairs and public diplomacy section of the U.S. State Department has a mission to “support the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives, advance national interests, and enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world.”<sup>9</sup> Influencing and communicating messages through the media can be used to deter violent extremism.

Contained within the public affairs and public diplomacy section is the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism (CSCC), which was “established in 2010, the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) is an interagency unit based at the U.S. State Department which aims to coordinate, orient, and inform government strategic communications activities directed at audiences abroad designed to counter the appeal of violent extremism.”<sup>10</sup> Developed by the CSCC, the English-speaking #thinkagainturnaway campaign seeks to highlight the brutality of terrorist groups from Somalia, Yemen, and Syria, and specifically, against the Assad regime.<sup>11</sup> Whether it has

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<sup>9</sup> “U.S. Department of State,” accessed February 8, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/t/>.

<sup>10</sup> “Counter Extremism,” accessed February 8, 2017, <https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/404/center-for-strategic-counterterrorism-communications-csc>.

<sup>11</sup> Shaarik Zafar, “Western Foreign Fighters in Syria: Implications for U.S. CVE Efforts,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 14, 2014, 8.

been effective is up for debate, according to Rita Katz, “who is the director of the SITE Intelligence Group, which studies jihadi extremists’ behavior online.”<sup>12</sup>

While the U.S. Department of State has waded into the waters of counter-messaging with its “think again, turn away” program, more efforts across America’s broad government agencies and communities prove that more work must be done to deter violent extremists. The #ThinkAgain approach was created to provide a counter narrative on social media to terrorist groups, but mainly Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It attempted to paint ISIS as bloody, radical, wrong, and disenfranchising to youth, in an attempt to counter radicalize anyone who may show interest in supporting ISIS.<sup>13</sup>

Other initiatives currently in place to expand counter-violent extremism programs throughout cities and communities across the United States include the community awareness briefing (CAB). The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), which falls under the Officer for the Director of National Intelligence, created the CAB. The CAB is literally a close-hold PowerPoint briefing consisting of about 20 slides of information presented by members of the NCTC to interested parties. The CAB attempts to educate citizens on what violent extremism looks like and how they can be proactive at identifying what violent extremism is and the tools at their disposal to inform authorities. This course also provides parents and community members with information on recognizing signs of radicalization and ways they can intervene should they recognize these signs.

Another initiative recently created by the NCTC and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is the community resilience exercise program. This joint effort seeks to further “improve communication between law enforcement and communities and to share ideas on how to counter violent extremism.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Rita Katz, “The State Department’s Twitter War with ISIS is Embarrassing,” *Time*, September 16, 2014, <http://time.com/3387065/isis-twitter-war-state-department/>.

<sup>13</sup> Anne Gearan, “U.S. Attempts to Combat Islamic State Propaganda,” *Washington Post*, September 7, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-attempts-to-combat-islamic-state-propaganda/2014/09/07/c0283cea-3534-11e4-9f4d-24103cb8b742\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.64e7c1819d14](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-attempts-to-combat-islamic-state-propaganda/2014/09/07/c0283cea-3534-11e4-9f4d-24103cb8b742_story.html?utm_term=.64e7c1819d14).

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Rasmussen, *Hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs “Cybersecurity, Terrorism, and Beyond: Addressing Evolving Threats to the Homeland”* (Washington, DC: National Counterterrorism Center, 2014), 10.

The DHS also has programs designed to assist state and local law enforcement agencies. These programs are aimed at helping law enforcement identify and counter the current threat while providing indicators of violent extremism and potential “lone wolf attacks.”<sup>15</sup> Also, the DHS has “sponsored exercises in seven cities, including Houston, Seattle, [and] Durham, N.C., to improve communication between local law enforcement and communities to share ideas on how best to build community resilience against violent extremism.”<sup>16</sup> It is not as if the federal government is not doing everything possible to help combat violent extremism, but federal government officials, members of law enforcement, and community members need to deter violent extremism more proactively.

## **2. Local Government Level**

Pilot programs in large cities engage communities and local law enforcement to create conditions to allow conversations to help one another. One example is Minneapolis and the surrounding metropolitan area in which Somali refugees are a large portion of the population. “The community has faced unwanted national attention after nine Somali men from Minnesota were arrested for plotting to join ISIS in Syria. Six have pleaded guilty, and the other three were convicted in federal” court in 2016.”<sup>17</sup>

For years now, the mayor’s office has been involved in building communities of trust.<sup>18</sup> Minneapolis leaders hold various public forums where local officials speak openly about security issues facing the population. This forum also allows citizens to voice their concerns, approvals, or discussion points on security issues. “They have trained over 600 sworn officers in the Somali culture, started after-school study programs, mentored kids, hosted open gyms and supported female swim and fitness classes. Their programs serve hundreds of Somali American children and teens. They

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<sup>15</sup> Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Trying to Counter ISIS’ Efforts to Lure Alienated Young Muslims,” *New York Times*, October 4, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/us/us-is-trying-to-counter-isiss-efforts-to-lure-alienated-young-muslims.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/us/us-is-trying-to-counter-isiss-efforts-to-lure-alienated-young-muslims.html?_r=0), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Alexia Fernandez Campbell, “America’s Real Refugee Problem,” *The Atlantic*, October 24, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/10/the-challenge-of-integrating-americas-refugees/505031/>.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Stanek, “It Can and Does Happen Here: Somali Youth with Terrorist Ties in the Twin Cities,” *Police Chief Magazine*, February 2011, 48.

have built trust, cooperation and friendships.”<sup>19</sup> The addition of sworn Somali police officers has resulted in creating a more diversified police force with police training focused on better community policing procedures.<sup>20</sup> Law enforcement’s knowledge of its community and at least an attempt to understand its challenges goes a long way towards fostering mutual respect and trust. Communities straddle borders, municipalities, and jurisdictions with each other and it is up to law enforcement agencies to share CVE programs in spite of that diversification. Sheriff Richard Stanek of Hennepin County said, “A trusting relationship with the Somali community is a crucial piece in learning about behaviors or activities that, when properly reported, will help protect members of the community from harm.”<sup>21</sup>

Another example of this mutual sustained effort is the Community Advisory Board in Hennepin County, Minnesota. “The CAB is a group of community leaders who live or work in Hennepin County. The board meets regularly with the sheriff to exchange ideas and information on public safety concerns and to consider emerging trends and policy issues.”<sup>22</sup> Such local initiatives illustrate the importance of the involvement of local communities and local assets. The people who live and work on a daily basis in the community are best placed to identify anything out of the ordinary. “The local police, more than the federal government, have their finger on the pulse of the local community from which domestic terrorists may come.”<sup>23</sup> The community-led approach promises great results to help deter violent extremism in this community.

CVE programs are neither consistent nor comprehensive in the United States. In fact, the programs listed represent most of the few such programs that exist. Despite the

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Attorney’s Office, “Building Community Resilience Minneapolis-St. Paul Pilot Program A Community-Led Local Framework,” 3, February 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/file/642121/download>.

<sup>20</sup> Greg Barnes, “Seeking Safety: With History of Tensions, Minneapolis Builds Community Trust,” *Fayetteville Observer*, October 27, 2014, [http://www.fayobserver.com/news/local/seeking-safety-with-a-history-of-tensions-between-police-and/article\\_e9e52cce-1862-52f0-88eb-b0be2190a90b.html](http://www.fayobserver.com/news/local/seeking-safety-with-a-history-of-tensions-between-police-and/article_e9e52cce-1862-52f0-88eb-b0be2190a90b.html).

<sup>21</sup> Richard Stanek, “Countering Violent Extremism: A Community Partnership Approach,” *Police Chief Magazine*, October 2013, 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Written Testimony of DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson for a House Committee on the Judiciary Hearing Titled “Oversight of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security”* (2014) (statement of Jeh Johnson), 2.

various CVE initiatives in America, no agreed-upon federal policy or strategy exists that can be implemented with local variations by state government leaders or city mayors. Greater focus should be placed on an effective national counterterrorism strategy that is needed for the future, one that empowers local governments to take action as their own CVE specialists. An enabling national strategy gives the states and local governments the ability to adapt a national plan to suit their communities. A national plan would be a long-term and progressive strategy that would help empower communities to deter violent extremism at home.

A “better” strategy for America includes one in which “good practices” or strategies and policies working in other countries are implemented, and trying to understand how other programs and strategies would benefit American society. The current U.S. strategy of CVE in America is not working. A “good practice” is one in which the policy or strategy works effectively to counter, deter, or reduce violent extremism. The 2011 National Counter Terrorism Strategy for the United States was a broad policy that was not’ useful in practice for different levels of government that could use it to shape and implement their own CVE policies or programs. The 2011 strategy did not provide a useful foundation for what various levels of government should do or which actions they should take to implement CVE programs. American leaders should recreate or update the U.S. national strategy to provide a better useful program to counter, deter, or reduce violent extremism.

A “better” approach for the United States includes an understanding of a multi-pronged methodology, one that tackles sympathizers, radicalizers, and recruiters and attempts to dissuade them from violent extremism using communication, messaging, and persuasion methods. A “better” approach is one that brings together and integrates members of communities and local leaders, in an effort to counter violent extremism, and is not merely a top-down, federal approach to solving local issues. “Better” also means a flexible, fluid, and workable strategy with proven approaches that can be applied to diverse populations at the local level.



## **B. CVE ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD**

The United Kingdom and Australia have proactive strategies in place to help prevent radicalization in their respective countries. The United Kingdom has the most robust and reviewed strategy in place, called counter terrorism strategy (CONTEST). One component of the CONTEST program is called Prevent, which is aimed specifically at deterring violent extremism. Australia has a strategy called living safe together. This program focuses on creating cohesive communities based on tolerance and resilience.

As similar western democracies, the United Kingdom and Australia, offer the United States many potential programs and policies for deterring violent extremism. Each has its pros and cons that can help point the United States in the right direction to deter violent extremism in America. These case studies provide the United States an opportunity to learn from the mistakes and challenges the United Kingdom and Australia faced in implementing their strategies.

The United Kingdom and Australia offer various tactics, programs, and policies that make up the overall CVE strategy and this analysis reveals the programs that can be effective in the United States. Episodes like the Boston Marathon bombing in 2014, the Charleston church shooting in 2015, the Orlando nightclub shooting in 2016, and the pipe bomb explosions in New Jersey, as recently as September 2016 prove that such radicalization presents a growing concern for American communities and the greater public.

This thesis includes information about what other countries are doing to stop terrorism, what works, and what does not, and what these outcomes mean for America. Analysis of the countering violent extremism approaches in the two countries described provides an overview of what that means to the United States, and delivers best practices and recommendations for how this country can move forward in the effort to deter violent extremism.

The research in this thesis does not discuss the legal, civil liberties, or economic aspects of radicalization or how American policymakers can counter violent extremism in America. In fact, it begins from the position that addressing these issues in this thesis

would be tantamount to trying to study the legal implications before truly understanding the problem. As such, this thesis focuses on radicalization and preventing it.

This thesis uses the following format divided into chapters.

The first chapter discusses the problem, what terrorism is and provides a working definition of violent extremism. The chapter continues with an overview of violent extremism in America and the roots of terrorism. Next, Chapter I provides research questions this thesis seeks to answer and includes a discussion of what the United States is doing now, at the federal, state, and local level to counter violent extremism. The chapter continues with potential options for community members and concludes with a discussion of western strategies to deter violent extremism in America.

The second chapter of this thesis contains the literature review. This thesis provides an understanding of radicalization with a summary of the current literature available. Next, Chapter II reviews the perspectives and shortfalls of the national U.S. CVE policy. Finally, it shares an overview of western strategies to deter violent extremism.

The third chapter focuses entirely on the UK's CVE programs and what may be useful to the United States. Chapter III includes a review of the current threat in the United Kingdom and described the agencies involved in countering violent extremism there. Next, Chapter III also continues with a review of the policies that counter violent extremism there, which includes the UK's countering terrorism strategy, the Prevent strategy, and Channel. The chapter also discusses what police officers are doing, in conjunction with educators and the whole of community, to help deter violent extremism in the United Kingdom. The chapter continues with a discussion on radicalization over the internet, pitfalls, and perspectives for the United States before concluding.

The fourth chapter focuses on Australia and the policies and procedures it uses to deter violent extremism. The Australia chapter also consists of a review of the current threat there and moves into a discussion of what the agencies are doing to counter violent extremism. The thesis continues with a discussion of the CVE programs in Australia, which includes the living safe together concept. The Australia chapter continues with a

discussion of what other members of the community are doing to help combat violent extremism and rehabilitation efforts. The chapter follows with a discussion of radicalization over the internet, pitfalls, and perspectives for the United States before moving into the recommendations chapter.

The fifth chapter of this thesis discusses the lessons learned from the United Kingdom and Australia's CVE policies that may be of use to the United States. It talks about deradicalization, communication and messaging, a whole of community approach, deterring violent extremism at a young age, and the use of prevention engagement officers as far as the UK case study goes. Next, the chapter moves into Australia's lessons learned including topics on human vulnerability, expanding training for citizens and other individuals, and building communities, as well as potential rehabilitation efforts. The chapter continues with an overview of lessons learned and possible strategies to deter violent extremism from the internet. The chapter discusses the challenges and implementation procedures the U.S. government policy makers could perform to deter violent extremism.

The last chapter is the conclusion and connects the discussion from the introduction of the violent extremism problem in America to challenges and implementation procedures to stop terrorism in the United States.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss the leading relevant literature on CVE and considers the previously published literature associated with this thesis subject. This literature review considers material relevant to radicalization, extremism, policies, and strategies recommended by subject matter experts from various types of organizations. The chapter describes radicalization and CVE material from a variety of sources to include books, newspaper articles, websites, and more to understand the topic of radicalization and violent extremism better and to realize where current thoughts are on these topics. The literature review concludes with an overview of some of the pitfalls and problems faced in America with current strategies and policies in place.

### A. UNDERSTANDING RADICALIZATION AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The research on these topics deals a lot with what drives extremists to join terrorist groups and conduct attacks, or to become lone wolf terrorists. Jessica Stern focuses on the psychology of terrorism in her book, *Terror in the Name of God, Why Religious Militants Kill*.<sup>24</sup> This book helps explain the “why” of terrorism; what motivates, upsets, and urges violent extremists to continue their treacherous ways. For example, Stern says, “[P]oor governance and inadequate protection of civil liberties have allowed extremist groups to thrive and to spread the message that the west is responsible for their plight.”<sup>25</sup> This book also talks about why individuals stay in the fight, continue their work, and prosper at doing their “jobs.” In some cases, extremists worked for the organization because it was a paycheck and helped feed and house their families. In other instances, individuals have a strong belief in the extremist cause. Other times, an extremist could not leave a terrorist organization and had to stay in or face death. Stern’s work provides a fascinating review of militancy that further adds to the notion of understanding the “how” and “why” of terrorists and their violent groups.

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<sup>24</sup> Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

Similarly, Georgetown University Professor Dr. Fathali Moghaddam conducted a study of terrorists in an attempt to determine what precipitates their radicalization or deradicalization.<sup>26</sup>

To foster a more in-depth understanding of the psychological processes leading to terrorism, the author conceptualizes the terrorist act as the final step on a narrowing staircase. Although the vast majority of people, even when feeling deprived and unfairly treated, remain on the ground floor, some individuals climb up and are eventually recruited into terrorist organizations.<sup>27</sup>

Once an individual climbs each level of the staircase, they get closer to greater destructive terrorist attack planning. The closer an extremist is to conducting an attack, it becomes more difficult for almost anyone to be able to intervene to step in to counter their beliefs and planning.

Still, more understanding and further research is required to stop violent extremism in America. However, for example, in Maajid Nawaz's *Radical: My Journey Out of Violent Extremism*,<sup>28</sup> he discusses what triggers enticed him to become a violent extremist, a terrorist, and what deterred him from continuing those beliefs. For example, Nawaz said, "How easy it is for a victim to construct a narrative out of half-truths and inspire thousands in the name of righteous indignation."<sup>29</sup> This point of view offers an important understanding of extremism from someone who personally explained how and why he was attracted to violent extremism.

Since Nawaz renounced terrorism, he has worked tirelessly to help deter other violent extremists and to slow the growth of individuals on the path to violent extremism. He created the Quilliam Foundation, an organization that has been immensely helpful in contributing to the discussion on deterring violent extremism. Nawaz brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding of violent extremism and shares best practices and lessons learned with government policy makers, community members, and others. To that end,

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<sup>26</sup> Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>28</sup> Maajid Nawaz, *Radical: My Journey Out of Islamist Extremism* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 114.

the Quilliam Foundation has focused a lot of attention on counter-radicalization methods and other non-coercive, potentially effective means of deterring violent extremism in the United Kingdom. For example, the organization shared measures about

counterspeech messaging [that] can be divided into three categories: a) content that aims to directly negate and undermine the content being put forth by extremism and terrorism-related messaging, b) counter speech that positively offers other narratives/alternatives/options and c) counter speech which aims to purely inform and provide transparency around an issue that is monopolized and/or misinterpreted by extremism and terrorism-affiliated individuals.<sup>30</sup>

Other helpful academic and think tank organizations, such as RAND, Countering Terrorism Center at West Point, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), provide positive feedback and important policy guidelines for the government to consider.

Counterterrorism analysts Will McCants and Clint Watts have worked to persuade the American public to fix the roots of the problem of violent extremism. They believe that to achieve success in deterring violent extremism, it must also be measured. McCants and Watts have provided evidence on the importance of agreeing on “a clear definition of the terms ‘extremism’ and ‘extremist;’ and [an] assessment of where CVE efforts are most effective ... [they have provided a way of] integrating CVE efforts in the virtual and physical environments ... with an emphasis on predetermined measures of project performance and effectiveness.”<sup>31</sup> This agreement is key to understanding how effective programs can help harness the power of counter-radicalization success but also how to measure performance standards.

McCants and Watts also believe that America’s policy makers can “seek to reduce sympathy and support by means that are measurable, low risk, small scale, and narrowly targeted on a specific, well-defined audience.”<sup>32</sup> They feel that policy makers and communication messages should “measure their effectiveness against defined

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<sup>30</sup> Erin Saltman and Jonathan Russell, *White Paper: The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism* (London: Quilliam Foundation, 2014), 8.

<sup>31</sup> McCants and Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

objectives.”<sup>33</sup> Instead of focusing on too much, too soon, McCants and Watts believe that government practitioners should create a limited number of goals and measure performance and effectiveness of the programs against those, then move forward with more strategies in time.<sup>34</sup> McCants and Watts out-of-the-box, creative viewpoints have helped to pave the way for government agencies to seek new strategies to deter violent extremism.

In 2009, a RAND homeland security white paper provided an understanding of deterrence in counter terrorism but focused more on the international aspects of terrorism and suicide terrorism. This study ultimately delivered an overview of deterring violent extremism overseas but unfortunately could not provide any helpful strategies for use domestically.<sup>35</sup> The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has created a few helpful reports on countering violent extremism in America tailored specifically for members of the U.S. Congress and their staffs.<sup>36</sup> For example, Jerome Bjelopera discusses several elements of the domestic terrorist threat including radicalization to violent extremism, lone wolves, how prisoners become radicalized, and provides case studies as examples.

Other articles from the CRS describe the availability of extremist information individuals can access online, which in turn radicalizes and links them with those who make plans and confer with others of similar interest online. When it comes to community policing in America, Bjelopera states, “An inherent challenge to building trust and partnership involves law enforcement investigative activities and tactics that can be perceived to unfairly target law-abiding citizens or infringe on speech, religion, assembly, or due process rights.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> McCants and Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Morral and Brian Jackson, *Understanding the Role of Deterrence in Counterterrorism Security* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Jerome P. Bjelopera, *American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat* (CRS Report No. R41416) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Jerome P. Bjelopera, *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States* (CRS Report No. R42553) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012), 14.

Furthermore, the coordination of CVE at the national level is limited in America, and so Bjelopera speculates, “there is no single agency managing all of the individual activities and efforts of the plan. At the national level, some may argue that it would be of value to have a single federal agency in charge of the government’s CVE efforts.”<sup>38</sup> This document supports claims of potential deterrence measures and offers evidence for what could work better in a range of efforts against violent extremism.

Other thinkers have highlighted the concept of coordinating CVE programs from local government or mayor’s offices in coordination with law enforcement. Some believe doing so may help in engaging with the community and gaining credibility, which may then open opportunities for intelligence collection. In a Study for the National Consortium to Study Terrorism and Response to Terrorism (START) article from December 2016, the authors shared, “local government municipalities are well positioned to elicit a common vision, consolidate partners in an accessible network, and increase access to funding and resources.”<sup>39</sup>

Alumni of the program at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) have produced insightful theses in this field of study as well. For example, in 2010, Brad Deardorff wrote a thesis titled, “Countering Violent Extremism the Challenge and the Opportunity”<sup>40</sup> that discusses the policies of combatting violent extremism in the United Kingdom. In it, Deardorff focuses attention against the backdrop of social identity theory and what that means for combating homegrown radicalization in America. Looking beyond federal capacity, some local governments understand well their capacity to affect violent extremists.

Los Angeles Deputy Chief Michael Downing offers state and local law enforcement examples by which they can increase their counter terrorism efforts across

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<sup>38</sup> Bjelopera, *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Joumana Silyan-Saba and Alejandro Beutel, “CVE Field Principles for Local Government Agencies,” START, University of Maryland, December 6, 2016, <http://www.start.umd.edu/news/cve-field-principles-local-government-agencies>.

<sup>40</sup> Brad Deardorff, “Countering Violent Extremism the Challenge and the Opportunity” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2010).



America.<sup>41</sup> Not many articles share and describe what state and local law enforcement officials do in the fight against violent extremism. However, Downing shares possibilities for local level law enforcement agencies to do something to deter terrorism, both from potential groups and from lone offenders in their communities.

## **B. NATIONAL U.S. CVE POLICY: PERSPECTIVES AND SHORTFALLS**

The 2011 White House National Counterterrorism Strategy provides an overview, of deterrence, extremism, and terrorism in the United States,<sup>42</sup> and is the primary counterterrorism strategy for the United States. The Strategy is directed by “efforts are guided by core principles: Adhering to U.S. Core Values; Building Security Partnerships; Applying CT Tools and Capabilities Appropriately; and Building a Culture of Resilience.”<sup>43</sup>

Equally generic, the February 2015 National Security Strategy states, “for the sake of our security and our leadership in the world, it is essential we hold ourselves to the highest possible standard, even as we do what is necessary to secure our people.”<sup>44</sup> The 2015 version does not offer much substance either.

The National Strategic Narrative (NSN) offers a holistic approach for American government agencies and its people who have ties internationally, diplomatically, and economically, as an overarching, safer, and more beneficial way of working together and looking toward the future. In the NSN, the writer(s), “Mr. Y” propose a more sustainable, authentic way ahead for our American government to have integrity in what we say and what we do as we try to find more effective solutions for global issues.<sup>45</sup> For example, the NSN “advocates to achieve sustainable prosperity and security through the application of credible influence and strength, the pursuit of fair competition,

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Downing and Matt Mayer, “Preventing the Next ‘Lone Wolf’ Terrorist Attack Requires Stronger Federal-State-Local Capabilities,” no. 2818, The Heritage Foundation, June 18, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2011), [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 19.

<sup>45</sup> Mr. Y, *National Strategic Narrative* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2011).

acknowledgement of interdependencies and converging interests, and adaptation to complex, dynamic systems—all bound by our national values.”<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps with more emphasis on countering violent extremism, a stronger all-encompassing national counterterrorism plan could empower communities and enable them to have a greater role in deterring violent extremism locally.

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<sup>46</sup> Mr. Y, *National Strategic Narrative*, 5.

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### III. UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom, one of America's closest allies, faces similar threats from Islamic radicalization as the United States. The British have worked hard to find effective programs that fit in their society. The threats to Britons continue to this day and government officials, law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and the community must continually react and sharpen their efforts to deter violent extremism. CONTEST is the British version of a national CVE strategy and one that is heavily relied upon for tactics and methods available to the government.

British counterterrorism has taken many lessons from the history of "The Troubles," as the Northern Ireland conflict is called, a 30-year struggle that witnessed the advent of targeted killing and bombings by the Provisional Irish Republic Army and ultimately claimed more than 3,500 lives.<sup>47</sup> First, the United Kingdom understood that the adversaries, the fighters, and those willing to commit atrocities in support of their cause were dedicated to their cause. The adversaries clung to their cause and would go to great lengths to defend their beliefs and their actions. Second, the United Kingdom learned that law enforcement and intelligence agencies must work in close coordination.

Lastly, the United Kingdom came to understand the influences of soft power and hard power should be complementary and closely synchronized, instead of being exclusively from one another.<sup>48</sup> Soft power means more of a shaping, persuasive tactic to change the attitudes and habits of the adversary. Hard power in this reference means using the powers of arrest and force to affect the adversary.

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<sup>47</sup> "The Troubles" occurred when factions within Northern Ireland sought to change (or keep) their constitutional status. "The goal of the unionist and overwhelmingly Protestant majority was to remain part of the United Kingdom. The goal of the nationalist and republican, almost exclusively Catholic, minority was to become part of the Republic of Ireland." (The longer history of these frictions dates back to the time of Henry VIII and English attempts to control Ireland). The conflict lasted until the Belfast Agreement or Good Friday Agreement was signed in April 1998. "Troubles," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>, accessed February 28, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Magnus Ranstorp and Hans Brun, *Terrorism Learning and Innovation: Lessons PIRA in Northern Ireland* (Stockholm: Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies, Swedish National Defence College, 2013), 4, <https://www.fhs.se/Documents/Externwebben/forskning/centrumbildningar/CATS/publikationer/Terrorism%20Learning%20and%20Innovation%20-%20Lessons%20from%20PIRA%20in%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf>.

The face and focus of terrorism in Britain began to change in 1980, when six armed men took hostages at the Iranian Embassy in London, demanding the release of prisoners in Iran. Their action was largely overshadowed by the Iran-Iraq War that broke out days later.<sup>49</sup> This episode is still significant; however, as it marked the first time in the United Kingdom that actual live footage was brought directly to the British public through their television screens with scenes of Special Air Unit forces, or SAS, quelling the terrorists during the anti-terrorism operation. Terrorism—and counterterrorism—came home, so to speak.

The most notable terrorist attack within Great Britain was the coordinated suicide bombing attack on July 7, 2005, by four Islamic extremists with ties to Al Qaeda. Four backpacks were used in the attack that occurred in the Underground subway system and on a bus in central London. That day, 52 people were killed and hundreds more were injured.<sup>50</sup> This attack showed the United Kingdom being under direct threat of terrorism by radicalized British citizens within the resident Pakistani community within the United Kingdom, which had direct geographic, and in some cases, kinship connections with al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

## **A. CURRENT THREAT**

The number of people radicalizing in the United Kingdom is shocking. Islam is the second largest religion in the United Kingdom, with more than 3 million followers, who represent 4.5 percent of the population. More than 2.6 million UK Muslims live in England, while the rest live in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.<sup>51</sup> The number of people identifying as white has decreased over the last decade from 94 percent to 86 percent.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “1980: SAS Rescue Ends Iran Embassy Siege,” accessed August 29, 2016, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthistday/hi/dates/stories/may/5/newsid\\_2510000/2510873.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthistday/hi/dates/stories/may/5/newsid_2510000/2510873.stm).

<sup>50</sup> “7 July London Bombings,” July 3, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-33253598>.

<sup>51</sup> Martin Beckford, “Muslims in UK Top 3 Million for First Time ... with over 50% Born outside Britain: Number in Country Doubles in a Decade as Immigration and Birth Rates Soar,” Daily Mail, January 30, 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3424584/Muslims-UK-3-million-time-50-born-outside-Britain-Number-country-doubles-decade-immigration-birth-rates-soar.html>.

<sup>52</sup> “Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales,” December 11, 2012, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11>.

Islamist terrorism and its recruiting and capabilities are fast on the rise over the last decade. This increase is due in part to an increased number of people who feel they do not belong.

The biggest Islamic violent extremist threat to many countries for over a decade was Al Qaida. “Al Qa’ida, Al Qa’ida affiliates, other terrorist groups and lone terrorists have all been active in the UK over the past two years. They have tried to conduct attacks, recruit people in the UK to conduct attacks overseas, raise funds and distribute propaganda.”<sup>53</sup> Western democracies have not seen such a strong, versatile, and capable recruitment threat posed by any other extremist group except for al Qaeda.

It also owes to the geostrategic decisions that London has made since the end of the Cold War. The “Iraq war does appear to have fed grievances linked to violent acts: Mohammed Siddique Khan, the leader of the July 2007 London bomb attacks, said in a pre-recorded video that the bombers were retaliating against Britain’s role in the invasion of Iraq.”<sup>54</sup> The increase in individuals angry with the British government and supporters of the Iraq War continues to this day. In 2015, more than 3,000 extremists are in the United Kingdom. Compared to the overall population in the United Kingdom of just over 65 million individuals, the threat is greater there than compared to the United States.<sup>55</sup> Those angry at the British government continue to this day as new threats and new opportunities for violent extremism grow around the world. For example, “the UK has seen an estimated 760 jihadists travel to Syria and Iraq. Some estimates say that half of these have returned to the UK, while more than 50 are reported to have died.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism* (London: Home Office, 2011), 26.

<sup>54</sup> Larry Attree, “The UK and Extremism: Understanding the Problem and Owning Our Values,” Safer World, July 22, 2015, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/comment/181-the-uk-and-extremism-understanding-the-problem-and-owning-our-values>.

<sup>55</sup> Sam Jones, “UK Puts 3,000 Extremists on ‘Jihadi John’ Watchlist,” *Financial Times*, February 27, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/35a081fa-bea9-11e4-8d9e-00144feab7de.html#axzz4IizShBiR>.

<sup>56</sup> Ashley Kirk, “Iraq and Syria: How Many Foreign Fighters are Fighting for ISIL?,” *The Telegraph*, March 20, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/>.

The UK National Counter Terrorism report from May 2015 showed that “in the last financial year [April 2014–March 2015] there were 338 [counterterrorism]-related arrests, a 33-percent increase on the 254 that were arrested last year. 157 [46 percent of the total arrested] were linked to Syria and worryingly, 56 are under 20-years-old, which is an emerging trend.”<sup>57</sup>

The fact that al Qaeda utilized the internet to such a degree, and made splashy colorful magazines online to spread their propaganda, and reached a whole new subset of minds to influence and persuade individuals was alarming and unprecedented. For al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the magazines were called Inspire. Magazines created by ISIS were entitled Dabiq, named after a key site in Muslim apocalypse mythology,<sup>58</sup> and has been renamed Rumiyah as a reference to Rome.<sup>59</sup> Since the advent of Al Qaida, and now the threat from ISIS, terrorist groups continue to threaten to attack the United Kingdom and “continue to pose a significant threat to the security of countries in Europe,”<sup>60</sup> at an alarming rate. A never-ending stream of “wannabe” Islamist violent extremists and their supporters within the UK’s borders inundate a system of intelligence specialists, law enforcement, and government bureaucrats.

Like Al Qaeda before them, ISIS and other terror groups have worked hard to delineate the disadvantages of being Muslim abroad and how they are being treated. These terrorist groups are placing the ills of being Muslim on their counterparts in the United Kingdom. The “Islamic narrative [is] the product of all the problems ailing [the Middle Eastern] region at once: underdevelopment, sectarianism, lagging education, sexual repression, lack of respect for women and lack of pluralism in all intellectual thought.”<sup>61</sup> These violent extremists encourage individuals to act and attack the

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<sup>57</sup> “Latest Counter Terrorism Arrest Statistics Announced,” May 14, 2015, <http://news.met.police.uk/news/latest-counter-terrorism-arrest-statistics-announced-116776>.

<sup>58</sup> David Harris, “The Islamic State’s (ISIS, ISIL) Magazine,” The Clarion Project, September 10, 2014, <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq>.

<sup>59</sup> Meira Svirsky, “Latest Issue of ISIS Rumiyah Magazine,” The Clarion Project, October 11, 2016, <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/latest-issue-isis-rumiyah-magazine-released>.

<sup>60</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 32.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Friedman, “Who Are We?” *New York Times*, November 15, 2014.

“infidels” and other non-Muslims.<sup>62</sup> The extremists are creating a wedge between communities across the country. They create an in-group versus an out-group that seeks to destroy the fabric of what makes the UK communities open and growing.

## **B. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

In the United Kingdom, the Secretary of the Home Office oversees counterterrorism strategies and deals with the issues faced in the United States as well. Appointed in July 2016 by Prime Minister Theresa May, who was the former Home Office Secretary, the Home Office is led by Secretary Amber Rudd.<sup>63</sup> “The Home Office leads on immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime policy and counter-terrorism and works to ensure visible, responsive and accountable policing in the UK.”<sup>64</sup>

British intelligence agencies are also involved in U.K.’s counterterrorism program and aid the policy makers at Home Office in their decisions. An interesting component of the British intelligence system is its Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). Similar to the U.S. NCTC, the “JTAC analyses and assesses all intelligence relating to international terrorism, at home and overseas. It sets threat levels and issues warnings of threats and other terrorist-related subjects for customers from a wide range of government departments and agencies, as well as producing more in-depth reports on trends, terrorist networks and capabilities.”<sup>65</sup> The JTAC is comprised of 16 government agencies and sits at the British MI5 Intelligence Directorate. It is the preeminent intelligence and analysis department in the country. The JTAC is the country’s first and only fusion center that

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<sup>62</sup> “Young, British and Radicalised: Why People Want to Join Islamic State,” November 17, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/34851049/young-british-and-radicalised-why-people-want-to-join-islamic-state>.

<sup>63</sup> “Ministerial Role, Secretary of State for the Home Department,” accessed September 2, 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/secretary-of-state-for-the-home-department>.

<sup>64</sup> “Departments,” January 12, 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>.

<sup>65</sup> “Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre,” accessed September 8, 2016, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/joint-terrorism-analysis-centre>.



seeks to be the central repository for intelligence, and therefore, counter terrorism-related matters.<sup>66</sup>

The JTAC conducts its analysis, which in turn helps to feed the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) and the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), which are departments within the Home Office that focus their programs and policies to the greater countering terrorism strategy in the United Kingdom. Unlike the NCTC in the United States, the JTAC works closely with law enforcement agencies to help them understand and stem violent extremism.

As the main hub for counter terrorism policy within the United Kingdom, the OSCT is charged with

exercising the UK's response to a terrorist incident, developing legislation on terrorism here and overseas, providing security measures and protection packages for public figures, ensuring that the UK's critical national infrastructure is protected from attack (including electronic attack), ensuring the UK is prepared to deal with a chemical, biological, or nuclear release, liaising with government and emergency services during terrorist incidents or counter-terrorism operations.<sup>67</sup>

The OSCT initiates and supervises the UK's countering violent extremism program. Vitally important, the OSCT is a policy hub is somewhat akin to a cross between the American DHS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). While the OSCT is a department within the Home Office, they coordinate the Prevent policy across the UK government.

Established in 2007, the RICU is a cross-departmental strategic communications body based in the Office for Security and Counter-terrorism (OSCT) at the Home Office. RICU aims to link the wider government policies to the countering violent extremism program. They coordinate government-wide communication activities to counter the

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<sup>66</sup> Ben Harbisher, "Unthinking Extremism: Radicalising Narratives that Legitimise Surveillance," *Surveillance & Society* 13, no. 3/4 (2015): 477, [http://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/viewFile/unthinking\\_extremism/unthinking](http://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/viewFile/unthinking_extremism/unthinking).

<sup>67</sup> "About Us, About the Directorate," accessed September 8, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20071022054409/http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/about-the-directorate/?version=1>.

appeal of violent extremism while promoting stronger grass-roots inter-community relations.<sup>68</sup>

The RICU is more akin to a government agency that communicates what happens in communities, in a sense, perhaps similar to the U.S. Information Agency from American's past, which closed its doors in 1999.

An important tenet of the RICU counter-messaging program is the use of credible voices to deter violent extremism through the use of messaging and counter narratives.<sup>69</sup> Certainly with any messaging and influence operations, a government is going to have its opponents. However, when used properly and ethically, communicating through soft power using persuasion mechanisms, messages can be especially productive and effective, according to the European RAN Centre of Excellence Issue Paper on "Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives."<sup>70</sup>

Just as in the United States, the United Kingdom has issues with individuals radicalizing through the internet. "Terrorists have used the Internet to reach a much larger audience than has ever been possible for them before and with a broader and more dynamic series of messages. Because many parts of the internet are largely ungoverned, extremists have been able to circumvent censorship laws and host material on sites which are unlikely to be removed."<sup>71</sup> The difficulty in policing every facet of the internet poses a problem in that governments cannot get into some of the far reaches of the internet where the chances for radical influence and hidden discussions are high and the ability to counter the narratives is very low. "Most terrorist propaganda online goes unchallenged."<sup>72</sup> A better program to coordinate the effective use of counter-messaging

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<sup>68</sup> "Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU)," accessed August 29, 2016, <https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/413/research-information-and-communications-unit-ricu>.

<sup>69</sup> Caroline Mortimer, "UK Government Running 'Covert' Propaganda Campaign to Stop Muslims Joining Isis," *Independent*, May 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ricu-uk-government-running-covert-propaganda-campaign-to-stop-muslims-joining-isis-a7010436.html>.

<sup>70</sup> RAN Centre of Excellence, *Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives* (Amsterdam: RAN Centre of Excellence, 2015), [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/net-works/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/issue\\_paper\\_cn\\_oct2015\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/net-works/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 73.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

narratives should be created and used often to help deter potential violent extremists and give them more positive messaging to consider.

The National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) is new in the United Kingdom created under the National Crime Agency in 2013, “leads the UK’s response to cyber crime, supports partners with specialist capabilities and coordinates the national response to the most serious of cyber crime threats.”<sup>73</sup> The NCCU has strong working relationships with regional agencies, and local law enforcement, where they share “information, intelligence and expertise to enhance knowledge of the cyber threat in order to prioritise operational and disruption activity most effectively.”<sup>74</sup> This unit promises to enable CONTEST, Prevent, and Channel programs on the internet where some of the more serious cases of radicalization occur.

### **C. POLICIES THAT COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

The UK’s overall countrywide, and global strategy to stem violent extremism is its CONTEST program. CONTEST’s policies are based on the “four P’s”: pursue terrorists and their supporters through legal means, prevent terrorists and their supporters from radicalizing; protect the people within the country and critical infrastructure, and prepare by mitigation effects of terrorist incidents.<sup>75</sup> CONTEST seeks to work with global and intergovernmental partners to help prevent, protect, pursue, and prepare the country and its citizens for attacks from violent extremists, either from abroad or from within its borders.

U.K. policy makers and law enforcement officials have worked hard to utilize the tools of Prevent to fight violent extremism. Prevent is the most difficult effort from CONTEST to perfect; it must be sound in foreign policy, and precise in social, and economic goals and policies, as well as attempting to assist all individuals in a country filled with many people from various nations. The Prevent portion of the CONTEST

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<sup>73</sup> “National Cyber Crime Unit,” accessed September 8, 2016, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/national-cyber-crime-unit>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*.

program seeks to deter people from becoming or supporting terrorism through their counter-radicalization programs. Prevent and its supporters seek to use the concepts of counter-ideology, assistance, and the inclusion of help from all types of community members to prevent violent extremism. These sectors include mental health, social work, community leaders, and the police to guide individuals away from extremism and violent extremism, and toward becoming a more inclusive society.<sup>76</sup> A close community can assist in deterring violent extremism by helping identify people who are going down that path to extremism or are vulnerable to radicalization.<sup>77</sup>

### **1. Channel: A Deradicalization Program in the United Kingdom**

Channel is a program that falls under the umbrella CONTEST. Piloted in 2007, and officially rolled out in 2012, Channel is a “police-led, multi-agency partnership that evaluates referrals of individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, working alongside safeguarding partnerships and crime reduction panels.”<sup>78</sup> After going through a few iterations and versions, and last updated in April 2015, Channel, as a subset of the UK’s Prevent strategy, aims to find, monitor, and persuade individuals from the path of becoming a violent extremist or supporting terrorism.<sup>79</sup> Channel’s intent is to understand who is at risk of violent extremism, the risk such potential extremists pose to society, and how to persuade and deter them from becoming or supporting violent extremism. It seeks to use a multi-agency coordinated approach to counter the individual’s violent extremism to one of becoming a more productive member of society, according to the Channel Duty Guidance document from 2015.<sup>80</sup>

For example, Channel resulted in the “successful intervention involving a man who had been convicted of burglary and who expressed anti-western views in jail. He

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<sup>76</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>79</sup> HM Government, *Channel Duty Guidance Protecting Vulnerable People from Being Drawn into Terrorism* (London: HM Government, 2015), 5, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425189/Channel\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_April\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

was also known to have viewed extremist videos online and was referred to the programme. After a CHANNEL-backed intervention he returned to education and re-established contact with his family.”<sup>81</sup> Channel has expanded in use and popularity over the last two years, specifically. “Almost 4,000 people were referred to the UK government’s flagship counter-terrorism scheme last year—nearly triple the figure in the previous year, and an average of 11 people a day.”<sup>82</sup> This increase has led to about a 20-percent rate for interventions where more hands-on assistance and attention is needed for those people.<sup>83</sup>

## 2. Police Officers

In the United Kingdom, it has become clear that “communities may be able to act as an early warning system for the police and intelligence services should they come across information or have concerns about particular individuals or groups.”<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately for law enforcement and intelligence agencies, earlier iterations of Prevent made Muslims feel that they were stalked and spied on for information, according to an *Independent* article written by Joe Watts.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Muslims felt that agencies were using illegal intelligence mechanisms to gain knowledge and information on them, their friends, and family.<sup>86</sup> Architects of the current version of the Prevent program have collaborated more effectively with more members of the communities and throughout

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<sup>81</sup> Alan Travis, “Hundreds of Young People Have Received Anti-radicalisation Support,” *The Guardian*, March 26, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/mar/26/hundreds-people-anti-radicalisation-support>.

<sup>82</sup> Josh Halliday, “Almost 4,000 People Referred to UK Deradicalisation Scheme Last Year,” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/20/almost-4000-people-were-referred-to-uk-deradicalisation-scheme-channel-last-year>.

<sup>83</sup> “Deradicalisation Programme Referrals on Rise,” October 8, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34469331>.

<sup>84</sup> Rachel Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” *International Affairs*, 2010, 97.

<sup>85</sup> Joe Watts, “Muslims See Anti-extremism Scheme Prevent as a ‘Spying Programme,’ Admits Terror Law Watchdog,” *Independent*, September 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/muslims-prevent-scheme-seen-as-spying-says-terrorism-law-watchdog-a7347751.html>.

<sup>86</sup> House of Commons, *House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, Preventing Violent Extremism* (London: House of Commons, 2010), 11, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf>.

government to avoid the presumption of targeting and spying on Muslim communities through meetings and other coordination efforts.

By understanding the “beat on the ground” and comprehending communities across the United Kingdom, local citizens and authorities alike

can observe a number of potentially contributing factors [to radicalization]: the presence of radicalizers; the spread of global extremist narratives; the availability of extremist material; group or individual identity issues; personal crisis; changed situation or circumstances; underemployment; links to criminality; social exclusion; grievances; and a lack of trust in political structures and civil society.<sup>87</sup>

From this information, the ability to craft counter messages and deterrence mechanisms carefully are more focused and effective. Once effective themes and messages are in place, local respected leaders will be empowered with a refined product to spread across communities.

By 2011, the United Kingdom “saw the introduction of Prevent Engagement Officers in local police forces, and the creation of a toolkit for schools to use in their role in the prevention of violent extremism.”<sup>88</sup> The police are crucial in the delivery of Prevent in local communities. “At a local level there are over 200 Prevent Engagement Officers who connect counter-terrorism policing, neighbourhood policing and communities. The police also develop comprehensive assessments of threat, risk and vulnerability in local areas that identify priority areas and underpin the delivery plans for those areas.”<sup>89</sup>

Currently in its third iteration, the latest version of Prevent from 2011 has become a softer, albeit a more standardized program with its capabilities to help combat violent extremism in the United Kingdom. In the third version, the tactical approaches the United Kingdom chooses to use to combat violent extremism include community intervention programs, peer mentoring groups, and using non-governmental organizations to

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<sup>87</sup> Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” 973.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 975.

<sup>89</sup> Christian Turner, “Counter Violent Extremism—“Communities Beat Terrorism,”” Foreign & Commonwealth Office, January 16, 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/counter-violent-extremism-communities-beat-terrorism>.

disseminate counter-radicalization messages to refute extremist narratives.<sup>90</sup> The United Kingdom had learned CVE through trial and error. Officials came to feel that they needed to expand their counter-violent extremism approach to schools and further into communities, much like the anti-drug or anti-gang policy approaches have been in the United States, as described in alumni Mike Ward’s NPS thesis, “The Impact of “Duty to Warn” (and Other Legal Theories) On Countering Violent Extremism Intervention Programs.”<sup>91</sup>

### 3. Educators

Of note in connection with Prevent is the “strategy [of] placing educators and community members in schools and other relevant forums to engage at-risk youth with positive messages can be an effective method of CVE, and can leverage the community in actively countering radical ideas.”<sup>92</sup> Importantly, as stated in the CONTEST strategy, “preventing radicalization must mean challenging extremist ideas that are conducive to terrorism and also part of a terrorist narrative.”<sup>93</sup> Strengthening the counter-narrative by speaking of tolerance, resilience, and acceptance, and also of cooperation, could be beneficial in communities. By teaching tolerance, acceptance, and resilience in a society, in schools, religious centers, and throughout the community, then the need to seek revenge against others, and to feel powerful should cease.

The problem of (potential) violent extremism to such a degree is especially relevant to the United Kingdom since, in 2013, an investigation was conducted in Birmingham schools that found that extremism and unfavorable religious opinions were being taught in the classroom, as reported in the “Report into allegations concerning

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<sup>90</sup> Mark Taylor, “Australian, British, and US Approaches to Countering Islamic Extremists,” E-International Relations Student, June 4, 2015, <http://www.e-ir.info/2015/06/04/australian-british-and-us-approaches-to-countering-islamic-extremists>.

<sup>91</sup> Mike Ward, “The Impact of “Duty to Warn” (and Other Legal Theories) On Countering Violent Extremism Intervention Programs” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2016).

<sup>92</sup> Chairs Summary, *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group Community-Oriented Policing Workshop* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2013), 7, [https://www.thegetf.org/documents/10295/39130/13Apr18\\_COP+Meeting+Summary\\_Washington+22+March.pdf](https://www.thegetf.org/documents/10295/39130/13Apr18_COP+Meeting+Summary_Washington+22+March.pdf).

<sup>93</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 59.

Birmingham schools arising from the ‘Trojan Horse’ letter,” in July 2014.<sup>94</sup> Now serving as Her Majesty’s Inspector of Prisons, Peter Clarke was the investigator at the time and the education commissioner for Birmingham schools. In the report, Clarke wrote that he “found clear evidence that there are a number of people, associated with each other and in positions of influence in schools and governing bodies, who espouse, endorse or fail to challenge extremist views.”<sup>95</sup> Through education, training, and gaining access to the tools to help educators stand up against violent extremism, they are the best-positioned individuals to be the change. Educators and counselors are all perfectly situated to help create a transformation and steer vulnerable youth to more meaningful outlets and channels for their issues and problems. The UK Prevent program gets it right by enabling the teachers and counselors to help affect change for the better in youth as they grow and navigate their way through life in and around school.

The toolkit consists of information and mechanisms by which educators can understand the extremist narrative and model for pupils how diverse views can be heard and challenged in a way that values freedom of speech and freedom from harm.<sup>96</sup> The toolkit also allows educators to help prevent harm by others to and within a school. As well, the toolkit addresses how educators can “support individuals who are vulnerable through strategies to support, challenge, and protect”<sup>97</sup> them and seeks to increase the resilience of students so they can acquire skills and knowledge to challenge extremist views. The toolkit also promotes the values of respecting others and offers teaching styles and opportunities for grievances to be shared so that conflict can be resolved.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Peter Clarke, *Report into Allegations Concerning Birmingham Schools Arising from the ‘Trojan Horse’ Letter* (London: House of Commons, 2014), [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/340526/HC\\_576\\_accessible\\_-pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340526/HC_576_accessible_-pdf).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>96</sup> Department for Children, Schools, and Families, *Learning Together to be Safe* (London: Digital Education Resource Archive, 2008), 7, [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8396/1/DCSF-Learning%20Together\\_bkmk.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8396/1/DCSF-Learning%20Together_bkmk.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*



#### 4. Whole of Community Approach

Prevent has changed and grown over the last decade to meet new requirements, and different needs and obligations demanded by the citizens in the United Kingdom. For example, as stated in the Prevent strategy, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command, “previous work in this area has made some progress but has not consistently reached the few people who are the most susceptible to terrorist propaganda. It has failed to recognise the way in which terrorist ideology makes use of ideas espoused by extremist organisations and has not fully understood the implications this should have for the scope of [our] work.”<sup>99</sup> As noted, earlier iterations of Prevent seemed unfairly to target Muslim populations, which led to animosity toward the individuals working to deter violent extremism. Moving ahead, the United Kingdom came to believe that, “one of the effects of Prevent [to date] has been the improvement in understanding between police and communities in this country on a range of issues, including security.”<sup>100</sup>

Equally important is the ability to partner with Muslim leaders across communities to help communicate messages tailored to those who need to hear the message. “A[nother] study found that Muslims welcomed the partnership message, but wanted to know what it meant in practice.”<sup>101</sup> To that end, in 2009, a telephone and internet helpline was offered in the United Kingdom that provided trained Islamic scholars to offer advice about the true teaching of Islam.<sup>102</sup> The hotline “El-Hatef el-Islami’s founder, Cherif Abdel Meguid, launched the service in Egypt [in 2000] and the UK operation is its first foray into English-speaking countries.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> HM Government, *Prevent Strategy, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command of Her Majesty* (London: HM Government, 2011), 7.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>101</sup> Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” 980.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Pigott, “‘Real Islam’ Just a Phone Call Away,” *BBC News*, June 2, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/8078344.stm>.

<sup>103</sup> Riazat Butt, “Fatwa Advice Line el-Hatef el-Islami to Launch in UK,” *The Guardian*, May 10, 2009.

Authorities in the United Kingdom have come to realize that “local authorities should shift their focus and funding away from small-scale community projects which they are often ill-equipped to commission towards enhancing their capacity through the creation of additional community outreach posts to provide human links between the local authority and local communities.”<sup>104</sup> The “whole of community” approach has a greater outcome, than smaller scale, more minutiae projects in communities that reach far less people. “[These posts are] also likely to enhance the quality of commissioning and increase the likelihood of reaching the priority target groups.”<sup>105</sup>

#### **D. PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS**

CONTEST has not been without its problems and pitfalls. For example, the CONTEST strategy of working with various partners and partnerships “continue to struggle with the principles and practicalities of partnership with non-state actors on matters relating to security and counterterrorism, according to Rachel Briggs in her article in *International Affairs*.”<sup>106</sup> To the detriment of the program, it became policy to contract out community projects and polls to determine what various communities around the country needed, according to the CONTEST Annual Review in 2013.<sup>107</sup> Literally, contractors from outside of communities were creating programs. Therefore, the nuances to communities and the individualistic nature of the programs were lost in planning and execution since outsiders were charged with creating the programs. It became evident that “local authorities should invest in people rather than projects to build their own community knowledge and contacts. They should not commission external consultants—people who are not usually local to the area.”<sup>108</sup>

Government officials believed that a strong CVE program, like the “Prevent strategy has been based on the assumption that their ability to deliver is directly

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<sup>104</sup> Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” 980.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 971.

<sup>107</sup> Home Office, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 13.

<sup>108</sup> Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” 972.

proportionate to the amount of funding they receive.”<sup>109</sup> The United Kingdom has learned that funding should be tied to the following three initiatives to be the most effective at countering violent extremism: “deradicalization programmes, the Channel process and projects to counter extremism messages.”<sup>110</sup>

UK policymakers have realized, “instead of seeking to seed democratic ideals and shape Muslim societies in a democratic quasi-Western image, the West’s focus is shifting toward protecting its own societies.... No longer seeking to change Muslim societies or to influence how Islam is interpreted,”<sup>111</sup> The United Kingdom is attempting to use funding in an efficient manner to deter violent extremists, not to fundamentally change religions.

Another problem proponents of the Prevent strategy realized was that government funding was granted to extremist organizations claiming to be Muslim community groups.

Funding is all too often allocated based on the ability to present slick funding applications even though those applicants requesting funding have never delivered or worked with the marginalized group they are requesting the funding for and have no links or understanding of the needs of that minority group. Funds are then allocated with the stipulation that the organisation must work with the organisation which is directly linked with providing support to that marginalized group.<sup>112</sup>

Too many times, this erroneous policy of providing funding to the wrong group led to more extremist individuals and groups receiving money under the guise of trying to promote collaboration and resilience.<sup>113</sup> Such missteps have cost the program some credibility, despite its successes to date.

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<sup>109</sup> Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” 981.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> James Brandon, “The UK’s Counter-radicalization Strategy Just Failed; What Now?” War on the Rocks, September 18, 2014, <http://warontherocks.com/2014/09/uk-attempts-to-create-moderate-islam-just-failed-what-now/>.

<sup>112</sup> House of Commons, *House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, Preventing Violent Extremism*, EV 170.

<sup>113</sup> “Islamist Hate Mongers Funded by the Taxpayer with Money Earmarked for Schools,” June 8, 2011, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2000492/Theresa-May-admits-63m-terror-fighting-fund-GIVEN-extremist-groups.html>.

## **E. IN SUMMARY**

Great Britain has experienced varied violent extremist attacks for myriad reasons. They have learned lessons the hard way and have been forced to counter terrorism through hard and soft power measures. Since 9/11, in particular, and 7/7 more acutely, the United Kingdom has seen the threat it, first due to Al Qaeda, and now from ISIS, has grown by leaps and bounds.

Funding will always continue to be an issue no matter where individuals find themselves in a country or government. The internet is a whole diverse problem area that needs much greater attention than what is provided in this thesis. However, it must be understood and reviewed much more closely, despite benefiting from the tools of deterrence and counter messaging that already exist.

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## **IV. AUSTRALIA**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The greatest contributor to countering violent extremism in Australia is building strong and resilient communities. Australia takes a proactive approach, encouraging its citizens to become resilient in the face of challenges; the government encourages the creation of a stronger, more capable populace. In Australia, and in particular among government leaders and communities, a sense exists that “the meanings of resilience vary by disciplinary perspective. While there is no universally accepted definition of the concept, it is widely acknowledged that resilience refers to the capacity of an individual to do well in spite of exposure to acute trauma.” Despite a fluctuating CVE budget and changes in government, Australia is trying to find innovative and effective programs to reduce the threat of radicalization there.

While Australia needs a comprehensive strategic counter-terrorism program, current CVE programs in Australia are designed to evoke a sense of “nationalism and national identity, particularly in the way its government leaders have] framed policy discussion on managing national responses to disasters and threats, has arguably been more muted than some of the European hysteria witnessed recently around cultural diversity and national life.” To this end, the Australian perspective that deterrence measures can come from building and exhorting a sense of national pride, a national identity, and social cohesion, is broadly used to counter violent extremism.

### **B. CURRENT TERRORIST THREAT IN AUSTRALIA**

The history of terrorism in Australia can be traced back to 1915, when two men fired their rifles on a slow-moving train carrying passengers. Four people were killed.<sup>114</sup> Few, if any terrorist incidents followed this attack until the 1970s, when sporadic yet lethal acts of terrorism occurred, often linked to grievances about overseas issues. For example, in February 1978, Australia experienced a terrorist bomb attack on a Hilton

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<sup>114</sup> “Fact File: Five Facts about Terrorism in Australia,” updated February 24, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-25/fact-file3b-five-facts-about-terrorism-in-australia/6226086>.

hotel in Sydney. Despite the horrific act that killed three people and wounded many others, no one has claimed responsibility and mystery still surrounds the attack.<sup>115</sup> Believing it was mainly an overseas or outside issue, the Australian government perceived that these attacks did not much affect them or the citizens and did very little to address the attacks. “Little was done to engage the community about terrorism.”<sup>116</sup>

A turning point for the government and people of Australia was a series of terrorist attacks conducted by Jemaah Islamiyah in Bali, where large numbers of Australians holiday. These attacks were judged to be in direct retaliation for the west’s war on terror and Australia’s specific involvement in the liberation of East Timor.<sup>117</sup> In 2002 alone, attacks at two nightclubs in Bali killed more than 200 people.<sup>118</sup>

Australia experienced its most recent terrorist attack on December 15, 2014. At a café in Sydney, an Islamist cleric held hostages while demanding to speak with then-Prime Minister Abbott.<sup>119</sup> Man Haron Monis pledged allegiance to Sunni extremist beliefs as posed by the Islamic State and wrote on the day of the attacks, “If we stay silent towards the criminals we cannot have a peaceful society. The more you fight with crime, the more peaceful you are.”<sup>120</sup> His premeditated assault made clear to Australians what extremist terrorism on Australian soil might look like. “Monis took 18 people hostage.... And... Sixteen hours after he first drew a sawn-off shotgun from a bag and ordered the cafe closed, police stormed the building to end the standoff, Monis killed café

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<sup>115</sup> Cathy Stubbs, “Sydney Hilton Hotel Bombing Happened on this Day in 1978,” *The Daily Guardian*, February 11, 2016, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/city-east/sydney-hilton-hotel-bombing-happened-on-this-day-in-1978/news-story/ffe8120f20831d4f84d27c04f77f6c12>.

<sup>116</sup> Anthony Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” Australian Strategic Policy Institute, June 30, 2015, 42.

<sup>117</sup> *Wikipedia*, s.v. “2002 Bali Bombings,” last modified March 22, 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002\\_Bali\\_bombings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Bali_bombings).

<sup>118</sup> “Terrorist Groups, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI),” updated September 2013, <https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/ji.html>.

<sup>119</sup> “Sydney Siege: Police Monitor Social Media Reports of Gunman Demands,” December 15, 2014, <http://ewn.co.za/2014/12/15/Sydney-siege-police-monitor-reports-of-gunman-demands>.

<sup>120</sup> Ashley Fantz, Catherine Shoichet, and Tim Hume, “Sydney Hostage-taker Called Himself a Cleric—and Had a Criminal Record,” *CNN*, updated December 18, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/15/world/asia/australia-hostage-taker/>.

owner, Tori Johnson, and Monis and barrister Katrina Dawson were left dead following the gunfight.”<sup>121</sup>

Over the last decade, Australia has experienced more threats from self-professed Al-Qaeda and ISIS extremists. Approximately 61 Australian citizens have gone to Syria and Iraq to offer support to the latest ideology of ISIS.<sup>122</sup>

### C. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Australia’s six states and territories have an integral role in supporting the nation’s security. The state and territory governments

- maintain policies, legislation, and plans within their jurisdictions,
- maintain counter-terrorism and consequence-management capabilities within their relevant agencies,
- have primary operational responsibility for responding to a terrorist situation in their jurisdiction,
- determine prevention strategies and operational responses to threats, including seeking assistance from other jurisdictions, and
- actively consider the requirement for the declaration of a national terrorist situation
- contribute to the national strategy in a national terrorist situation<sup>123</sup>

As a country and across communities, these roles ensure that leaders, government officials, and citizens are aware of how best to combat violent extremism within their boundaries and the commitment it takes to work together.

Coming from the Attorney General’s office to the aptly named CVE unit, the initiatives focus on early prevention training and programs, as well as counter-

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<sup>121</sup> Australian Associated Press, “Sydney Siege Inquest: Man Haron Monis Was a ‘Psychopathic Lone Wolf Terrorist,’” *The Guardian*, May 2, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/may/02/sydney-siege-inquest-man-haron-monis-was-a-psychopathic-lone-wolf-terrorist>.

<sup>122</sup> Geoff Chambers, “Revealed: Full list of Aussie Jihadis Fighting with ISIS in Syria and Iraq,” *The Daily Telegraph*, April 15, 2015, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/revealed-full-list-of-aussie-jihadis-fighting-with-isis-in-syria-and-iraq/news-story/bc2b29a864c20f5affffef8e8d3a368f>.

<sup>123</sup> “States and Territories,” accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/WhatAustraliaIsDoing/Pages/StatesAndTerritories.aspx>.



radicalization methods.<sup>124</sup> Such programs as “building strength in diversity and social participation, addressing terrorist propaganda online, and targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions,”<sup>125</sup> help communities foster cooperation, acceptance, tolerance, and resilience in the interest of countering violent extremism. Cultural competency training is offered, and informal and formal meetings are held to discuss issues that affect communities.

In addition to counter-radicalization, the Australian government works to rehabilitate prisoners to be more resilient in the face of terrorist extremists. The Australian government “Work[s] with state and territory governments to develop and implement programmes to rehabilitate people imprisoned for terrorism related offences, as well as prevent the radicalisation of other prisoners.”<sup>126</sup>

The government of Australia also hopes to deter violent extremism by preventing Australians from traveling overseas to support terrorist organizations abroad.

The Australian Government has been working towards achieving those objectives through activities relating to identification and information sharing; motivation, recruitment and containment; referral and support, diversion and rehabilitation; education; and communication, as stated by the author of the *Australian Government Measures to Counter Violent Extremism: A Quick Guide*, Cat Barker.<sup>127</sup>

While trying to understand the root causes of the problem, and by offering holistic solutions to deter violent extremists, the Australian government is working toward finding solutions that will enable most deradicalization programs.

Joint counterterrorism teams and joint operations have become the standard operating procedure, and have been well established in Australia since 2001. According to their website, The Australia—New Zealand Counterterrorism Committee (ANZCTC)

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<sup>124</sup> “Countering Violent Extremism,” accessed January 17, 2017, <https://www.ag.gov.au/NationalSecurity/Counteringviolentextremism/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Cat Barker, “Australian Government Measures to Counter Violent Extremism: A Quick Guide,” Parliament of Australia, February 10, 2015, [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick\\_Guides/Extremism](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick_Guides/Extremism).

has become the premier counterterrorism organization in Australia for multijurisdictional cooperation. ANZCTC has attempted to be a useful forum that creates and develops national counterterrorism plans and handbooks, offers training and exercise opportunities, and acts as a purchasing agent.<sup>128</sup> The committee has worked together to develop and coordinate policy advice on CVE to governments and sustained and promoted cooperation across jurisdictions, which has proved helpful in different types of crises, including natural disasters.<sup>129</sup>

The eight members of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) coordinate counter-terrorism policy in collaboration with intelligence agencies and the states and territories. In addition to the prime minister, the ministers for indigenous affairs, women, justice, state, veteran's affairs, and others make up the PM&C.<sup>130</sup> Jointly, they provide the secretariat for the Secretaries Committee on National Security and the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) terrorism information. The members of the PM&C provide information and assistance to the secretariat for the ANZCTC and advise the prime minister on matters related to counter-terrorism.<sup>131</sup>

The multi-agency body of the Australian Counter-Terrorism Centre (ACTC) works closely with the Office of the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (OCTC) to ensure close coordination and set priorities are focused, evaluated, and consolidated against the backdrop of the national counter-terrorism goals.<sup>132</sup>

These groups, along with the entire Australian government, share the responsibility for coordination and synchronization for the overall effort of countering violent extremism in Australia. Each of these agencies is accountable for working together and synchronizing efforts to combat extremists and their counterparts. The

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<sup>128</sup> "Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee," accessed February 28, 2017, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/WhatAustraliaisdoing/Pages/Australia-New-Zealand-Counter-Terrorism-Committee.aspx>.

<sup>129</sup> Bergin et al., "Gen Y Jihadists," 42.

<sup>130</sup> "Ministers," accessed January 26 2017, <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/who-we-are/ministers>.

<sup>131</sup> "National Security Agencies," accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/WhatAustraliaisdoing/Pages/NationalSecurityAgencies.aspx>.

<sup>132</sup> "Australian Counter-Terrorism Centre," accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.asio.gov.au/australian-counter-terrorism-centre.html>

January 2015 *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* portrayed that Australia has come a long way yet still has improvements to make. For example, “The ACTC’s focus should be on progress against priorities and overcoming impediments to an effective CT approach. It would need to take on an important role in the coordination of strategic CT policy across the Commonwealth.”<sup>133</sup> This approach is an example of the requirement of having measures of performance and measures of effectiveness from which to compare the effects of counter-violent extremism programs.

#### **D. POLICIES THAT COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AUSTRALIA**

The Australian government created a CVE program in 2010. Australia’s government has spent a great deal of time trying to integrate individuals into society by focusing their time and efforts on community relations and maintaining resilience in the face of hardships. “Radicalisation processes are at work in some Australian communities and violent extremism is a real and persistent threat to Australia’s security. Australia faces threats from violent extremists with a variety of motivations.”<sup>134</sup> The diversified Australian CVE approach attempts to counter this range of causes and motives.

##### **1. Living Safe Together**

The Living Safe Together program has essentially become a grant scheme, a unique funding approach to deter the growth of violent extremism and to help enhance citizens’ ties to the community. Australian grant recipients and community leaders offer tools to build resilience, create cohesive networks and communities, and help foster creative, innovative solutions to countering violent extremism. Over time, the Living Safe Together program became more of a grant-based, funding capability to help counter violent extremism in communities, which are the hallmarks of the majority of their programs and grants.

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<sup>133</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* (Canberra: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015), 27, [https://www.dpmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/190215\\_CT\\_Review\\_0.pdf](https://www.dpmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/190215_CT_Review_0.pdf).

<sup>134</sup> Countering Violent Extremism Unit, *Countering Violent Extremism Strategy* (Barton: Australian Government, n.d.), 1, accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/aboutus/Documents/Resilient%20Communities%20CVE%20Strategy%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

According to their website, “overall, Living Safe Together seeks to:

- “Identify and divert violent extremists and, where possible, support them in disengaging from violent extremism;
- Identify and support at-risk groups and individuals to resist and reject violent extremist ideologies;
- Build community cohesion and resilience to violent extremism;
- Communicate effectively to challenge extremist messages and support alternative narratives; and
- Communities, both through their own activities and in collaboration with government, play a vital role in achieving these objectives.”<sup>135</sup>

In many ways, the Living Safe Together program is similar to the UK’s Prevent program. The Living Safe Together initiative seeks to use government and police resources to help identify violent extremists and assure their recovery from terrorism. However, Australia’s leaders discovered that many Muslim-based communities on whom these initiatives should focus on are anti-government and untrusting of the police and withheld their support for such programs.

Australia’s government policy makers have emphasized the use of governmental resources over specifically enabling the use of police-specific programs. Communities therefore can help themselves by concentrating on programs and grant money to community resilience and cohesion in numerous ways.

The Living Safe Together website<sup>136</sup> points to “intervention programs that include youth diversion activities, healthcare initiatives, mentoring, employment, and educational support programs and counseling options.”<sup>137</sup> These measures seek to encourage individuals to be confident and resilient against potential radicalization and influencing by violent extremists.

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<sup>135</sup> “Countering Violent Extremism Strategy,” accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/aboutus/Pages/countering-violent-extremism-strategy.aspx>.

<sup>136</sup> “Home,” accessed January 23, 2017, <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/pages/home.aspx>.

<sup>137</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 54.

Underlying the principles of the Living Safe Together program, from 2010 to 2013, Australia had another program called Building Community Resilience. This program sought to provide community members and youth with education and tools to identify and understand violent extremism, and the skills to discourage or address that behavior. Once individuals become aware to understand and see how detrimental these violent extremist behaviors are, the training encourages them to disavow these beliefs and ways of thinking. The Building Community Resilience and Youth Mentoring grant programs encouraged the engagement of communities and offered intensive training with specific tasks to inform youths better.<sup>138</sup> These specific tasks focused on peer mentoring, community presentations, and community consultations.<sup>139</sup> The training and education aimed to inform youth about vulnerability, strength, resilience against extremism, and similar topics. Thanks to grant funding, the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) created a community awareness training manual titled *Building Resilience in the Community* that offers means and ways to build resilience, increase awareness and understanding, and promote knowledge and strategies to give people the tools to remain social and active in their communities, and is supported by the Australian government.<sup>140</sup> This program seeks to share the ideals of the Living Safe Together initiative under the banner of building resiliency in communities.

An important component to the Living Safe Together initiative is the open-source advice provided by the Australian government to assist people in recognizing whether an individual is radicalizing. “Advocacy groups All Together Now, Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), and ReachOut ran workshops to teach participants how to identify and respond to hate speech online, how to leverage their skills as leaders, and how to

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<sup>138</sup> “Current Projects,” accessed November 8, 2016, <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/getinvolved/Pages/current-projects.aspx>.

<sup>139</sup> Australian Government, *Building Community Resilience Programme 2010–2011 Projects* (Barton: Australian Government, n.d.), accessed January 11, 2017, <https://www.ag.gov.au/NationalSecurity/CounterIngiolentextremism/Documents/bcr-grants-2010-11.pdf>.

<sup>140</sup> “Community Awareness Training Manual: Building Resilience in the Community,” accessed November 8, 2016, <http://amf.net.au/entry/community-awareness-training-manual-building-resilience-in-the-community>.

promote inclusivity and cross-cultural collaboration online.”<sup>141</sup> These sources have been used as a backstop for those individuals within a community, to provide them with information to defend against others who may be curious about what extremist organizations offer, but have the fortitude to turn away from radicalization using the courage and capabilities that reside within themselves.

Those who support counter-radicalization efforts recognize early intervention is key to offering a range of services and options for at-risk Australians to get the help they need. “Communities also play a leading role in rejecting extremist ideologies and supporting individuals who are at risk of marginalisation, or who might be attracted to the use of violent expression to achieve political, social or ideological goals.”<sup>142</sup> The Living Safe Together initiative seeks to direct people to services offered by healthcare professionals, school counselors, and a range of other social services.

## **2. Rehabilitation**

Looking beyond its borders for inspiration, the Australian government has taken a hard look at going beyond security and intelligence enhancements to stem violent extremism. Mimicking a Singapore policy, Australia has begun a program facilitated by the Australian federal police to assess former violent extremists in an effort to rehabilitate and remove them as a threat to society.<sup>143</sup> Religious mentoring and career counseling advice are positive potential initiatives the Australian government is working with to help disengage and deter violent extremists and potential extremists from harmful activities.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> “Digital Youth Forum ‘Digiengage—Our Diverse Digital Forum,’” November 8, 2016, <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/news/Pages/Digital-youth-forum-digiengage-our-diverse-digital-future.aspx>.

<sup>142</sup> Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Security Australia, Protecting Our Community* (Barton: Australian Government, 2010), [https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/basic\\_pages/documents/counter-terrorism-white-paper.pdf](https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/basic_pages/documents/counter-terrorism-white-paper.pdf).

<sup>143</sup> David Wroe and Tom Allard, “AFP Assessing Reformed Islamic Radicals as Potential Counter-radicalisation Poster-boys and Girls,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 12, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/afp-assessing-reformed-islamic-radicals-as-potential-counterradicalisation-posterboys-and-girls-20150611-ghlz9f>.

<sup>144</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 38.

Australia is trying to find the perfect approach to disengage former terrorists from recruiting and influencing others into violent extremism. Harkening back to the community model and the building resilience theme, a study titled *Looking Outward: Enhancing Australia's Deradicalisation and Disengagement Programs*, by Kristen Bell, addresses these programs and demonstrates that they should be based within communities. Recognizing one size does not fit all communities is encouraged to support at-risk individuals to enable their disengagement from violent extremism and to embrace a better way to participate in society positively.<sup>145</sup>

### 3. Educators

The Australian government is recognizing, too, the role schools could and should play in countering violent extremism and counter-radicalization efforts, which could offer some promising results.<sup>146</sup> Since education plays such a prominent role in the lives of youth, “these education interventions focus on teaching subjects that promote tolerance, understanding and citizenship.”<sup>147</sup>

As many countries have been experiencing, Australia’s “growing number of young Australians radicalising has been the focus of government attention and points to the need to address the role of schools.” The theory is that “perhaps some are reaching a peak rebellious phase and their impulses are being misdirected into violent Islamist extremism.”<sup>148</sup> In an effort to stem the growth of violent extremism at schools, school administrators and teachers receive training in awareness of what radicalization is, how to help deter influential youth away from violent extremism, and what other resources are available to help schools persuade students from radicalizing.

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<sup>145</sup> Kristen Bell, *Looking Outward: Enhancing Australia's Deradicalisation and Disengagement Programs* (Kingston: Institute for Regional Security, 2015), 18, <http://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/resources/Documents/SC%2011-2%20BELL.pdf>.

<sup>146</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 53.

<sup>147</sup> “Teaching Terror: What Role for Schools in Countering Violent Extremism?” July 1, 2015, <http://theconversation.com/teaching-terror-what-role-for-schools-in-countering-violent-extremism-44080>.

<sup>148</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 12.

The Turnbull administration announced in February 2016 an initiative to provide teachers in schools with awareness training so they can recognize and help provide tools to counter radicalization. This training ties into other awareness trainings provided by the Australian Multicultural Foundation.<sup>149</sup> In addition to the awareness training for teachers, the initiatives for schools include classroom resources by which teachers and parents can more effectively communicate. These measures may be the solution in Australia for teachers to help combat the increase of young people trying to join international terrorist organizations.

#### **E. PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS**

The mission to counter violent extremism in Australia has been hampered by a lack of funding, lack of branding, and a lack of concentrated focus. The fiscal year 2007–2008 witnessed a peak of \$790 million in funding for homeland security and counterterrorism efforts in Australia. This number steadily declined to \$523 million by 2013–2014.<sup>150</sup> The “building community resilience” element of the Attorney-General’s department CVE program, after having been reduced to \$7.9 million over the four previous years funding was discontinued entirely in 2014–2015. The Australian federal police budget has not increased since 2013. That money was allocated for such new programs as the Cyber Security Operations Center.<sup>151</sup> The ebb and flow of terrorism threatening Australia’s borders and their region at times have in turn created an Australian government prone to reaction; therefore, generating less strategic oversight of their CVE programs. Maintaining a strategic plan but with a reactionary budget has prevented policy makers from performing adequate oversight and offering assessments that hinders the improvement of current programs and the creation of new initiatives.

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<sup>149</sup> Ministers for Justice and Education and Training, “New Initiatives in Schools to Safeguard our Youth,” February 6, 2016, <https://www.ministerjustice.gov.au/Mediareleases/Pages/2016/FirstQuarter/6-February-2016-New-initiatives-in-schools-to-safeguard-our-youth.aspx>.

<sup>150</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 45.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.



As stated in the “Gen Y Jihadists” information paper, “no new counterterrorism initiatives were funded in the May 2014 budget.”<sup>152</sup> However, the Australian government allocated an additional \$630 million package to boost agency funding on August 5, 2014. The money was allocated to increase intelligence resources, improve the security at Parliament House, and to boost border security. Additionally, the Australian government added another \$1.2 billion in the May 2015 budget, which was provided for continued operations in Western Asia, to assist telecommunications companies in implementing metadata retention, to build new capabilities in the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, and to counter online terrorist propaganda.<sup>153</sup> While the stop-and-go funding of counterterrorism operations in Australia seem reactive instead of proactive, the Australian government policy makers and counter-terrorism operations managers continue to try to find a balance in providing enough funding in today’s trying economic climate.

Despite the reactive spending budget for CVE programs in Australia, in 2014, the government took a renewed interest in CVE and \$13.4 million was allocated to the CVE program. The Australian government soon focused its efforts on community engagement and CVE intervention programs, as well as counter-radicalization programs that invested an additional \$22 million.<sup>154</sup>

As far as Living Safe Together is concerned, according to Bergin et al., “The government has allocated around \$1 million for the Living Safe Together Grants Program in 2014–2015 only, stating that there will be no further funding rounds available in the coming years.”<sup>155</sup> Without continued funding, it may not be a sustainable program, one which could aid Australian communities to counter violent extremism. “The programme’s objective was to support community-based, non-government and local government organisations to develop new and innovative services to help individuals

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<sup>152</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 43.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

move away from violent extremism (either directly, or through their families and friends).”<sup>156</sup>

Perhaps to the detriment of deterring violent extremism programs in Australia, the focus for CVE has been the over consideration of aid and funding various programs. All area of government is involved, every agency at all levels, to help combat violent extremism in Australia.

Initially intent on trying to reduce costs and focus money elsewhere, the Australian government recognized the value of countering violent extremism and has since boosted these efforts. The Australian government has recognized that without a proper strategy in place to counter terrorism, resource pressures will exacerbate and money will not be used effectively and efficiently.<sup>157</sup>

## **F. IN SUMMARY**

Australia has experienced varied violent extremist attacks at home and nearby, from other countries in their sphere of influence. They have learned lessons and counter terrorism through hard and soft power measures. They continue to upgrade their countering terrorism strategies as extremists continue to modify best practices too.

Funding will always continue to be an issue no matter where individuals find themselves in a country or government. However, it must be understood and reviewed much more closely, despite benefiting from the tools of deterrence and counter messaging that already exist.

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<sup>156</sup> “The Design of, and Award of Funding under, the Living Safe Together Grants Programme,” September 1, 2016, <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/design-and-award-funding-under-living-safe-together-grants-programme>.

<sup>157</sup> Cat Barker, “Budget Review 2015–2016 Index, Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” Australian Government, May 2015, [http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview201516/Terrorism](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview201516/Terrorism).

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## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

There have been more than 40 Islamic extremist terrorist attacks on American soil since 2001.<sup>158</sup> Most likely all of them could have been avoided. Responding to violent extremist attacks in the United States today relies heavily on the use of reactive and inconsistent measures including law enforcement and legal repercussions across the country. The time has come for the United States to adopt more effective means of deterring and deradicalizing violent extremists within this nation's borders.

In America, local governments across the country are finding out they cannot rely on the federal government to provide them with CVE policies. The federal government has been trying to determine who should lead CVE efforts in America, while local governments have had to forge ahead to develop approaches that will work in their specific populations.

Local governments' approaches in places like Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in Los Angeles, California, have proven to be effective as they have created enduring programs that aim to build resiliency within the community and engage the community members. However, only these two cities in this vast country have done anything to deter violent extremism that has come to attention in America. The policy measure of coordinating from the local leader's office, as referred to in Chapter I, may lend to new, insightful ways to transform the fight against violent extremism in communities across the country. Small towns and municipalities have the tools and capabilities among their residents to deter violent extremism. Further coordination and communication measures may provide an opportunity to create stronger deterrence measures against violent extremists.

Perhaps, as referred to in Chapter I, Michael Downing of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) stated that by enabling local law enforcement to counter violent extremism through community engagement opportunities, and by working and partnering with citizens, they might become helpful in deterring violent extremism. He states that

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<sup>158</sup> William R. Johnston, "Terrorist Attacks and Related Incidents in the United States," Johnston's Archive, last updated February 4, 2017, <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255a.html>.

through better federal and national coordination efforts, as well as with additional funding, “they can build resilient communities in which it is harder for this type of threat to take root, as well as providing a larger safety net.”<sup>159</sup>

#### **A. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Elements of the U.K. countering terrorism strategy, including Prevent and Channel, offer the United States a few lessons learned. These lessons include the concept of potential deradicalization methods. Prevent and Channel offer the United States the way ahead for effective, useful communication strategies to help deter violent extremism. Next, a whole of community approach enables all members of a society to play a vital role in deterring violent extremism in their communities. It is essential to start to deter violent extremism thoughts, beliefs, and ideas when individuals are young and vulnerable to messages of extremism and terrorism. Lastly, coordinating prevention engagement officers, people dedicated to following up with individuals who may require extra attention, may be useful in American society.

#### **B. DERADICALIZATION IS IMPERATIVE**

The deradicalization process is essential to the fight to reduce violent extremism anywhere. As Angela Rabasa of the RAND Corporation said, “Ideally, the goal is to get the individual to change his belief system, reject the extremist ideology and embrace a moderate worldview.”<sup>160</sup> The United Kingdom recognizes the importance of deradicalizing violent extremists and is something the United States must focus efforts on as well.

The United States does not currently have a program to deradicalize individuals; despite references they have counter-narrative programs through social media. “Because counter-radicalization or deradicalization programs are embedded in a war of ideas, the

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<sup>159</sup> Downing and Mayer, “Preventing the Next ‘Lone Wolf’ Terrorist Attack Requires Stronger Federal-State-Local Capabilities,” 3.

<sup>160</sup> “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists,” November 29, 2010, <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2010/11/29.html>.

counter-ideological component of these programs is extremely important.”<sup>161</sup> In Channel, by drawing on the “existing collaboration between local authorities, the police, statutory partners (such as the education sector, social services, children’s and youth services and offender management services) and the local community,”<sup>162</sup> the chances are higher that individuals can avoid a life of extremism. Once individuals turn away from violent extremism, they become better, more productive members of society. To convince them of this better life, it is necessary to communicate effectively what a better life consists of. Proper communication will support and enhance the deradicalization of individuals.

### C. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The most important aspect to deterring violent extremism is to communicate effectively and to use members of a community to help share messages of counter radicalization and counter extremism. As Admiral Mullen stated in 2009, “to put it simply, we need to worry a lot less about how to communicate our actions and much more about what our actions communicate.”<sup>163</sup> Communication is key to helping deter violent extremism in the United Kingdom. It stands to reason that an effective targeted communication strategy to deter violent extremism in the United States can be as significant. Without strong targeted messaging, to dissuade individuals from becoming violent in the first place, then efforts to deter violent extremism in America will be muddled and useless. Not only is communicating a matter for government professionals, but for members of society as well.

Of importance is the concept of “credible messaging to a target audience is best created by an equally wide range of credible non-extremist voices coming from civil society level. Civil society is best placed to provide counterspeech that both negates the extremist message directly, as well as provides counterspeech that can provide vulnerable target audiences with alternatives to extremism.”<sup>164</sup> Local government leaders, members

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<sup>161</sup> “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists.”

<sup>162</sup> “Channel Process,” accessed February 22, 2017, <https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/115/channel-process>.

<sup>163</sup> Thom Shanker, “Message to Muslim World Gets a Critique,” *New York Times*, August 28, 2009, 1.

<sup>164</sup> Saltman and Russell, *White Paper: The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism*, 9.

of Muslim communities, and other civic leaders and individuals in a society can communicate against violent extremism and the damage it does to individuals and communities.

In some ways, this thesis builds on what Brad Deardorff proposed in 2010 and expands on the notion of requiring improved communication and messaging standards in America to deter violent extremism. To date, what has been used the most at countering violent extremism in America has been law enforcement tactics. As this thesis has reiterated, that tactic is not working. American government policy makers and its supporters to deter violent extremism must communicate more effectively to deter individuals from going travelling up the staircase *to* terrorism.

In the United Kingdom, the RICU is charged with countering the messaging of violent extremism and terrorists from around the world who promote threats within its borders. A key takeaway for the U.S. government is to house counter-violent extremism messaging from a government body similarly. By centralizing the effort to deter or influence individuals from a main hub, messages will be more consistent, credible, and effective. However, more than merely communicating effectively, many individuals and agencies should be communicating the same messages. A holistic, community approach that includes individuals from all sectors of society would be most effective at deterring violent extremism.

#### **D. WHOLE OF COMMUNITY APPROACH HAS GREAT POTENTIAL**

The concept of “it takes a village” is no less true in countering violent extremism in America. Combining the efforts of trained educators, social workers, and caring members of a community, in relationship with local law enforcement, are imperative to deterring violent extremism in the United Kingdom. The United States, when executed properly and carefully, could be equally effective at using and building its key community resources to deter violent extremism.

The United Kingdom has used educators, messengers from Islamic communities, mentors, police officers, and helpful members of the communities who have combined their efforts to deter violent extremism. Kieran Ramsey, Assistant Special Agent in

Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Boston, said, “the practice of enlisting community groups, nonprofit agencies, private businesses, and neighborhood residents will better prevent and predict future threats ‘from gangs, drugs, cyber-related crimes, and terrorism’ than ‘merely reacting to ones as they appear.’”<sup>165</sup>

A more holistic use of communities and the people contained within would be far more effective at deterring violent extremism in America. The United Kingdom shows how the coordinated and combined efforts of many can help the few in need. Another component to deterring violent extremists through a community approach is to recognize the signs of radicalization early and use deterrence methods when people are young.

#### **E. START THEM YOUNG**

The U.K. Channel program offers a multitude of lessons learned for potential use in the United States. First, by attempting to provide support to juveniles and young people at risk of being potentially drawn into violent extremism, the United States can stem the growing tide of young violent extremists. By enabling the successful intervention of young people, as referred to in Chapter III, Channel has proven effective at deterring violent extremism and reacquainting them back into their communities. Youth are surrounded by many kinds of community members. By “enlisting a broad spectrum of religious leaders, community leaders, and experts in health and education to identify people susceptible to radical ideology and intervene before they become a threat,”<sup>166</sup> youth can be deterred from violent extremism before it is too late.

Providing counter-radicalization programs from schools, libraries, and anywhere youth can effectively deter violent extremism before individuals reach adulthood. Youth have to deal with so much, especially in this globalized world, that it is important to share messages of counter violent extremism early on. Just like messaging to influence kids not to do drugs, to take care of their bodies, to avoid unsafe sex at a young age, so too should messages be shared to deter violent extremism. Part of this program would fall under a

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<sup>165</sup> Shelley Murphy, “Federal Initiative in Boston Aims to Counter Extremism,” *Boston Globe*, October 3, 2014, 3.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



Prevent-like program similar to what the United Kingdom does. Certain specialists or school educators would be trained and ready to help prevent violent extremism in schools and around sections of communities as well.

## **F. PREVENTION ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING**

Training is critical to deterring violent extremism in America. It is imperative to train American educators, police officers, and community members to understand, recognize, and share counter violent extremism messages. In the United Kingdom, Prevent engagement officers are trained to understand and recognize violent extremism. The Prevention officers take it a step further by acting as subject matter experts who have the tools and know how to best intervene to deter potential violent extremists. In the United States, similar programs can be enhanced. By sharing the Community Awareness Briefing to broader audiences, American government policymakers and its benefactors can share knowledge and tactics to stop violent extremists much sooner. Similar to having school resource officers, who are trained law enforcement officers, Prevent engagement officers would fill the same role.

The United Kingdom has had to update the CONTEST, Prevent, and Channel programs over time, to appease various stakeholders, due to vocal protests and those angry with previous models. The updated changes and measures have added value to the programs and helped to create a more efficient, beneficial counter violent extremism program than what the United States has. Perhaps, the American method to deter violent extremism should start with deradicalization programs.

Good policy proposals to deter violent extremism in America include:

- deradicalizing
- communicating effectively
- embracing a whole of community approach
- starting them young
- preventing engagement and training will help

These proposals are all effective and significant that American policymakers can implement from what the United Kingdom does right to deter violent extremism.

#### **G. LESSONS LEARNED FROM AUSTRALIA**

Elements of Australia's Living Safe Together program and their broader Building Community Resilience programs have been effective tools to deter violent extremism. The United States could take from Australia the importance of individual and community resilience and learn how to integrate messages of tolerance and acceptance in an effort to build strong and resilient communities. Offering opportunities to change and rehabilitate individuals who have gone down the path of violent extremism should be given another chance, perhaps. Australian government programs provide the United States an example for how to help individuals forgive the past to make the future better.

As terrorist events are increasing globally, government agencies and citizens become more determined to disrupt terrorist activity. Thus, government initiatives to build resilience and cohesion throughout communities have been an integral focus for the Australian government. After the 2014 Sydney café attack, the global war on terrorism, support of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, Australian citizens appreciate what strong communities can look like and what they entail. The government in Australia helps by offering the knowledge, tools, and infrastructure for stronger communities.

#### **H. RECOGNIZING HUMAN VULNERABILITIES TO OVERCOME CVE**

Emergency management planners communicate methods to be prepared and have emergency supplies available in the event of an attack. By extension, emergency planners describe the importance of being strong and resilient in the event of an emergency, in the face of adversity. To this end, individuals must also stand firm and be resilient as humans being. The same is true of individuals on a daily basis. The Australians have it right when they provide training and tools of inclusion, acceptance, and tolerance in the face of U.S. differences in communities around the country.

As humans, sharing difficulties in schools and neighborhoods leads to shared opportunities to work together and build relationships. A stronger human understanding,

relationship building, and learning and growing from others' cultures and backgrounds create bonds of inclusion in communities. It becomes more difficult to hate someone when individuals are building relationships and communities with others who are different.

America could rely more heavily on psychologists, therapists, and other human scientists to understand the human component to deter violent extremism better. Understanding that individuals are human beings and recognizing how vulnerabilities and conditions make individuals act could deter violent extremism better. Once CVE practitioners understand the human component better, individuals can get to the root of the problem and effectively deter violent extremism with a greater understanding of the problem. Humans have weaknesses and reasons for becoming violent extremists, so it is up to individuals to understand what motivates others to deter them more effectively. From the Australian case study, building resilience against hate, while teaching the harmful effects of exclusion, are strong deterrents to violent extremism.

Messaging effectively and sharing human connections creates understanding and shared experiences. These shared experiences provide opportunities for inclusion, aspirations, and growth as individuals and communities collectively. Building this structure takes time but is worth the effort to help humans grow as people and as communities.

## **I. BUILDING COMMUNITIES**

In Australia, building individual and community resilience go hand in hand oftentimes. Similar to building individual resiliency, building communities' bonds deters violent extremism. Families and communities need to know where they can turn to with their concerns.<sup>167</sup> Creating resilience in individuals and the community empowers individuals to fend off violent extremism that reduces many of the problems societies face before they grow. In the face of new and changing threats, the stronger a community's constitution, the more extremism they can ward off. As Ann-Marie

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<sup>167</sup> Rachel Briggs and Ross Frenett, "Policy Briefing: Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives," Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2014, 13.

Slaughter, the former Public Policy Director for the U.S. State Department noted, “power in today’s world derives from connectivity. The ability to engage others, in pursuit of common objectives, is now a potent means to achieve American national interests.”<sup>168</sup> While the point from Slaughter is to create connections overseas, it is imperative that individuals make strong bonds and connections among communities first, at home. This concept of the importance of connection and community must be taken as a way forward for the American people.

Communities grow when its people and neighborhoods work hard to take care of their homes and each other. Americans have understood this concept, but reminding them of the importance of communities is in order. In today’s globalized world, and thanks to the effects of social media, Americans have forgotten about their neighbors and the communities in which they live. Americans must remember their neighbors and communities first, in an effort to understand individuals better before looking to the globalized world for an interpretation of personal needs.

In reference to the UK lessons learned where “it takes a village,” this viewpoint also rings true in this situation. The Australians have created programs that build communities and their connections to deter violent extremism. Americans can replicate these measures as well. Coming back to neighbors, the connections of small communities, and those living nearby will go a long way in deterring violent extremism in the long run. Creating positive connections thus enables individuals to look out for one another, which leads to building a team spirit among communities. This team concept enables building resilient communities.

In addition to building a positive cohesiveness, Australians take their program a step further by messaging that inclusiveness, acceptance, and tolerance for one another are important in communities. Once more, it is evident that communicating positively is effective at deterring violent extremism.

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<sup>168</sup> Kristin Lord, “Public Engagement 101 What Strategic Communication Is, Isn’t, and Should Be,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 56 (1st Quarter 2010): 6–9.

## **J. COUNTER NARRATIVES OF ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE COULD HELP DETER VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AMERICA**

Australia does a great job of effectively train and communicate messages to individuals the importance of accepting one another and tolerating others' beliefs and opinions. By integrating new approaches of acceptance and tolerance in counter-narrative strategies could help deter violent extremism in America. To this end, stronger opinions, messages, and taglines of acceptance and tolerance are needed. Terrorist group messages that narrate fear and exclusion, much like what ISIS does and what Al Qaeda perfected, place a wedge between individuals and communities.

By working with leaders of all stripes throughout communities across America, communities can create stronger voices willing to rise up and denounce hatred and exclusion. Communities need to take it upon themselves to encourage those with strong, moderate voices to help spread the word of tolerance, resilience, cooperation, and acceptance. These types of messages need to be heard so that individuals can diminish the noise of negativity and the call to terrorism.

It is healthy to share opinions and ideas in communities in America. It is what makes individual Americans stronger, resilient, and enduring than others in different nations. By extension, those opinions and ideas have become somewhat inflammatory and allow individuals to exclude others due to their biases, judgments, and assumptions to point out the flaws of others.

Leaders of all types in a community include mayors, religious leaders, civic leaders, congressmen, influential business owners, and several others should begin the conversations that include accepting and tolerating those with whom others may disagree to include showing respect for individuals even when disagreeing with them. It also includes having integrity when speaking with others, being honest, open, and caring towards individuals.

Acceptance of others and their beliefs is what this country was founded upon. By strengthening these ideals and speaking about inclusion, openness, and acceptance, it is possible to encourage responsible individuals and communities.

Individuals seek extremist groups because others have “done them wrong,” they have been made to feel weak, and they have been made to feel useless, powerless, and stupid. By distributing messages about the importance of tolerance, acceptance, and resilience, individuals can fight violent extremism in America by strengthening the communities in which they live.

The Australians have focused efforts on tolerance and acceptance, and by extension, forgiveness. By tolerating or accepting the wrongs or mistakes of others, communities can move forward towards growth and positivity. To that end, Australian policymakers have offered opportunities to rehabilitate and change the lives of former violent extremists.

## **K. REHABILITATION**

Aside from Australia, other countries offer rehabilitation programs for former violent extremists as well. These types of programs offer hope for many individuals and communities. In this case study, Australia offers possibilities of “work in a pre-criminal space and allow[s] those vulnerable to recruitment or indeed those who have dabbled in violent extremist activity to exit, to be reformed and helped along a different path.”<sup>169</sup> Australia demonstrates that those who were violent extremists made mistakes and should be offered an opportunity to step away from their past and to try to become a better person, under the careful eye of government officials.

In America, as Jessica Stern stated, “one of our goals must be to make the terrorists’ [rehabilitation]... seem less urgent: to demonstrate that humanity that binds us, rather than allow our adversaries to emphasize and exploit our differences to provide a seemingly clear (but false) identity, at the expense of peace.”<sup>170</sup> By offering former violent extremists a new chance at life and opportunity, it is possible to deemphasize the importance of violent extremists in this world and deter terrorists more easily.

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<sup>169</sup> Georgia Holmer and Fulco van Deventer, “Inclusive Approaches to Community Policing and CVE,” United States Institute of Peace, September 2014, 6.

<sup>170</sup> Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, 280.

Rehabilitating violent extremists offers forgiveness for past wrongs and hurt. Individuals can live healthy, vibrant lives when they have a chance to change their evil ways or by offering their apologies for having made mistakes. Many individuals across societies have made mistakes; some are worse than others. Offering forgiveness to others for their mistakes will help create more inclusive and positive societies.

#### **L. EXPAND TRAINING FOR CITIZENS**

Perhaps, the first step in deterring violent extremism in America should come from the Australians sense of training citizens, educators, and others what violent extremism is and how to avoid it. The training provides tools and concepts to fend off violent extremism, thus providing individuals with an awareness and resilience against this behavior. This training includes understanding what terrorism is, what tactics individuals use as they become radicalized, who individuals can reach out to for help, and offers the tools for building confidence, strength, and resilience in the face of adversity. These deterrence methods afford individuals a certain confidence to overcome potential recruitment into violent extremism.

Currently, American government members provide the CAB to select communities, but if greatly expanded, it could be far more effective at deterring violent extremism. Even just offering awareness training could be effective at helping individuals know what terrorism is, what extremist behaviors look like, and how to protect themselves and communities from falling prey to violent extremism. Oftentimes, individuals just do not know or understand what the problem is, what extremism looks and sounds like. Expanding training for citizens, educators, and others who live and work in communities could provide useful knowledge to deter violent extremism.

Training and discussions for understanding the human psyche include providing opportunities for individuals to speak with psychologists, therapists, and the like in an effort to examine extremist thoughts, ideas, or beliefs. Or, these opportunities may just offer individuals a chance to communicate with someone if they are upset, scared, fearful, or hurting. These efforts will help individuals who may find refuge in a violent extremist organization a chance to just speak about what is bothering them.

Good policy proposals to deter violent extremism in America include:

- recognize human vulnerabilities to overcome CVE
- build community cohesion
- counter narratives are imperative to CVE
- rehabilitate for violent extremists
- expand training for citizens

Australia offers the United States some helpful programs that could be useful to deter violent extremism. Namely, promoting the benefits of community cohesion and personal resilience as enablers to fend violent extremism can go a long way in deterring terrorism in the United States. Additionally, offering awareness training and providing tools for teachers and school administrators could help in providing early intervention for some of the youth in America. Offering incentives to rehabilitate, educate, and influence extremists from violence and to provide alternative options, or offer mercy in an attempt to change their ways, may guide others to lasting positive change as well.

## **M. OVERCOMING THE ISSUE OF THE INTERNET**

As described in previous chapters, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States experience issues with radicalization over the internet because “[t]he Internet affords individuals the ability to marinate themselves in the violent jihadi-ideology in the early stages of radicalization, and it can be used to facilitate targeting and operational planning in the later stages.”<sup>171</sup> These opportunities make it difficult to target the multiple uses and varieties of platforms on the internet that extremists use to recruit and radicalize individuals.

As of 2011:

[Anwar al] Awlaki ha[d] a tremendous following worldwide, and, more than anyone else, he appears to have capitalized on the capabilities of [the web], which he is effectively using for both messaging and recruiting. Awlaki’s videos are easily accessible in both private jihadi forums, but a

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<sup>171</sup> William Sweeney, “CTRL+ALT+DELETE: Understanding the Need to Interrupt the Jihadi Internet” (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, September 2011), 3.



bigger concern is that the videos have proliferated onto other more readily accessible [web] platforms, such as YouTube, LiveLeak, and Facebook to name a few.<sup>172</sup>

These platforms provide an outstanding avenue into the hearts and minds of young Muslim teens (mainly male) who are disenchanted because of racism, no jobs or opportunities, language difficulties, or problems at home. What is not seen are “bands” of disenchanted, radicalized Muslims.

To deter violent extremism online, which is quite different than in the “real world,” the U.S. government must create a proactive counter-violent extremist approach embedded with and consistent with any other national strategy. It is not about creating a secondary strategy to deter violent extremism in America online. It is about one deterrence strategy used across multiple channels.

Any agency that works to deter violent extremism in America will play a role in countering radicalization online. Each has its own platforms and forums that that will continue to be monitored. The strategies to deter violent extremists will consist of the promotion of counter messaging, sharing messages related to positive ways of life, and offering ways and incentives to create healthy, vibrant communities. The messages of influence will encourage and enable individuals to speak up and use their voice to counter violent extremism across America. To encourage individuals with religious backgrounds, non-governmental organizations, and communities of interest, these messages and influence tactics will be open to many stakeholders for use. Lessons learned and best practices will be shared freely and openly. American government leaders must learn to trust those who support deterrence and counter violent extremism activities, and should encourage self-regulation to occur online. Obviously, law enforcement and intelligence agencies will continue to monitor and defend against extremist behavior, but this approach should remain inclusive of individuals who want to play a role to deter violent extremism and have the platform available to do so.

Luckily, “there are a plethora of tools that can be used to highlight and promote counter-narrative content that can be tailored to target individuals. Those who are

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<sup>172</sup> Sweeney, “CTRL+ALT+DELETE: Understanding the Need to Interrupt the Jihadi Internet,” 15.

searching for and accessing extremist content, including Google, YouTube and Facebook ads, and targeted ads on gaming platforms.”<sup>173</sup> Once it is better understood which platforms are the most successful at recruiting and radicalizing individuals, we can it is then possible to use effective messaging to help deter violent extremism. “The most compelling propaganda by those encouraging others to fight shares a number key attributes: It tends to use video rather than text, takes full advantage of the linguistic skills of members (sometimes even translating suras used to European languages), makes good use of music and resonates with western youth culture.”<sup>174</sup>

As referred to in the Australian case study, governments can do more to deradicalize on the internet. Providing consistent, effective, credible messages to counter violent extremism everywhere, including the internet, would deter and influence individuals equally and effectively; a great place to start.

The creation of an integrated approach to countering terrorism across many platforms on all types of media must be improved in America. A clear, concise, easy, consistent messaging plan against violent extremism in America must exist. America needs an overall communications strategy as part of the counterterrorism strategy, which addresses national concerns that states and communities across this country can utilize for local approaches to the problem. The messaging should be credible, consistent, and shared throughout information platforms including print, television, and cyber.

“One of the areas where governments can make the greatest contribution is in helping to build capacity among credible messengers, such a former foreign fighters, the victims of violent extremism, those from conflict zones or individuals with influence over at risk youth, including young people themselves.”<sup>175</sup> It is one concept to communicate effectively and well; however, a critical component is through credible messages and messengers. As Roslyn Richardson states in the *Fighting Fire with Fire: Target Audience Responses to Online Anti-Violence Campaign*, “governments aren’t the best source to

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<sup>173</sup> Briggs and Frenett, “Policy Briefing: Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives,” 13.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 14.

offer compelling counter-narratives, but they can help build the online capacity of influential voices in the most affected communities.”<sup>176</sup> Whatever approach is taken to counter violent extremism online must be consistent across the board. It should communicate messages using individuals who are credible, helpful, and effective. Certainly, fighting violent extremism has its issues and many challenges.

Moving beyond their original assumptions that violent extremism could be deterred through the use of security enhancements and intelligence capabilities, Australia is well poised to change the influencing behaviors of violent extremists, for good. Those well trained in detecting radicalization could be prepared to assist in the deradicalization of individuals. Offering the same training to community leaders and social workers that is offered to teachers and school administrators could be beneficial. By offering individuals a way out, through influence and deterrence measures, away from violent extremist behavior, can help communities become stronger, better, and more connected over time. However, “responsibility for intervention programs should rest with governments and not just Muslim community groups or religious leaders. For these programs to have any chance of working, [the Australian community] must also acknowledge that cultural and religious diversity are integral parts of [the] national identity.”<sup>177</sup>

When it comes to deterring radicalization and violent extremism from online resources, it can be a difficult and challenging strategy to overcome. Similar to the United Kingdom and the United States, Australian citizens are prone to the harmful effects of online radicalization. “Australians have featured consistently in ISIL’s regular stream of online videos over the past year and used strategically to attract further Western recruit.”<sup>178</sup> “Direct conversations with frontline fighters in Syria and Iraq, recruiters and facilitators are a keystroke away.”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Roslyn Richardson, *Fighting Fire with Fire: Target Audience Responses to Online Anti-Violence Campaign* (Barton: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2013), 60, [https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/fighting-fire-with-fire-target-audience-responses-to-online-anti-violence-campaigns/Fight\\_fire\\_long\\_paper\\_web.pdf](https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/fighting-fire-with-fire-target-audience-responses-to-online-anti-violence-campaigns/Fight_fire_long_paper_web.pdf).

<sup>177</sup> Clarke Jones, “Terrorists Can Be Turned around—Here’s How,” *Australian ABC News*, October 7, 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-08/jones-terrorists-can-be-turned-around/5796544>.

<sup>178</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 15.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

“Most of those who have become radicalised have had some vulnerability in their lives that made them receptive to extremist ideology. For most, radicalisation tends to take a long time, yet there’s potential for more rapid radicalisation with the level of propaganda that’s now available online.”<sup>180</sup> Too many cases today illustrate “how the internet can become a valuable tool to re-enforce beliefs and assumptions without peer challenge to those ideas.”<sup>181</sup>

Messaging and providing counter narratives to violent extremism should be accessible for deterrence strategies online too. “This approach should be complemented by face-to-face engagement, a process of trust building, recognition of the importance of selecting the right language to describe the problem, and an understanding of the significant differences of attitude that exist within the Muslim community.”<sup>182</sup> Both the credibility from the government and Muslim communities would grow as they work together to counter violent extremism messaging. More follow up should be planned alongside community discussions so that as many people as possible can work as one community to counter radicalization. However, counter radicalization and moderate Muslim voices online are key to fighting the violent extremism that so many countries face.

## **N. CHALLENGES**

These recommendations thus far may be considered difficult or too soft. Currently, however, counter violent extremism strategies in America are lacking effective approaches since previous programs have been too heavy-handed and harsh, namely due to law enforcement and arrest procedures.

Programs to counter violent extremism in the United States must always abide by and follow the tenets of the U.S. Constitution. By doing so, the United States will improve its credibility, and possibly, eliminate one reason for a person to become disillusioned with the systems currently in place. Creating messages that fall within U.S.

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<sup>180</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 18.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 55.

constitutional limits while also being effective and credible is the greatest challenge ‘being faced in America.

Identifying and adapting effective messaging is challenging because no set way of measuring how effectively a certain approach is conveying a message currently exists. Tracking the effectiveness of CVE activities is quite difficult. Mostly, “these challenges are partly due to the fact that CVE is a relatively recent policy objective.”<sup>183</sup> One way to overcome this issue is by government use of “online analytical tools and polling data to understand which extremist narratives have the greatest impact to better inform their own counter-narrative campaigns.”<sup>184</sup> The key to overcoming the lack of awareness of counter-violent extremism programs is through understanding what works and what does not.

Of key concern is that:

The success of radicalization prevention is even more challenging to evaluate because it requires planners to prove a negative: the number of individuals who did not become terrorists because of the program. Governments have attempted to set clear metrics to empirically verify the effectiveness of their actions, ranging from simple quantitative analyses of program participation to more complex indexes seeking to determine the level of community engagement.<sup>185</sup>

Conflicting goals play a role in countering violent extremism as well. Agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), may have a desire to build a case against a potential extremist and see where the trail leads while other groups or agencies, such as human rights organizations or community groups, may have the goal of intervening early in the process to prevent the radicalization in the first place. “This is particularly a problem because U.S. law enforcement has no incentives to stop young kids from ruining their lives and every incentive to build cases against them or to recruit

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<sup>183</sup> Caitlin Mastroe and Susan Szmania, *Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement and DeRadicalization Programs* (College Park, MD: START, 2016), 2.

<sup>184</sup> Briggs and Frenett, “Policy Briefing: Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives,” 15.

<sup>185</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, *Countering Radicalization in America: Lessons from Europe* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2010), 10.

them to build cases against their friends.”<sup>186</sup> A difference of opinions at federal government levels can hinder cases where simple intervention and deterrence measures may be more effective. The opinions of the DHS versus the FBI versus the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement may have other viewpoints. Additionally, it creates less animosity when law enforcement does not have to get involved, as seen in the case study of the United Kingdom.

Enabling effective CVE programs in America to date have included too many policymakers with too many opinions; it has been quite challenging.

So far, too many working groups and federal agencies have pointed to each other as the lead for deterring violent extremism in America. That needs to stop. Someone must take the reins and be the lead to combat violent extremism. It has been too long having no chiefs to lead CVE efforts; the focus has been lost with too many irons in the fire.

Great challenges can be overcome with great efforts. This thesis has shared the gravity of the situation to deter violent extremism in America to a great extent. The challenges in America to deter violent extremism can be overcome, with hard work and by better coordinating efforts. Implementing these strategy concepts is the key to creating great change to deter violent extremism in America.

## **O. IMPLEMENTATION**

Challenges affect how these policy proposals can be implemented in the United States. Implementation can occur on any level in America; some programs, when implemented at the local level, can have the greatest effect for positive change.

It would benefit Americans to have one “CVE Czar” focused and acting as a repository for CVE knowledge, who has an understanding, as well as the capability to move CVE programs forward. This CVE Czar would answer directly to the President of the United States on all CVE matters and likely work from or near the DHS. This CVE Czar would likely come from the DHS, the Department of State, or even better, would be a former Public Affairs or influence operations officer from the military or state agency.

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<sup>186</sup> McCants and Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism,” 3.

Since many of these proposals contained within this thesis offer more soft power strategies, someone with experience in influence operations and public affairs tactics may be best for the CVE Czar. This thesis does not advocate for the creation of any new type of federal agency or more umbrella organizations, under the CVE Czar. This thesis does advocate for an update to current agencies and structures.

The United States could manage a similar UK OSCT-like structure at the federal level, which would act as the “main hub” for all counterterrorism strategies for the federal government. Creating an extension of the NCTC or the DHS, which would house this CVE strategy and its components, would enable a top-down approach to reach into states and municipalities for action.

Next, many states regions around the country have fusion centers, which are information-sharing centers for intelligence and law enforcement agencies. These agencies could be reconfigured in a UK RICU-like state to enable the CVE Czar to work policies and procedures down from the federal level into states and territories. These RICU-like units would answer to the governor, in a similar fashion that already exists for fusion centers.

Then, a “whole of community” committee would fall under the RICU structure to enable and encourage cities, towns, and communities to buy into policies and strategies to deter violent extremism at the local level. These city-based whole of community committees would consist of local police department members, the mayor, community leaders, social workers, supervisors or schools, religious leaders, and more members who have a stake in deterring violent extremism in communities across the country.

Current working groups that come from various sections of the U.S. government have not been effective. No one person has been labeled a leader to deter violent extremism in America. That situation needs to change. By anointing someone as the head to combat violent extremism in America, it is then possible to remove the groupthink mentality that has been stagnant concerning CVE efforts thus far. A CVE Czar could initiate and administer this top-down approach, while encouraging bottom-up information in return. Additionally, information, best practices, and lessons learned could

be sent up the chain of command to the CVE Czar, who in turn, could share the information back out to the OSCT-like structure, to the fusion center/RICU-like structure, and into the whole of community committees for action.

The human psychology, vulnerabilities, and conditions to persuade individuals to do something can be extremely difficult to achieve.

Counterradicalization programs are an immensely complex and controversial subject. They touch on extremely sensitive issues, such as religion, identity, and integration. They can be highly intrusive, impinge on civil liberties, and risk further alienating the very group they seek to reach. Despite these enormous difficulties, a preventative approach and a deradicalization effort are necessary components of a comprehensive counterterrorism policy.<sup>187</sup>

The CVE Czar would be tasked with encouraging and inviting leaders in religious groups, communities, and schools to create a dialogue around what conditions and vulnerabilities Americans must overcome to deter violent extremism. For example, “when a mosque and synagogue conduct an interfaith event, it should not be framed as a counterradicalization issue, it should simply focus on building interfaith relationships because that is the ‘right thing to do.’”<sup>188</sup> Merely bringing together groups of various types, faiths, and ideas can have a profoundly positive effect on a community. Overtime, strategies to deter violent extremism will continue to grow. These best practices and lessons learned would provide the basis for a stronger national approach to counter violent extremism in America.

Coordinating training and shared opportunities in communities can make implementation procedures easy and smooth. For example, “the Islamic Council is seeking advice from psychologists, sociologists and computer experts on how to develop the training program, with workshops, and possibly interactive educational apps for smartphones, that would be implemented at mosques throughout New England, and eventually nationwide.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Vidino, *Countering Radicalization in America: Lessons from Europe*, 10.

<sup>188</sup> Todd Helmus, Erin York, and Peter Chalk, *Promoting Online Voices for Countering Violent Extremism* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013), 8.

<sup>189</sup> Murphy, “Federal Initiative in Boston Aims to Counter Extremism,” 3.



Other types of potential implementation methods include building “partnerships between the federal government and local law enforcement, educational and community groups that are better positioned to detect potential militants in their own midst and to derail those young men and women from the path of radicalization before they turn violent.”<sup>190</sup> Implementation of these policies and strategies can occur in a variety of ways. Many of them can take place in small communities, as grass-roots efforts, and grow from there into cities, states, and regionally. As long as methods are effective, credible, and meaningful for communities, the implementation methods should be simple.

At the federal level, the “CVE Czar” referred to earlier would be better positioned to implement roles and responsibilities for interested individuals working to counter violent extremism. These interested individuals include stakeholders from the federal government, states, and local communities. The CVE Czar as the leader would be more effective in deterring violent extremism from the federal level, with efforts, ideas, concepts, and plans trickling down into states and local communities. Or even from the bottom up, to one point person who can further share lessons learned, best practices, and effective methods.

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<sup>190</sup> Schmitt, “U.S. Trying to Counter ISIS’ Efforts to Lure Alienated Young Muslims.”

## VI. CONCLUSION/EPILOGUE

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Too many shocking terrorist attacks have occurred on U.S. soil in the last 17 years. The impetus for this thesis was the Boston Marathon bombing of April 2013. Americans cannot sit by and watch while more terrorist attacks occur within U.S. borders. The American government and communities have more tools in their arsenal to deter violent extremism than ever before. The “military, police, and intelligence measures still dominate among practitioners countering the immediate needs which stem from violent extremism, but prevention is equally necessary, and governments across the world are looking for ways to prevent violent extremism and its predecessor, radicalization.”<sup>191</sup> This thesis sought to understand what other countries, namely the United Kingdom and Australia, are doing to deter violent extremism in their borders.

While countries in this study experience challenges in difficulties in fighting terrorism and violent extremism, hope also remains. Australia is working hard to overcome the terrorist ideologies that threaten its country and way of life. “There may be many within our communities able to develop potent counter-narratives to ISIL and other extremist groups, but don’t have the capacity to promote that message to a wider audience. Governments and the private sector can assist in providing the skills needed for natural community influencers to emerge.”<sup>192</sup>

By effectively messaging, the U.S. government and individuals can be more influential and effective in deterring violent extremism within this nation’s borders. “Research has shown that the three vital factors in successfully reaching target audiences

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<sup>191</sup> Candace Karp, “You Can’t Fight What You Don’t Understand,” United States Institute of Peace, June 2, 2015, 2.

<sup>192</sup> Bergin et al., “Gen Y Jihadists,” 21.

through counterspeech are the message, the messaging, and the messenger.”<sup>193</sup> Americans, government officials and individuals, must do more to message and communicate correctly with adversaries who seek to harm Americans.

American government lawmakers can take U.S. policies of diversity, tolerance, and acceptance farther in America. A strong, cohesive national CVE strategy is seriously lacking. “In both North America and in Europe, more constructive policies must be developed to manage diversity. There are serious flaws in the current policies, both of the assimilation and multiculturalism varieties.”<sup>194</sup> It is now extremely necessary to build strong and resilient people and communities. By understanding the differences between individuals, American communities can grow better with healthy policies that encourage individuals to look after each other, care, and serve one another.

It is imperative to enable messaging strategies to encourage CVE “to recalibrate the message, the messenger, medium and method by which they counter extremism.”<sup>195</sup> American current policies and practices need to be completely overhauled to speak credibly and effectively to deter violent extremism. “Ultimately, terrorism is a moral problem with psychological underpinnings; the challenge is to prevent disaffected youth and others from becoming engaged in the morality of terrorist organizations.”<sup>196</sup> It should not be an about “us versus you” or “bad versus right” scenario, but about human beings and how individuals can live together in this world.

Further research is needed to understand how to implement counter narrative messages into the school system and throughout communities, the role of the media and other individuals who have a role to play in deterring violent extremism, and the

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<sup>193</sup> Saltman and Russell, *White Paper: The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism*, 8.

<sup>194</sup> Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Violent Islamist Extremism in Global Context.*” *Testimony to U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs* (2008), 9.

<sup>195</sup> Clint Watts, “The White House CVE Summit: What Should We Expect? More of the Same or a New Direction to Counter ISIS,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, February 2015, 3.

<sup>196</sup> Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration,” 168.

“psychological processes influencing behavior [which] are subjective interpretations of material conditions, perceptions of fairness, and adequacy of identity.”<sup>197</sup>

This thesis explained what challenges the United States is experiencing when countering terrorism in its borders. By attempting to learn and study what other countries are doing to stem the growing tide of violent extremism in the United Kingdom and Australia, this thesis has proposed possibilities for the future of American policies to deter violent extremism under this nation’s authority.

Now, American policymakers must “pursu[e] a more sustainable approach that prioritizes targeted counterterrorism operations, collective action with responsible partners, and increased efforts to prevent the growth of violent extremism and radicalization that drives increased threats.”<sup>198</sup> Now is the time to match words and deeds. All Americans must help this country strive to “become the strongest competitor and the most influential player in a deeply inter-connected global system, which requires that we invest less in defense and more in sustainable prosperity and the tools of effective global engagement.”<sup>199</sup> All Americans must match words with actions and eliminate the ambiguity that brought this country to this point. It is time all Americans communicate what they mean, build strong communities, and help those who have done wrong with forgiveness. This is a call to America; the time for action is now.

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<sup>197</sup> Moghaddam, *Violent Islamist Extremism in Global Context.*” *Testimony to U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*, 3.

<sup>198</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 9.

<sup>199</sup> Mr. Y, *National Strategic Narrative*, 2.

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