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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

"Combating Homegrown Terrorism"

Written testimony by Raheel Raza – July 27, 2017

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

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

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

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

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

These are as follows:

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

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

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

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

Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Countering Violent Extremism Programs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tactic for Islamist groups.

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

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

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

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

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

We have three objections to such a shift.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naming the problem

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Understanding the Muslim Brotherhood Agenda

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

terrorism."[27]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remove Radicalization From American Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[38] https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html

[39] https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-qa-is-saudi-arabia-funding-isis

[40] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-saudi-terrorist-funding

[41] http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/saudi-arabia-terrorism-funding-214241

[42] http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-wenar-saudi-arms-deal-20170522-story.html

[43] http://bridge.georgetown.edu/

[44] http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=1402008

[45] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/omer-aziz/wahhabism-saudi-arabia-an_b_8131838.html

[46] https://clarionproject.org/omer-aziz-why-i-am-offended-saudi-arabias-funding-yale/

[47] https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Saudi%20Publications%20on%20Hate%20Ideology%20Invade%20American%20Mosques.pdf

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Include the Voices of Moderate Muslims

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

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

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

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

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

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

when addressing this issue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Identify Potential Strategic Improvements

To conclude, we have four key policy proposals.

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

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[67]https://www.cair.com/government-affairs/11869-drone-wars-the-constitutional-and-counterterrorism-implications-of-targeted-killing.html

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

[69]https://aclum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/cve-flyer.pdf

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

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