STEMMING THE TIDE:

EVALUATING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO COUNTER

THE RADICALIZATION OF BRITISH MUSLIM YOUTH

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Domestic terrorism is increasingly becoming a top security priority for many Western countries. Over the last decade, Britain has seen more than a dozen terrorists come from within their own population due, in part, to the lax stance taken toward asylum seekers in the 1990s. Presently, British security forces estimate over 4,000 dangerous radical Muslims alone. Studies show that violent extremist organizations have begun actively recruiting Muslim youths and a majority of British Muslim terrorists are under 25. As a result of the 7/7 bombings in London, the British government has launched a new mission not just to stop terrorists, but also to prevent people from becoming terrorists. This new program is the first of its kind and, as such, has gone through many changes and reformulations, though it remains without meaningful metrics. This report finds that the British Prevent program was successful in encouraging the formation of several non-profit organizations with counter radicalization as a mission. Many of these organizations are only able to operate with funding provided through the government program, but are unable to retain credibility with at-risk youths. American officials should carefully examine the mixed success of this program when formulating a US counter radicalization program. This report concludes with policy recommendations for the US, as well as projections regarding future success or failure in Britain.

Chapter 1

HOW TO PROCEED

On February 21st, 2010, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced, "Americans who turn to terrorism and plot against the U.S. are now as big a concern as international terrorists."[1] In this statement, she acknowledged a shift from international extremism to US citizens who became radicalized and plot attacks against their own country. Though Americans are just beginning to focus on this problem, across the Atlantic, the British have been grappling with domestic radicalization for much longer.

The British government has been striving to understand and counter domestic radicalization since it gained the notoriety of being the third Western nation to be attacked by Islamic extremists and the first to be attacked by a group comprised entirely of their own nationals on July 7th, 2005. In addition, Britain has also seen several of its citizens plot and carry out terrorist attacks against foreign targets as well. Despite the fact that Islamic radicalization has been festering within their borders since the early 1990s, the British government did nothing to enhance their anti-terrorism security laws until after

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[1] Associated Press. "Napolitano: Domestic Extremism Top Concern." *MSNBC*.

9/11, and only introduced their Prevent program designed to counter extremists and promote community cohesion in 2005. Working ahead of the government, many private citizens have created foundations with similar missions and have remained independent despite substantial government grants available.

Whenever terrorism, extremism, and radicalization are discussed, it is necessary to define what is meant by these terms, as they are labels applied from a single perspective. The old axiom "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" is practically guaranteed to be mentioned, and rightly so. Readers would do well to remember that the British might have labeled future US Presidents John Adams and George Washington as terrorists for their use of irregular warfare during the American Revolution. As well, there are people who view the perpetrators of the 7/7 bombings as freedom fighters protecting the Muslim world. The international community has long struggled to define terrorism, and though past UN secretary general Kofi Anan pushed for a consensus in July of 2005[2], the UN was still unable to come up with a satisfactory decision.[3] These difficulties arise because "terrorism" is largely a

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22 Feb. 2010. www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35520031/ns/us_news-security

[2] Deen, Thalif. "U.N. Member States Struggle to Define Terrorism - IPS Ipsnews.net." IPS.com. Inter Press Service, 25 July 2005. Web. 30 Feb. 2010. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=29633>.

[3] UN General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, 13th session report, June 30, 2009

pejorative word with negative connotations, removing any rationale for their action and dehumanizing the perpetrators. In addition, we must also differentiate between the persecution by a state of its own citizens, such as was seen with Stalin, Pol Pot, Hitler, and Saddam, and the violence perpetrated against civilians by non-state actors. Even though the targets chosen by these violent Islamist extremists may have symbolism or deeper meaning, it is very distinct from state terrorism. The Kurdish population in Iraq and the Jewish population in Nazi Germany knew that they were specifically being targeted and by whom. The largely faceless threat of Islamist terrorism, on the other hand, is not as predictable, giving a deeper sense of vulnerability to these apparently random attacks. As such, the definition of terrorism most fitting for the cases discussed in this thesis is the apparently random violence used against non-combatants to instill fear for political ends.

Trying to define what constitutes Islamic extremism is equally difficult. Since it is unclear who, if anyone, can speak on behalf of Muslims in any country, it is equally unclear where to place any particular belief on a continuum. One can even make the case that there are extremists on both ends of any such continuum. The highly respected polling institution Gallup also faced this problem when conducting its six-year study of Muslims around the world. It decided to define extremism as both a negative view of the US and considering the 9/11 attacks as completely justified, while those who did not believe the 9/11 attacks were completely justified were termed moderates.

The extremist group comprised roughly 7% of the sample.[4] Though this may be an extremely narrow definition of extremism and indeed only include the most extreme and radical, the results are interesting.   In particular, Gallup found that there was little difference between moderates and extremists in the frequency of religious service attendance and the role of religion in their lives, largely debunking the notion that violence is inherent to Islam.[5] Extremists also tended to be slightly more educated and affluent than moderates, suggesting that it is not a symptom of ignorance or poverty.[6] This observation seems to be supported by the backgrounds of many domestic terrorists who are both university educated and middle class.

Threats to Western nation-states, however, come from a greater variety of targets than just the small number of extremists who believe that 9/11 was justified. Some authors such as Daniel Pipes of the US, Geert Wilders and Ayaan Hirsi Ali of the Netherlands, and others view even non-violent Islamic extremism as a threat to the soul of the Western nation-state. Chiefly, this refers to the values and principles of liberalism as a ruling ideology. Thus, the Western nation-state is also under attack from competing ideologies, not least of which is political Islam also called Islamism.

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[4] Mogahed, Dalia. "The Battle for hearts and Minds: Moderate and Extremist Views in the Muslim World." Gallup World Poll, Washington, D.C., 2006. Pg. 1

[5] *ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.* 2

It is this support for shari'ah, or Islamic law, and an Islamic state either in the Middle East, the West, or globally that characterizes the extremist threat to countries such as the US and UK. Several distinctions are relevant to this conversation: non-violent extremists who support an Islamic state elsewhere and in theory, those who support it in practice whether it is regional or global, and extremists who justify violence in the pursuit of an Islamic state. Indeed, it is the foundation of an Islamic State that drives Osama bin Laden, and by extension Al-Qaeda to terrorism.[7, 8] As such, it may be more useful to divide extremists into non-violent and violent extremists – two distinct groups agreeing to some extent on the end, but disagreeing on the means.

Simply put, "radicalization" is the process by which one becomes an extremist and its opposite, "counter radicalization" is the active attempt to disrupt that process. The current debate centers on where along this process one should intervene. A major point of contention comes in determining whether the Prevent program should be working toward social cohesion, and thus working against all forms of extremism, or countering terrorism, in which case extremist organizations can be valuable partners. The Active Change

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[7] Khalil, Lydia. "Bin Laden's Call to Unite Exposes Al-Qaeda's Strategic Blunders." Terrorism Focus, Volume: 4 Issue: 35

[8] Gerges, Fawaz. "Eavesdropping on Osama Bin Laden." *Ciaonet.org.* Columbia International Affairs Online. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. www.ciaonet.org/cbr/cbr00/video/cbr_v/cbr_v_2b.html

Foundation, for instance, is an extremist organization working with youths who are on the brink of accepting violence and trying to bring them down from the edge.

Not all non-violent extremist organizations work toward nonviolent means, and some groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and the recently banned Islam4UK, have been accused of only rejecting violence superficially.[9] Dr. Peter Neumann of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization is quoted as calling these types of non-violent extremist groups as conveyor belts toward violence, a version of the slippery slope argument.[10] From here, the debate touches upon civil liberties and freedom of speech. Whether or not the extremist position can be protected as political dissent is another popular question, and invites comparisons to the rejection of Communism during the Cold War.

A debate of note is also happening in regards to what qualifies an individual as a "homegrown" terrorist or extremist. For instance, would Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Christmas Day bomber, be considered a

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[9] International Crisis Group. "Radical Islam in Central Asia." *Crisisgroup.org*. International Crisis Group, 30 June 2003. Web. 12 Mar. 2010. www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1441&l=1

[10] Shirbon, Estelle, and Keith Weir. "Britain Bans Islamist Group at Centre of March Row | Reuters." *Reuters.com*. Reuters, 12 Jan. 2010. Web. 13 Jan. 2010. www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE60B1SE20100112

homegrown terrorist? He was born in Nigeria and started to show signs of

radicalization in Yemen before stepping foot in Britain, but was introduced to

extremist preachers such as American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki while studying

in London. While his time in London certainly contributed to his adoption of

violent extremism, this alone should not qualify him as homegrown either in

Nigeria or Britain. Indeed, there is a wide gulf separating Abdulmutallab from

people such as the 7/7 bombers. There are many examples of a person or

organization attacking a foreign nation. The phenomenon of natural-born

citizens forsaking their national identity for an ideological one and furthermore

attacking their own country, on the other hand, is relatively new, separating

Abdulmutallab from the people discussed in this paper. Anwar al-Awlaki does

express anti-American sentiment, however, and was born in New Mexico but

was radicalized while in Afghanistan in the early 1990s and then further in

Yemen after 9/11. Can he be considered a homegrown extremist? Since he

was not radicalized in America -there is little evidence to suggest he sought

out al-Qaeda during his early trip to Afghanistan - it seems that the case to

say he was homegrown is weak. Therefore, one can conclude that a

homegrown terrorist or extremist must be a citizen of the country they express

animosity towards as well as radicalized inside of that country.

This paper aims to elucidate the situation today and how it evolved.

First, it will adumbrate the story of the development of a Muslim Diaspora in

the United Kingdom. Tracing the immigration and integration of

Commonwealth citizens from India, Southeast Asia, and the East Indies from the Post-World War II era to the modern day, it will examine how immigration became politicized in the UK and eventually led to the radicalization of British Muslims during the 1990s as well as the violence of the 2000s. The next chapter discusses the modern counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism efforts of the British government. Peter Neumann has described the Prevent program as being pieced together by trial and error and applied differently across localities. As such, the various iterations of this program will be examined with successes and failures being highlighted.

There is also a substantial counter-radicalization movement being conducted quite independently from the government. The following chapter will evaluate this movement in contrast to the government. Then, this paper will draw conclusions about the state of counter-radicalization in the UK as well as making predictions as to the possible future, considering the upcoming election in May that could see a change in hands. Finally, the concluding chapter will highlight important lessons learned from the last decade of British counter-radicalization and make recommendations as to how the nascent American programs should proceed.

Chapter 2

THE FORGING OF A MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

The story of Islamic extremism in Britain can be traced back to the roots of Imperialist expansion and the dissolution of colonial empire into the British Commonwealth. The incorporation of a significant population of Muslims into the British Commonwealth would set into motion a chain of events beginning with the post-World War II influx of Muslims to Britain.

With high demand for labor in Britain during the post-war reconstruction period, many people from within the Commonwealth immigrated searching for work. Though for some this was only to be a temporary period of their life, hoping later to return to their home countries with the money they made, many viewed it as a permanent change. This initial influx set the tone for the immigration policy debate in the UK for the rest of the century. Britain twice tried to reduce the number of immigrants on largely racial criteria, but simultaneously held that immigration was a non-issue for them, ignoring the metaphorical pot until the water boiled over.[11] It was not until the turmoil of the 1990s and the resultant flood of asylum seekers that arrived on British

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[11] Freeman, Gary P. "Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies: The French and British Experience, 1945-1975." Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ. 1979. Pgs. 43-45

soil, including the itinerant radical Imams and extremist preachers that government officials started to recognize the link between immigration and national security.

As opposed to the scarcity of work during the interwar period that caused much interracial and xenophobic violence,[12] the post-war period brought much more opportunity for young and enterprising immigrants.[13] The first major immigration to the UK from outside of Europe was in 1948 when a group of 400 black men from the West Indies sailed to London looking for work.[14] From there, the immigrant population originating in the Commonwealth - primarily the West Indies, India, and Pakistan - exploded. In 1950, the total number of non-European immigrants living in the UK numbered roughly 20,000;[15] as of 1961 it was 336,000, making the non-white percentage of the population which was previously 0.17% balloon fourfold to 0.73% in just over a decade.[16]

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[12] Lucassen, Leo. "The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850." University of Illinois Press. Chicago, IL. 2005. Pgs. 122-123

[13] *Ibid.,* 124-125

[14] Freeman, 45

[15] Lucassen, 125

[16] Freeman, 45

The main point of conflict thus transitioned from a loss of employment

to a loss of living space as much of the low-income districts had been

damaged or destroyed in the war.[17] This housing crunch thus sparked race

riots in London as well as the creation of several groups aiming to "keep

Britain white."[18] Though "nobody was killed and the damage was minor,"

these events altered the political debate over immigration and persuaded

politicians to pass an act restricting immigration from outside of Europe.[19]

The resultant Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 was to abolish

the free movement of peoples within the Commonwealth. Specifically, unless

a passport was issued under the authority of London, citizens from the

colonies and New Commonwealth would require a voucher from the Ministry

of Labor to immigrate.[20] Though these vouchers were theoretically linked to

labor qualifications, "Britain faced severe labor shortages and no means were

established to ensure that entering immigrants would match employers'

needs" and were ultimately about controlling the entry of non-white

immigrants.[21] This act was the first of its kind in Britain and went far to

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[17] Lucassen, 125.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Lucassen, 125-126

[20] *ibid.*

[21] Freeman, 52

specifically link immigration to race.[22] Further, it created a surge in

immigration by those attempting to "beat the ban" - in 1958 and 1959 there

were roughly 15,000 entries annually, compared to 50,000 in 1960, and

66,000 in 1961.[23]

Even after the legislation went into effect, immigration to the UK from

these areas continued by means of family reunification. An additional

130,000 Caribbean-born immigrants came under these auspices, practically

doubling the existing population.[24] 1965 saw the Labour Prime Minister call

for an additional restriction of immigration – 8,500 less vouchers, no unskilled

laborers, and tougher measures against illegal entry – using figures that

related more to political viability than to the actual labor needs of Britain.[25]

The justification for such measures was said to be to slow immigration to allow

sufficient time for the existing immigrants to integrate, but considering the lack

of integration policy implemented these motives are dubious.[26]

In 1967, the United Kingdom was faced with a new wave of

immigration. Due to the Africanization movement that sprang up in many

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[22] Freeman, 46

[23] Lucassen, 126

[24] *ibid.*

[25] Freeman, 54-55

[26] Freeman, 56

former British colonies in Africa, many Asians living in Kenya who had retained their UK passports decided to flee to Britain. Fearing another mass migration of Commonwealth citizens with UK passports, the government speedily passed yet more restrictions on immigration requiring a "substantial personal connection with the country" and limiting East African Asian immigration to just 1,500 people per year.[27] As a result, it became possible for the descendents of white colonists anywhere in the Commonwealth to travel without restriction while non-whites with spouses living in Britain had to face lengthy procedures to gain access. Doing away with all pretenses, this "was clearly unjust in its removal of rights of citizenship from an identifiable group of citizens purely on the basis of color".[28]

Thus was the context set for Enoch Powell's infamous speeches in 1968, railing against the inability of immigrants to integrate, the formation of ghettos, and the gradual ethnicization of England. Powell's speech, while generally recognized as morally unsound even by those who think it factually accurate[29], has become the rallying cry for anti-immigration groups to this very day. It was Powell's popularity and speeches that gradually pushed the Conservative Party closer to equalizing Commonwealth and alien immigration

[27] Freeman, 58

[28] Freeman, 59

[29] Caldwell, Christopher. "Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West." Doubleday. New York. 2009. Pg. 6

– a policy that was ultimately adopted even after Powell was removed from his own party.[30]

Gradually, immigration into the UK would nearly grind to a halt with the Immigration Act of 1971 that blocked entry for single men in tandem with the supplementary Immigration Rules of 1973. The concept of Patriality was introduced so that those with a parent or grandparent born within the UK would be able to enter freely, effectively excluding non-whites while not using overtly racial criteria.[31]   However, when the inevitable came to pass in the Africanization movement and President Idi Amin of Uganda delivered an ultimatum in 1972 that gave all Asians three months to leave his country[32], the Conservatives found themselves between a rock and a hard place. Politically unable to simply turn their collective backs on Commonwealth citizens, they were forced to accept yet another mass immigration of non-whites to their shores.   As such, some 28,000 Ugandan Asians arrived in Britain seeking

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[30] Freeman, 60-61

[31] *Ibid.*, 63

[32] BBC. "Asians given 90 Days to Leave Uganda." BBC News, 7 Aug. 1972. Web. 15 Mar. 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid_2492 000/2492333.stm

refuge, and though the Conservative Party assisted with their resettlement, "they were resolved that it should never happen again."[33]

After the Ugandan expulsion, motivation to immigrate to the UK increasingly began to stem from foreign conflict rather than new economic opportunity. Unable to legislate effectively to control floods of asylum seekers, this opened up a new front of Muslim immigration to Britain. The main ethnic group to thus come in the 1970s and 1980s originated from Bangladesh after "a series of political upheavals, starting with the end of British India in 1947, a spell as East Pakistan and a battle against West Pakistan for independence in 1971."[34] Though the conflict lasted less than a year, it was a very bloody affair with some estimates of up to three million Bangladeshi civilians killed.[35] Large numbers of Bangladeshis also fled the country during the war with eight to ten million fleeing to India alone.[36] Many Bangladeshis thus came to the UK in search of stability and prosperity.

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[33] Freeman, 67

[34] BBC. "Bangladeshi London." BBC News, 27 May 2005. Web. 25 Jan. 2010. www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/bangladeshi_london _feature.shtml

[35] Harff, Barbara, Ted Robert Gurr. "Toward an Empirical Theory of Genocides and Politicides." International Studies Quarterly 32. 1988. Pg. 359-373

[36] Rummel, R.J. "Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900." Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. 1997. Fig. 8.2

Indeed, there was already an established Bangladeshi community in the

Tower Hamlets – a poorer district in central-east London now well known for

its ethnic cooking and arts. Stability, however, was not readily available as

racial violence in the Tower Hamlets erupted[37], peaking with the murder of a

25-year old Bangladeshi man by three British teenagers. The murder sparked

a huge demonstration against racism, which began to organize the local

community politically.[38]

1983 saw the enactment of the British Nationality Act of 1981, which

created a further distinction between British citizens of descent, and those

who hold nationality by other means. Included in this law was the stipulation

that British citizenship could no longer be passed on automatically through

descent. Now, one has to prove nationality to an immigration officer, who

could refuse entry if unsatisfied.[39] Compared to other European countries,

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[37] Sandhu, Sukhdev. "Come Hungry, Leave Edgy." London Review of Books, 9 Oct. 2003. Web. 2 Oct. 2009. www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n19/sukhdev-sandhu/come-hungry-leave-edgy

[38] Altab Ali Station. "Call to Name Aldgate East after Martyr." UK Indymedia. 19 Sept. 2007. Web. 05 Feb. 2010. www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/09/381365.html

[39] Workpermit. "UK Immigration Staff Can Ask Muslim Women to Remove Veils." Workpermit.com. 27 Oct. 2006. Web. 23 Jan. 2010. www.workpermit.com/news/2006_10_27/uk/lifting_veil_muslim_identity.htm

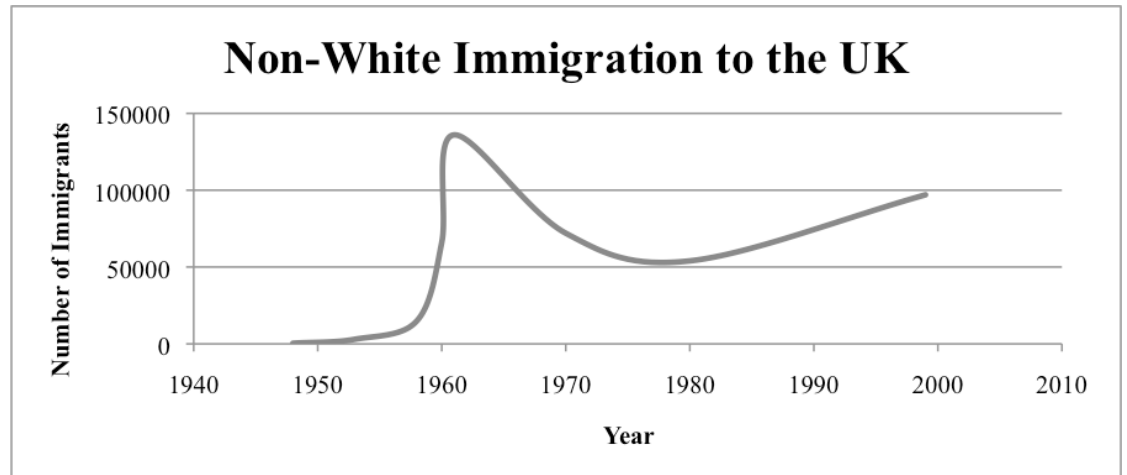immigration to Britain between 1970 and 1990 was decidedly lower, only a fraction of what it had been.[40]

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant expansion of conflict zones, a huge influx of refugees and asylum seekers flooded into Europe after 1990. As the UK is a signatory to the UN's Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, it cannot return refugees to a place where they would face persecution and so a new front of virtually uncontrollable immigration opened up. Asylum applicants quadrupled in number between 1992 and 2002,[41] increasing the total foreign-born population of the UK by 2%, an increase greater than the increase in the previous three decades combined.[42] In that same time period, asylum seekers from Iraq increased from 18,000 to 52,000, those from Afghanistan increased from 9,000 to 29,000, and those from Iran 11,000 to 15,000. Asylum seekers from other conflict zones such as Congo, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Yugoslavia declined significantly, dramatically altering the composition of the population existing within the UK in this time period.[43]

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[40] Penn, Roger. "Patterns of International Migration to Britain." University of Bologna, slide 22.

[41] Home Office. *Asylum Statistics: 4th Quarter 2006*. Digital image. 2007. Web. 3 Apr. 2010. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/asylumq406.pdf

[42] Rendall, Michael; Salt, John (2005). "The foreign-born population". in Office for National Statistics. Focus on People and Migration: 2005 edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 131–152.

[43] Penn, slide 31

Non-White Immigration to the UK

(chart: Number of Immigrants vs. Year, 1940–2010; values ranging from 0 to 150000)

Meanwhile, the twentieth century saw the rise of Islamist philosophers who advocated Islam as not just a religion, but also a complete political and socio-economic system. The earliest and most influential of such thinkers include Sayed Abul A'la Mawdudi of Pakistan (born 1903), and his Egyptian contemporary, Sayyid Qutb (born 1906). Qutb, after traveling in the United States, found a far deeper and radical connection to his religion. Upon as a return to Egypt, he became acutely aware of the secularization and Westernization of government in Muslim countries, which he saw as a return to Jahiliyya – a state of Godless ignorance that existed before the revelations of the prophet Mohammed. His writings on waging war on the "near enemy," the secular governments of Muslim countries, and the "far enemy", the Western countries that supported them, carried much influence in the Islamist movement. 1928 saw the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna with the mission of establishing an Islamic government in Egypt, struggling against the near enemy. Later in the century, Qutb's writings

on the far enemy influenced people like Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden and the violent organizations they would direct.[44]

As asylum seekers came to British shores in droves during the 1990s, the Islamist movement was in the midst of the most significant shift in ideology since its inception. Since the movement began, there has been a split between religious nationalists, like al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood, and religious transnationalists, like al-Qaeda. While both of these groups find their roots in the teachings of Mawdudi and Qutb, there has been vehement disagreement between the two on how to spend their resources.

After the failure of Nasser's Pan-Arab movement, several organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad in Egypt, the later Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria, and other groups in Sudan, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan came to the forefront of the political countercurrent, carrying the message of religious nationalism. Initially, many of these groups pursued violent means of resistance, which led to such events as the assassination of Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat, and the massacre in Luxor. Such violence was met with far greater brutality by the state, especially in Algeria and Egypt supported by the US and France, and in the mid-1990s, the armed resistance in Egypt came to an end due to a unilateral ceasefire on the part of the largest and oldest armed group, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. Most of the groups followed

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[44] For a more detailed discussion of Sayyid Qutb and his influence on bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, see The Looming Tower by Lawrence Wright.

suit, abandoning violent struggle in favor of democratic action, but "by the end of the 1990s religious nationalists were a spent force."[45]

As the sun set on nationalists, the stage was set for the transnationalists to come into their own. In the post-Cold War world, conflicts seemed to emerge on cultural fault lines, largely against the Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and elsewhere. However, as Gilles Kepel notes, "the recurrent violence of the decade was above all a reflection of the movement's structural weakness," as "no ideologist worth of the name had come forward to take the place of Mawdudi, Qutb, and [Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi] Khomeini."[46] Perhaps not as ideologically as strong but every bit as charismatic, the duo of Ayman Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden was reshaping the Islamist movement and focusing it on the far enemy.

With a peace accord struck between al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, and the Egyptian Government, other jihadi leaders in exile such as al-Zawahiri stepped into the limelight to push for a new direction. Pleading with al-Jama'a leadership in a letter not to give up the fight, Zawahiri attempts to "internationalize the conflict with local governments and turn it into a clash of

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[45] Gerges, Fawaz. "The Far Enemy." Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2005. Pg 151

[46] Kepel, Gilles. "Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam." Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2002. Pg. 207

civilizations,"[47] by trying to pit the US against the international Muslim community. This was not well received, and al-Jama'a "publically repudiated al-Qaeda and distanced themselves from it," revealing the "divisions and internal rivalries between religious nationalists and transnationalists."[48] Zawahiri continued to press for a shift in focus, criticizing the peace treaty by highlighting the jihadis that were being rounded up by US intelligence and tortured in Egyptian prisons. Instead of trying to overthrow the secular governments at home, the goal should be shifted to their supporters in the West, the "far enemy".[49] Once again, Zawahiri's message fell flat. With the decrease of tensions in Egypt and Algeria, exhausted prisoners were returned to their families. Fawaz Gerges notes that none of these former prisoners were enthused about the prospect of rejoining the fight against their local rulers, let alone taking the battle to the far enemy.[50] As such, al-Qaeda and religious transnational terrorism remains a very small fringe sect of the jihadi movement.

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[47] Gerges, 157

[48] *Ibid.*, 158

[49] *Ibid.*, 159

[50] *Ibid.*, 162

It is a mistake, however, to dismiss al-Qaeda's potency because of its small numbers.[51] Al-Qaeda makes up for this in many ways, including, as Gerges highlights, "raw tribalism coupled with religious messianism that resonated with the imagination of young zealous Muslim men."[52] Shocking images of abuses interspersed with religious pleas for help imbue the listener with a sense of duty as savior of the Ummah.[53] Ultimately, Osama bin Laden is portrayed as a humble, modest, and austere father figure working toward the good of his people – a very sympathetic and identifiable role.[54] Though this recruitment strategy worked best on young men from the Arabian Peninsula – an estimated 90% of bin Laden's followers were from either Yemen or Saudi Arabia[55] - Ed Husain describes similar tactics being employed on British youths in the 1990s as well.

1989 saw another powerful push of political Islam away from the Middle East and toward Western Europe with Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie. Giving official voice to the offense taken by many Muslims at the book, Khomeini at once captured the attention of the Islamic world away

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[51] *Ibid.*, 178

[52] *Ibid.*, 178

[53] *Ibid.*, 179-180

[54] *Ibid.*182-184

[55] *Ibid.*, 179

from Riyadh and pushed the Islamic world, the dar al-Islam, far past traditional

borders and into the West. Islamist politics grew to include Muslim immigrants

living in Europe and the varieties of Islam practiced there. Europe opened up

as a "new battlefield for these contending forces."[56] Islamist guerillas in

Chechnya, the conflict in Bosnia, and the presence of American soldiers in

Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War also opened up new dimensions in what

young Muslim men living abroad viewed as attacks on the Ummah.

Olivier Roy in 1994 discussed the future of political Islam, as at the time

it was obviously winding down. He predicted that the movement would either

"opt for political normalization within the framework of the modern nation-

state, or evolve what [Roy] termed neofundamentalism".[57] While the overall

trend for organizations such as Hamas or FIS are toward normalization, such

nationalism holds little sway over the Muslim Diaspora. For this reason,

"neofundamentalism has gained ground among rootless Muslim youth,

particularly among second- and third-generation migrants in the West."[58] Roy

also links this growth of "radical and militant neofundamentalism" with the

spread of religious schools, called madaris[59], with the very conservative Salafi

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[56] Kepel, 185

[57] Roy, Olivier. "Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah." Columbia
University Press, New York. 2004. Pg 1

[58] *Ibid.*, 2

[59] Plural of madrasa

or Wahhabi doctrine widely promoted by Saudi Arabia.[60] Ultimately, however,

Roy traces back the spread of neofundamentalism not to a return to the

Koran, but to a reaction to westernization[61] that is perhaps intensified in the

migrant Muslim population living abroad.

Islamism comes to Britain

In interviews conducted for this thesis in London, most of the

academics and activists point to this period in the 1990s as the start of

extremism in Britain. At this time, many of the asylum seekers from the

Middle East became active in spreading an extremely conservative and strict

interpretation of Islam to various communities in the UK. Indeed, it is in this

time period that Ed Husain and Maajid Nawaz, the founders of the Quilliam

Foundation, both became involved with Islamism and extremism. Principally,

organizations that invited such radical preachers such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir

and the Jamaat-e-Islami advocated the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate

and the implementation of political Islam globally. While not actively

encouraging their supporters to engage in violence to achieve these aims, it

was not clear if they were truly non-violent. These organizations primarily

operated on university campuses and heavily targeted young people. Their

message of Islam as a complete political-social-economic system perhaps

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[60] *Ibid.*, 2

[61] *Ibid.*, 6

inadvertently undermined respect for the rule of law and Western normative values. Though during this time, MI5 and other British security services were aware of the radical Islam being preached and its potentially deadly implications. But, the active terrorism of the IRA was a more pressing concern.

At the time, it was believed that British radicals posed no threat to the British state due to a sort of a live-and-let-live policy. As long as the radicals were given a long leash, theoretically they would not act to endanger their freedom. For most of the 1990s, the vitriol of these preachers was focused on everyone but the British. Their followers, however, began to apply the same criticisms leveled against other Western nations made by these refugee preachers to the UK government, especially in the wake of the invasion of Iraq. Gradually the movement that these Islamist preachers created turned its focus to violence both against other nations seen as part of or aligned with the West as well as Britain itself. As Peter Neumann put it, they were soon unable to control the monster they created. Ed Husain described in his book "The Islamist" seeing one of his friends within the organization turn to violence and murder another student, which prompted his exit from the movement. Soon, this violence would turn to large-scale terrorism.

Not long after the attacks of 9/11, the "shoebomber" Richard Reid, a British Muslim who was introduced to Islamism while in prison, attempted to bring down an airplane traveling between the UK and US with a bomb in his

shoe.[62] In 2003, two British Muslims bombed a bar in Tel Aviv.[63] 2005 saw

the infamous 7/7 bombings on the London Underground, perpetrated by four

British Muslims. Not two weeks afterwards, five British Muslims who arrived

as dependents of asylum seekers attempted a similar attack on the London

underground.[64] In 2006, eight British Muslims were arrested for a plot to

detonate liquid explosives on ten US-bound airplanes.[65] In short, British

Muslims who were radicalized partially as a result of the influx of asylum

seekers in the 1990s have become violent and active in the 2000s, with

dozens of disrupted plots and bombings in many places all over the globe.

After the 7/7 bombings of the London transit by British citizens, radicalized

within Britain, MI5 came to realize the depth of the problem and the lack of

control the preachers had over the movement. It is this new understanding

that has led to the modern counter radicalization movement

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[62] Elliot, Michael. "The Shoe Bomber's World." Time.com. Time, 16 Feb.
     2002. Web. 10 Mar. 2010.
     www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,203478,00.html

[63] Khazzoom, Loolwa. "Tel Aviv bar and bomb target slowly getting its groove
     back". Jewish Telegraphic Agency. 29 Aug. 2003. 28 Feb. 2010.
     www.jweekly.com/article/full/20444/tel-aviv-bar-and-bomb-target-slowly-
     getting-its-groove-back/

[64] BBC. "London Attackers 'meant to Kill'" BBC, 22 July 2005. Web. 2 Aug.
     2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4705117.stm

[65] Sherwood, Bob, and Stephen Fidler. "MI5 Tracked Group for a Year."
     Financial Times. 10 Aug. 2006. Web. 1 Mar. 2010.
     www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cbed2e12-28b5-11db-a2c1-0000779e2340.html

Chapter 3

THE GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

The British Government has long struggled to define the boundaries between security and civil liberties. As a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, various sections of the Prevention of Terrorism Act have had to be revised, first in 2000 and then again in 2005[66]. Having had to deal with terrorism before, and indeed having legislation related to preventing terrorism as early as 1939[67] in response to the IRA's S-Plan, temporary security measures that allow police to take extraordinary measures when terrorism was suspected constituted nothing new.

As the concept and definition of terrorism grows, however, a serious question is raised over when speech is simply political dissent or inciting terrorism. Already with some of the most heavily monitored public areas - a London resident can be taped hundreds of times a day[68] - and the focus

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[66] Given Royal Assent 11 March 2005, not related to the 7/7 bombing later that year.

[67] Prevention of Violence Act, expired 1953.

[68] Landler, Mark. "Where Little Is Left Outside the Camera's Eye." NYTimes.com. New York Times, 8 July 2008. Web. 01 Mar. 2010. www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/weekinreview/08landler.html

shifting heavily towards preventing ideologically motivated terrorist attacks, the government announced its Prevent program.

With the tagline, "working in communities to stop people from ever becoming terrorists," the stated mission is to "prevent people from supporting violent extremism, or becoming terrorists."[69] This does not only involve confronting and challenging people who support violence, but also "to actively promote the shared values (including democracy and the rule of law) on which our society and the cohesion of our communities depend."[70] Much of the present iteration of the Prevent program is a public relations battle, and the words on the Home Office's website are very carefully chosen so as to not engender hostility against Islam, but specifically to target "those violent extremists who misrepresent the Islamic faith and put lives in danger."[71] Even when talking about the attacks of 7/7, the Home Office declared, "British terrorists attacked the London transport system,"[72] and avoided any mention of a connection to Islam.

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[69] Home Office. "Prevent." Home Office. Web. 2 Apr. 2010.
    www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/what-we-are-doing/prevent/

[70] *ibid.*

[71] *ibid.*

[72] Home Office. "Counter-terrorism." Home Office. Web. 04 Apr. 2010.
    www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/index.html

While the stated purpose of the program is broad with end goals that most everyone can agree to, there is a lack of direction and detail that would make such a program practical. The program aims to "support mainstream voices", but struggles to identify who speaks on behalf of mainstream Islam in the UK. As of November 2009, over $230 million (140 million GBP)[73] has been spent on this broad approach, trying to fund community building, the fostering of social cohesion, and other welfare projects specifically targeting the Muslim community.

One government partner, the grassroots social activist group the Radical Middle Way was given a large grant to bolster their efforts in making an attractive and easy to use website to aid in organizing events, which are usually well attended, and in disseminating information. Ultimately this project garnered lackluster results with relatively few new visitors to their website. Between 2007 and 2009, close to $1 million (600,000 GBP) had been allotted to the Radical Middle Way.[74] Other government fronts, such as the

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[73] Power, Carla. "Preventing Muslim Extremism in Britain." *GlobalPost.com*.
    Global Post, 1 Nov. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010.
    www.globalpost.com/dispatch/united-kingdom/091030/britain-anti-
    extremism-program?page=0,0

[74] Parliament. "House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 16 July 2009
(pt 0025)." *United Kingdom Parliament*. House of Commons, 16 July 2009.
Web. 20 Feb. 2010. www.parliament.the-stationery-
office.co.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090716/text/90716w0025.htm

Community Development Foundation, provide funding to other groups that aim to improve social cohesion.

While the government is attempting to advertise their efforts as a centrally planned and unified program, the reality is that it is a program that has changed significantly since its conception. Much of the responsibility has devolved from London out to the municipalities and local governments, and the goals and methods have also adjusted themselves. Even the current plan is not universally applied across all of the municipalities and the government provides lackluster leadership. As Dr. Peter Neumann of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) described the Prevent program, it is a patchwork plan pieced together by trial and error.[75] Without the ability to attach metrics to it, it is more of a political necessity to have the appearance of action rather than measurable successes. This is not to say that this program was a failure, but rather to say that those in charge are simply not interested in designing it in a way that clear progress can be shown.

Several prudent changes have been made since the program's inception that should be highlighted. Dr. Neumann has strongly advocated increased flexibility and adaptability in governments and encouraged them to

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[75] Neumann, Peter. "Counter Radicalization in Britain." Personal Interview. 13 Jan. 2010

build networks to fight networks.[76] This program represents a strong attempt

at achieving just that. First, the government began by directly distributing

funding to various groups with an expressed mission similar to their goals

through the Prevent program.[77]

However, with a lack of knowledge of specific situations in individual

municipalities, funding was distributed inefficiently and to groups that may not

be addressing the most important issues. In addition, direct funding also led

to an unfavorable connection between these groups and the government. By

accepting such large sums of money, there is a general assumption that the

government was then able to exercise some amount of control over these

groups. As such, these groups working within Muslim communities and with

youths at risk of becoming violent extremists lost significant credibility and

were seen as simply government puppets. Beyond the lack of credibility, such

groups gained an unfavorable reputation by being associated with the

government's foreign and immigration policy. Such policies and the anger

they generate play a role in the radicalization of Muslim youths so, by trying to

directly support these groups, the government unintentionally undermined

their effectiveness.

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[76] Neumann, Peter. "Old & New Terrorism." Polity Press, Malden, MA. 2009.
    Pg. 154

[77] Ahmed, Khurshid. "DEEM and the UK Prevent Program." Personal
    Interview. 17 Jan. 2010.

The Quilliam Foundation is one such group that has been significantly hindered by government funding. Though the funding allowed them to continue to operate after finding themselves broke a year after opening, they have lost much credibility in the circles they are trying to influence. The founders of Quilliam have been denounced from within the British Muslim community as "government stooges" and "MI5 agents"[78] and the organization as "another establishment-backed attempt to divert attention from the main cause of radicalization and extremism in Britain: the UK's disastrous foreign policy in the Muslim world".[79] Indeed, even while alleging that the Prevent program is "gathering intelligence on people not committing terrorist offences," Quilliam founder Ed Husain went on to justify wiretaps and spying as "morally right" if it gave law enforcement agencies the best chance of countering-terrorism.[80] Remarks like this only further suspicions in Muslim circles that Quilliam is deep in the government's pocket – a suspicion that makes Quilliam virtually totally ineffective in influencing British Muslims.

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[78] Bunting, Madeleine. "Interview: Ed Husain, Author of The Islamist | Books | The Guardian." *Guardian.co.uk*. The Guardian, 12 May 2007. Web. 16 Jan. 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/may/12/religion.news

[79] Guardian. "Letters: What Turns Some Islamists to Terror." Guardian.co.uk. The Guardian, 26 Apr. 2008. Web. 19 Jan. 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/apr/26/uksecurity

[80] Dodd, Vikram. "Government anti-terrorism strategy 'spies' on innocent." Guardian.co.uk, 16 Oct. 2009. Web. 20 Mar. 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/oct/16/anti-terrorism-strategy-spies-innocents

Learning from such mistakes, the British government has begun to disperse funding through local governments. With a much better understanding of the unique situations in their own communities, these local officials are able to identify pressing needs and invest wisely. Unfortunately, funding was given to the local governments before they were thoroughly educated as to how to use it. As a result, officials who may be familiar with the radical Islam4UK but not Anjem Choudary, the group's inflammatory leader, may be duped into funding groups that only superficially support counter-radicalization efforts and in actuality further fund the groups they are working against. It is alleged that the Islamic Forum of Europe, a radical organization operating in Tower Hamlets in London, and their partners were awarded as much as 10 million GBP through the Prevent program.[81] Again following the pattern of trial and error, the government now provides more guidance in implementing the program.

Over the last few years since the program was first introduced the government has also become much more sensitive to the role that language plays. Bringing the message of sensitivity concerning official counter-terrorism lexicon, Jonathan Allen, the head of the Research, Information and

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[81] Gilligan, Andrew. "Islamic Radicals 'infiltrate' the Labour Party - Telegraph."
    Telegraph.co.uk. Telegraph, 27 Feb. 2010. Web. 05 Apr. 2010.
    www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/labour/7333420/Islamic-
    radicals-infiltrate-the-Labour-Party.html

Communications Unit (RICU) involved with Prevent, spoke at a George Washington university event. He discussed the prevalent government messages of earlier in the decade that used terms such as "Islamist terrorism" in an attempt to differentiate versions of political Islam. Allen's organization determined that these fine distinctions ultimately confused the public and simply bred anti-Islamic feelings. From there, the RICU re-evaluated their lexicon and found that "criminals and murderers" were much better as terms than "jihadi" to connect with audiences while not alienating the population. In addition, terminology that conjured up images of battle was abandoned as only reinforcing the extremist narrative of a "War on Islam" and thus the War on Terror became a Struggle against Extremism.[82]

Even today, after five years of mistakes and reevaluations, the program is far from ideal and is in danger of being significantly scaled back. The most glaring flaw is the lack of reliable metrics to gauge success, and thus many politicians see it as an area where decreasing funding will not produce a high-profile effect. As the budget deficit is a very salient issue in the British 2010 election, it is almost guaranteed that the next government will be cutting at

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[82] Allen, Jonathan, Daniel Sutherland, and Jeffery Imm. "Words Matter: The Role of Lexicon in Counter-Terrorism Communications Strategy." Policy & Research Forum. George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 24 June 2008. Lecture.

least some of Prevents budget. Just how reduced the next iteration of Prevent will be depends heavily on who takes power. The reality is that nobody knows how discontinuing the Prevent program will affect the counter-radicalization scene. There are a number of non-violent extremist-run groups that are working to counter terrorism, and a number of other groups that are trying to counter extremists in general. In this complex web of interconnectivity, there is a dire need for research to examine how the interaction of these groups furthers or hinders the ultimate goal of counter-radicalization. It is important for the government to realize how harmful direct funding can be to a group and how to proceed in situations where the damage is already done.

At present, the Quilliam Foundation is working closely with the Conservative party in order to boost their perceived value to the government so that if the Tories oust Labour come May, their funding will be secured. Funding such an expensive and ineffective group is what makes the Prevent program seem less important than it is and greatly harms the quality of Prevent. The hope seen in the Quilliam Foundation was that it would enjoy unrivaled credibility as the founders themselves were once involved in political Islam. As it no longer has this credibility, their value is significantly diminished and the limited funding given to Prevent is not being wisely spent.

Further, some very serious issues of the scope of the program need to be addressed before it can truly succeed. Many non-violent Islamist

organizations operating within the UK have been denounced as "conveyor belts to terrorism,"[83] posing a difficult question. Though most of the allegations of recent connections to terrorism leveled against Hizb ut-Tahrir and Jamaat-e-Islami have by no means been definitively proven, it does test the limits of civil liberties. The question of how far freedom of speech and dissent go is one that needs to be definitively answered before the government can formulate a coherent plan. Should these claims remain unverified, as is most likely, should the government be supporting groups aligned against them, such as Quilliam and others? If so, then it would seem that the government would have to take a similarly hard stance on right-wing groups that can also serve as a "conveyor belt to terrorism". For now, the specter of political Islam remains as frightening to many as communism did during the Cold War, and as such the right to their brand of political dissent should not be tolerated. It is up to the government to decide whether or not they agree in policy and action.

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[83] Casciani, Dominic. "Think Tank to Counter Extremism." BBC News, 21 Apr. 2008. Web. 06 Feb. 2010. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7359906.stm

Chapter 4

AN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

While domestic terrorism increasingly has become a top priority for security agencies all over the world, private citizens have decided to take matters into their own hands and address the issues that they feel are at the heart of the problem. These non-governmental special interest groups draw support from across the political spectrum, from the partisan right-wing British National Party, the English Defense League and Stop the Islamification of Europe, to the liberal British Muslims for Secular Democracy, as well as academic think tanks, attempting to handle the same problem in dramatically different ways. These non-profits and think tanks have supplanted the Government initiatives as the most successful in driving the counter-radicalization movement. While many of these organizations do benefit from the funding distributed by the government through the Prevent program, others have eschewed such funding and the strings that are inevitably attached. Indeed, there are even some groups that are working to wean organizations off of government funding.

With the May elections looming, their mission becomes even more significant. A change in government, very likely at this point, would mean the rapid evaporation of this micro-economy and a dramatic change in the

counter-radicalization landscape in Britain. Even those groups that have refused public funds will feel the impact as many of their partner groups suddenly find themselves without a source of income. If, as Dr. Peter Neumann says, the best thing about the Prevent program was that it bought the government friends, cutting those organizations off will only breed further enmity and damage the progress made over the last few years.

Though there are many charitable non-profit organizations that are working in neighborhoods with at-risk youths, there is also an academic class of NGOs that is forming to specifically examine radicalization and counter-radicalization. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, a part of King's College, is one of the premier think-tanks in the world in this regard. Headed by Dr. Peter Neumann, an academic who has earned respect through his analyses of the terrorist threat posed to the state by the insurgency in Ireland, the ICSR has already made valuable contributions to the body of knowledge surrounding the roots of radicalization and effective strategies to counter it. In the coming years, the ICSR will continue to influence debate and shape counter-radicalization policies in Western nations. However, being a purely academic institution with few cultural ties to the Muslim community puts them on the outside looking in on this issue, making them less valuable as a government partner.

Radicalization seems to be a social issue affecting disenchanted and angry Muslim youths. Therefore, having partners in the counter-radicalization

arena that have credibility within the Muslim community is crucial if the Prevent program is to be effective at all. Much of the debate surrounding the government's involvement in the counter-radicalization movement concerns who within the Muslim community the government should support, how they should be supported, and what the end goals should be.

The poster-child for government partnership in this arena is found in the Quilliam Foundation, both in terms of a successes and failures. In the debate over end-goals, two main schools of thought reign – the long term aim of social cohesion and defeating extremism, and the short-term aim of stopping violent extremism from carrying out terrorist attacks. The Quilliam Foundation is trying to have its cake and eat it too by attempting to combat violent extremism by promoting social cohesion. At first glance, it would seem that there would be nobody better suited to apply such a strategy. Founded in 2008 by ex-radicals Maajid Nawaz and Ed Husain, the Foundation tried to engage extremist Muslims through elevating the level of debate. They began working with Imams to educate spiritual leaders on theological arguments against violence and contributing to an academic body of knowledge. This new think-tank boasted brainpower and credibility in the Muslim community – a potent combination that seemed to place them in an ideal position to fight radicalization and extremism. After a short period of time – less than a year - their independent funding began to dry up and they were forced to accept Prevent money.

From here, things went downhill for the Quilliam Foundation. Despite recent publications on radicalization in prison and an extremely comprehensive Islamic legal opinion on the use of violence against civilians, the credibility of the foundation has been steadily waning. They accepted a large sum of money from the government, roughly a million pounds, and though nothing was explicitly promised in return, the Foundation also recently came out justifying wiretaps and other government actions. Presently, their focus centers around eliminating extreme interpretations of Islam, both violent and non-violent, with the justification that non-violent extremism such as that espoused by groups like the Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Jamaat-e-Islami act as gateway organizations to violence. Such blanket statements, however, appear to work more against freedom of speech and dissent than against violent extremism and terrorism. Indeed, they have been labeled "liberal extremists" by some in the London Muslim community.

The Quilliam Foundations opposite in practically every way, the Active Change Foundation is another group of former violent extremists working in their community to combat radicalization. After being recruited by radicals, the Qadir brothers donated money to the mujahedeen in Afghanistan and sent one of them, Hanif, to Pakistan for training. Upon his return, all four of them abandoned violent extremism based on what he told them. Teaming up with Mike Jervis, a former Afro-Caribbean gang member, the Active Change Foundation operates independently from the government and goes places

where government affiliated people cannot. They work on the front lines talking to kids who are in danger of being recruited by extremists and try to turn them away based on their own experiences. As the pace of recruitment increases – best estimates believe some teens can be radicalized in only a few weeks – their work in identifying these at-risk youths and stepping in before they are radicalized becomes more valuable. They would seem to be a great candidate to receive government funding. However, as the Quilliam case study has shown, direct funding from the government can go a long way to discredit an organization, and since credibility is paramount when dealing with these kids, that is a risk they cannot afford.

Beyond that it is politically problematic for the government to fund ex-radicals who have not adopted a liberal interpretation of Islam as the founders of Quilliam have. The Qadir brothers are still considered to be extremists, but non-violent extremists actively working to stop others from becoming violent and trying to achieve the government's short-term goal of stopping terrorism. Rather than giving them financial support with the perceived hidden strings attached that would ruin them, creating political space for them to operate might be a more viable way to encourage their type of activity. Though it might be politically unpopular to see elected representatives supporting Islamic "extremists", the actions of the Active Change Foundation have provided arguably the most concrete steps towards protecting Britain from terrorism. Considering that the Active Change Foundation operates from

private donations, ending broad political statements against Islamic extremism would go a long way towards supporting them. Public praise would go even further.

Here is where the two goals – cohesion and counterterrorism – truly conflict.   Though politically palatable, the Quilliam Foundation has little traction within the community they are trying to operate. Much of what they say is simply preaching to the converted or tied up in academic dialog without real-world impacts. The more controversial groups, such as the Active Change Foundation, can achieve measurable successes, but, if allowed to do so, threaten the notion of "social cohesion," protecting a British identity that many feel is under attack by immigrant cultures. Groups such as the English Defense League (EDL) and "Stop Islamisation of Europe" (SIOE) have formed on the fringe right of the political spectrum, demonizing Islam specifically and promoting social cohesion as a way to combat terrorism. Their notion of social cohesion, however, is a homogenous society in which all citizens assimilate to a single identity and all others are expelled from society. Though these groups are clearly extremist in their own right and would not side with either the Quilliam Foundation or the Active Change Foundation, it is clear that there are many conflicting groups trying to drive the movement in their own unique direction.

Seemingly as a response to the EDL and SIOE, British Muslims for Secular Democracy (BMSD) has emerged as a force for Muslim liberalization.

BMSD aims to challenge the depiction of Muslims as conflicting with a secular society. They actively work inside Muslim communities, sponsoring civics programs and working with youths to show them how to fight for change democratically. They join a chorus of other voices in protesting inflammatory extremist speakers who are invited to mosques and other lecture halls, both right-wing conservatives and radical Islamists. Satirical signs can be seen in their peaceful demonstrations espousing principles of liberalism and encouraging Muslims to "debate those who insult Islam." Though their protests do draw over two hundred people, the operations of BMSD are severely limited by a lack of funding – at present, part-time volunteers primarily run the organization. The trade-off in being understaffed is the boost in credibility they receive by not accepting government money.

Another independent group that has seen much success as of late is the Muslim Debate Initiative. Designed to challenge inflammatory speakers and radical theologians, the MDI has expanded to include debates of all sorts with the aim of educating the community about what Islam stands for and diffusing tensions based on misunderstandings. Though founded just a few years ago, the organization has already had many high-profile debates, including one challenging the head of the recently banned group Islam4UK Anjem Choudary. Though many of the people who debate through the Muslim Debate Initiative would be considered extremists, the organization as an entity is explicitly neutral and takes no official stance on anything. In doing

so, it promotes its mission of creating an engaging environment in which potentially radicalized youths can see these public figures called upon to defend their views and hear opposing arguments.[84]

It is this group of non-governmental organizations that provide the driving power behind the government's policy. Though there are myriad different methods being employed by groups with government funding and private donations, they all struggle toward a similar, though not identical, vision of a safer Britain. If there is cause for hope in the situation on the ground in Britain, it is here.

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[84]Al-Andalusi, Abdullah. "The Muslim Debate Initiative." Personal Interview.
        17 Jan. 2010

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECTIONS

The imperialism and colonialism of past centuries set the stage for the post-World War II influx of Muslims into the United Kingdom. The tensions felt by unskilled laborers and white supremacists were elevated to the national level after race riots and special interest groups made immigration so salient an issue that politicians could no longer ignore it. The increasingly restrictive and racially based immigration criteria spread these concerns to a large percent of the population – some surveys report 69% of Britons think their country has too many immigrants,[85] 47% say immigration has had a negative economic impact.[86]

Despite those findings, a recent Gallup World Poll titled "Beyond Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation" found that both Muslims in London and the British Public agree on what it takes to assimilate.[87] Indeed, more Muslims identify with Britain extremely strongly and very strongly (24% vs. 18%, 33%

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[85] Caldwell, 14

[86] *Ibid.* 37

[87] Mogahed, Dalia. "Beyond Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation." Gallup World Poll, Princeton, NJ, 2007. Pg. 1

vs. 30% respectively) and would prefer to live in a mixed background

neighborhood (63% vs. 58%) or even one in which they were a minority (8%

vs. 3%).[88] Unexpectedly, London Muslims also were found to be much more

likely than the general public to express confidence in the government, the

judiciary, honesty of elections, and local police.[89] It would seem that the

general public opinion regarding Muslim Britons is being shaped more by a

handful of xenophobes such than the actual situation on the ground. It is

fortunate that those in charge of counter radicalization for the British

government are not as sensitive to public opinion as mid-century politicians

were.

At first glance, it would appear that the British counter radicalization

programs have been utterly ineffective and a waste of money. However, the

indirect effects of their Prevent program may be more beneficial than the

direct effects. The most promising aspect of counter radicalization in the UK

today is the strong presence of government-independent groups working in

the field to increase Muslim civic participation, challenging violent extremists,

and talking to at-risk youths. Virtually none of these organizations existed

before the Prevent program in 2005. The earliest organizations centered on

such a mission were dependent on federal funding to exist. There does

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[88] *Ibid.* 3

[89] *Ibid.* 5

appear to be correlation between public disbursements and the establishment of an independent counter-radicalization movement. Though the research necessary to establish causality is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth investigating in the future. It would appear, however, that federal funding created a niche for counter radicalization organizations and gradually encouraged the right environment for private organizations to take hold. It is these private organizations that pursue the same mission as the government without sacrificing credibility amongst their target audiences – who are suspicious of Western government to begin with – that will be able to make the greatest strides in this area. One could argue then that, in order to foster the development of such programs, a government-sponsored effort must first exist to break the ground in this area of study.

How much money and how to distribute it is another important lesson that can be drawn from the British experience. To be successful in counter radicalization, the message must be effective in reaching violent extremists and at-risk youths who are being recruited by organizations such as al Qaeda. Typically these audiences reject many Western norms and establishments and view state institutions as illegitimate. As such, any organization seen as accepting federal funds will be regarded with equal suspicion and cease to become a valuable player in this regard. The British government learned quickly of the counter-productive effect of their direct support. This is an important lesson to be learned by the American government as the US

counter radicalization programs begin to take shape. The corrective action

was described as the right one to take by Khurshid Ahmed, chairman of the

Diversity, Equality & Empowerment Network, and local councils began to

distribute funds.[90] The local councils, both more ethnically representative of

their communities and more sensitive to case-specific situations, are able to

provide monetary support to organizations without the damaging attachments

of accepting government money. As previously stated, this method of

dispersal initially harmed counter radicalization efforts by accidentally funding

malicious actors. The American government should learn from their ally's

mistakes here. Only when combined with adequate federal leadership in

terms of educating the local councils did this become an effective strategy.

Some of the lesser effects that the Prevent program may have had are

also worth noting from the American perspective. First, an emphasis on the

lexicon the agencies employed demonstrates a dramatic improvement in

awareness of the delicacy of the situation and went miles towards improving

relations with the Muslim community in Britain. Ultimately, damage was done

through years of the government using terms like "Islamism," "Islamic

terrorism," and "jihadi" causing the general public to associate terrorism with

Islam as a whole. However, this eventual reassessment and use of more

neutral terms that did not paint a negative image of Muslims was a vital and

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[90] Ahmed, Khurshid.

significant corrective step. It is vital for the government to be on good terms with moderate and liberal Muslims if they are to have any hopes of partnering with conservative and extremist Muslims on security issues. For an American corollary, American Muslims must have a trusting relationship with the FBI for any counter terrorism effort to be successful. Treating these citizens with suspicion or as anything less than a partner in this endeavor will result in a less than effective effort – as witnessed in the Christmas bombing attempt where the FBI ignored a tip from the father of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab and the resultant security breach was nearly disastrous.

Another unintended benefit of the prevent program ties into government funding efforts. By handing out cash to over 400 different organizations, the government bought itself a lot of friends. It may very well be the case that without receiving government funds, some of the individuals involved or affiliated with these organizations would either be inactive or subverting the counter radicalization aim. By essentially bribing these groups to be on the side of the government, it not only removes stagnant and malicious elements from society but also incorporates them in positive movement toward their goals.

There are serious deficiencies in the current manner in which the Prevent program is being conducted, and the American government would again do well to learn from the mistakes. The Prevent program was largely rushed into action following the 7/7 bombings and the revelation that British

Muslims were not only attacking foreign targets but were also open to attacking their home country. As a result, insufficient attention to detail was given to the program and thus the program may be subject to significant budget cuts in the near future. Without establishing firm metrics to gauge progress, the government acknowledges that it is simply throwing money at a problem without providing firm leadership.

Decisions need to be made about the near term and short-term goals, whether counter terrorism also incorporates social cohesion, and if that precludes partnership with non-violent extremists. The British program is presently implemented differently across all local levels. Some municipalities decide to include non-violent extremists to fight against the immediate threat, sacrificing increased social cohesion. Others exclude such extremists and try to edge them out in favor of the long-term social cohesion strategy. In doing so, these efforts are ultimately negated by using strategies that undermine each other. For any counter-radicalization program to see forward progress this sort of tension must be resolved and a unified plan must be implemented. Limits on free speech will have to be decided upon and judgment shall have to be passed on if it includes the precepts espoused by non-violent extremists. Without these difficult policy goals being clarified, it will be impossible to establish any meaningful system of measurement and, without that, the British counter radicalization program will perpetually be placed on the short list for budget cuts.

Much depends on the results of the 2010 British elections, as economics has taken center stage in the political arena. It is not clear what will happen specifically to counter radicalization programs in Britain following the election, but the money allotted to the Prevent program will likely be slashed either way. Currently, groups such as Quilliam, which have ceased to be effective in the counter-radicalization mission, will likely continue to be funded under the Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat governments. The Conservative government, if put in power, would likely cut the Prevent programs budget severely, meaning the large budget given to Quilliam would represent a much greater percentage of the total program. This would reduce the efficacy of the Prevent program, endangering both the mission as well as British national security. If funding a large number of groups both bought off potential detractors as well as nurtured a counter radicalization non-profit sector, then a dramatic reduction in budget could have catastrophic implications for the progress made over the last five years.

First, all the detractors presently on the government payroll would be turned loose. Likely upset at being denied by the central government, they would potentially be more apt to become active in turning British Muslim youths against it. Second, without the collective momentum gathered by the huge consortium of counter radicalization organizations partnered with the government, support for independent counter radicalization non-profits could dry up. Organizations such as the Active Change Foundation, British Muslims

for Secular Democracy, and the Muslim Debate Initiative would find themselves operating in a much, much smaller pool. With drastically fewer government-sponsored organizations to be cast as their foil and trump up their own credibility, their own efficacy could also be hindered. Cutting the funding of the Prevent program at this point could have the consequence of aborting the entire counter radicalization mission entirely, even while continuing to fund some government-friendly groups.

It is possible that in the future, the non-profit sector will be self-sustaining. The press and momentum generated by the initial government effort does much to attract investors and benefactors to the issue and brings more independent money to the independent non-profits. At this time, however, where most of these organizations are run by a handful of people – some as few as a single person – interest is likely to fade until another 7/7 occurs.

Recently, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano declared that homegrown terrorism is a top threat to US national security. From this declaration, it is easy to see the early stages of an American Prevent program coalescing. Though counter radicalization has not received nearly as much attention in the US as it has in the UK – most lectures on the topic in American universities feature lecturers from Britain – it is vital that it gets off on the right foot. The American government should begin its effort with the creation of a distinct office within the Department of Homeland Security.

Similar to the formation of the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) in the UK, this office will have the benefit of little to no reputation and the ability to define itself quickly. Using the conclusions established by the RICU in the importance of a clear lexicon, buzzwords that the general public might simply associate with Islam as a whole as opposed to fringe extremists must be avoided. Failure to do so would make the American Muslim community less cooperative and increase tensions within communities. This office should provide clear, unambiguous leadership for the program, defining what the near and long term goals are and a coherent plan to shift from one to the other. In this case, using non-violent extremists to combat violent extremists and then later using moderates to combat non-violent extremists would not be advisable. Doing so would display hypocrisy and undermine the reputation and credibility of this new office and further complicate the mission. Beyond simple means and goals, metrics need to be established to judge the efficacy of organizations receiving funding, such as events hosted, hits on a website, success of youth counseling services, or a broader view of political and civic engagement.

Once clear goals and strategies are defined, state, local, and tribal governments should be educated about the situation. Rather than adopting a blanket approach, however, existing demographic data should be used to identify high-risk areas in terms of age, affluence, and political activity. Money allotted by the federal government should be distributed through the state

government to local governments, putting distance between what can be seen as the foreign policy oriented central government and the domestically concerned local governments. Initially, small grants should be made to more organizations rather than a few large grants in order to create momentum early on as well as to avoid the perception of the government "buying" whole organizations. Based on the standards laid out by the new office, underperforming groups should lose funding and successful groups (should they feel it would benefit their organization and not harm them) should have their budgets expanded. The reason the non-government affiliated groups were the drivers in the counter-radicalization mission in the UK was that they were a reaction against the government, its foreign policy, and the groups that were viewed as complicit by accepting money. The British government sponsored groups were largely ineffectual in terms of influencing potential violent extremists, but became a useful foil for the independent non-profits. If the American model of counter radicalization avoids tainting reputations, preserves the credibility of organizations and produces results, there may very well not be the independent counter radicalization sector seen in Britain. If government funding proves to destroy credibility in the US just as it did in the UK, then there will likely be a similar response from private citizens.

Ultimately, the struggle against radicalization must be a grassroots effort. It cannot be the singular effort of a few determined agencies in the government, and it cannot be accomplished with heightened security

measures and limited freedoms. The government does have a valuable role

to play, however, and that is creating the initial beachhead in the struggle. By

opening up counter radicalization to more prominent exposure, everyone in

that field benefits. More organizations will coalesce around the government

seed, and in some ways the framework laid out by the federal government

and implemented at the local level will initially control the movement. As the

movement expands, however, it will outgrow such controls. But, if the

framework previously laid out succeeded, progress will most likely continue

along those lines. Rather than expanding the budget as a whole, it would

behoove the mission to simply let new organizations form independently from

government funding and let them compete for grants. The counter

radicalization effort must be the project of citizens organizing citizens. The

first step along that line is providing effective leadership from the top.

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