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THE ROOTS OF VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISM AND EFFORTS TO COUNTER IT

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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THE ROOTS OF VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISM AND EFFORTS TO COUNTER IT

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Joseph I. Lieberman, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN LIEBERMAN

Chairman Lieberman. Good morning and we will convene the hearing. Welcome to the seventh in a series of hearings this Committee has held and is holding to examine the unique threat posed by what we have called “homegrown” violent Islamist extremism and to determine what steps we can and should take to identify, isolate, and ultimately eliminate this threat and the ideology that supports it.

On May 8, the Committee released a bipartisan staff report titled, “Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat.” That report concluded that the use of the Internet by Islamist terrorist organizations has increased the threat of homegrown terrorism in the United States because individuals can essentially self-radicalize over the Internet.

Since then, about a month ago, a college student in Florida plead guilty to a charge of material support for terrorism. According to the plea agreement, the student admitted to producing a video that he uploaded to YouTube which demonstrated and explained in Arabic how a remote-controlled toy car could be disassembled and the components converted into a detonator for an explosive device. The student admitted in the court papers that in producing the video, he intended to help those who wanted to attack American servicemen and servicewomen.

So we are here today to learn more about the ideology behind terrorism, the ideology that inspires people, including young people like the student in Florida, to take such hateful, violent, and anti-American actions.

The 9/11 Commission Report, I think, outlined quite eloquently and succinctly the dual challenges that we face. It is said, and I quote, “Our enemy is two-fold.” They mentioned specifically “al-Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists that struck us on September 11, 2001,” and second, “a radical ideological movement in
the Islamic world inspired in part by al-Qaeda,” but I would add not only inspired by al-Qaeda, but that al-Qaeda is in effect a result of that radical ideological movement.

Our first witness on the first panel is Maajid Nawaz. He will offer the Committee insights into that ideology and the role it played in driving him to become a member at age 16 and eventually a leader of the Islamist extremist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, or the Liberation Party, in the United Kingdom. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is called for short HT, claims that it is non-violent, the exposure of its members to a very extreme form of Islamist ideology seems often to have laid the foundation for the planning and execution of terrorist attacks. Mr. Nawaz recruited others, including his own family, to join HT and was sent to Pakistan and Denmark to set up additional cells. He was later arrested in Egypt in 2002 for being a member of the organization, and in fact was in prison for 4 years.

Upon release, Mr. Nawaz returned to England, where he eventually denounced the organization and the ideology that was at its foundation. Today, Mr. Nawaz is one of two directors of the Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom, a counterextremism think tank committed to discrediting the Islamist ideology that inspires Islamist terrorism around the world.

Mr. Nawaz, it is my understanding that this is your first visit to the United States and I wanted to extend a personal welcome to you, but also a thank you to you for making the effort to travel this distance to testify before our Committee. I believe your testimony is very important to our purpose.

The other three witnesses are equally distinguished and I know will be equally helpful to the Committee. They have extensive experience studying Islamist movements around the world—Dr. Peter Mandaville, Zeyno Baran, and Dr. Fathali Moghaddam. We look forward to your testimony and your collective insight into this ideology and the organizations that espouse it. As the three of you know, we are particularly interested in how the ideology facilitates the radicalization process, the end point of which is, of course, the planning and execution of terrorist attacks, which it is our aim to stop.

Our second panel today will have one witness. That is the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Leiter. This is the Committee that initiated the legislation that created the National Counterterrorism Center, so we are always proud in a somewhat paternalistic and maternalistic way to welcome Mr. Leiter, its Director, to testify.

I close with another quote from the 9/11 Commission Report as follows: “Our strategy,” the Commission said, “must match our means to two ends, dismantling the al-Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.” I agree. The testimony of our witnesses today, I am confident, can help us measurably in our efforts to better understand the roots of Islamist ideology, to distinguish it, of course, from Islam, with the overall purpose of better directing our international, national, and local efforts to counter the spread of this ideology and to stop the terrorism it aims to inspire.

Senator Collins.
OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COLLINS

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I, too, saw Michael Leiter outside in the anteroom and he said that he was looking forward to testifying before the father and the mother of the National Counterterrorism Center, so obviously he is thinking along those same lines that you are. On a more serious note, he did say that he thought the Center was operating very well and was bringing a great deal to our counterterrorism operations.

I am very pleased to be participating in this important hearing this morning. Islam is a major world religion with more than one billion adherents worldwide. Like most other religions, Islam has myriad variations that are adopted or rejected by people from all walks of life who view these different alternatives through the lens of their own experiences.

Obviously, but I believe it bears repeating today, the vast majority of Muslims lead peaceful lives following the tenets of faith, prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage that characterize mainstream Islam. There are also some Muslims who subscribe to an extreme variation of Islamic ideology that is antithetical to our Western culture and our constitutional democracy. Yet they, too, may pose no threat to our way of life nor to the free exercise of other faiths.

But there also exists a subset of violent Islamist extremists who seek to impose their world view, including the creation of a global totalitarian state, through all means, including violence. These terrorists turn to violence to achieve their ideological goals, seducing recruits and supporters with religiously laced rhetoric that legitimizes and in some cases exalts violence.

To better understand the roots of violent Islamist extremism, this Committee is exploring the radical religious ideology that can be used to incite or justify acts of terror. Specifically, we seek the answers to the following questions:

Is a certain ideology a necessary, albeit not sufficient, factor in leading an individual to embrace violence? How do some extremists use the ideology to legitimize terrorist acts and incite others to commit them? What other factors contribute to turning an individual from the non-violent advocacy of an ideology to violent extremism? How can we deter the use of violence in the support of any ideology?

Learning more about Islamist extremist ideology is important, but it is only part of our inquiry. To understand why an individual becomes violent, we must also consider other triggers, including the social, political, and psychological factors that may combine with ideological fervor to lead recruits down the path to terrorism.

This is a complex area of inquiry. It is not susceptible to easy analysis nor quick fixes. I do not believe that we can say that ideology is the root cause of terrorism any more than we can say that racism or perceptions of injustice or oppression are sufficient in and of themselves to explain violent extremism. Indeed, experts have debunked myths that all terrorists are psychotic, poor, uneducated, or otherwise fall within an easily identifiable profile. To actually gain a better understanding of all the factors that might contribute to terrorism, we must also work with the leaders
in the American Muslim community to address these root causes
and to delegitimize violence as the means of promoting a system
of beliefs.

As the Committee explores these issues, we must be clear that
our efforts are designed to prevent terrorism, not to suppress the
peaceful expression of ideas, even those beliefs which are repug-
nant to us. For example, I am alarmed when extremist ideology is
used to justify the oppression of women or those of other religious
faiths. As a public official, however, my personal abhorrence cannot
color my judgment as to the fair treatment of those who may
espouse that ideology as long as it is not accompanied by violence.

Let me emphasize the point. I condemn any group or individual
of any ideology that supports, condones, finances, or otherwise uses
terrorism to advance their goals. But let me say in equally uncer-
tain terms, I also condemn any action by any government that
would punish individuals merely for the exercise of their
unalienable rights to worship and speak as they choose.

More than 230 years ago, as this country declared its independ-
ence from tyranny, it also declared through the protections of the
First Amendment of our Bill of Rights that on these shores, the
clash of ideas would be waged with words, not with guns and
bombs. To that end, our duty as policy makers is to protect the po-
itical institutions that give individuals the right to express their
views and exercise their rights without resorting to violence. For in
a world where terrorists kill innocent men, women, and children to
forcefully impose their beliefs on others, the true battle is between
those who are violent and those who are not.

The Constitution protects an individual’s right to hold any belief
he or she may choose. This constitutional principle also underlies
some of the unique features of the American way of life that thus
far have helped to prevent violent extremism from taking root in
this country. Those values, such as the openness of our society, tol-
erance for different viewpoints, and the assimilation of peoples of
different faiths and ethnicities, are incompatible with extremist
ideas like the suppression of other religions.

This is the ongoing struggle, and today, we are continuing our
efforts to better understand the triggers of violent extremism and
the threat that they pose to our way of life.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Collins. Thank you very
much, and thank you, Senator Coburn, for being here.

Senator COBURN. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be able to
stay, but I would like unanimous consent to enter something into
the record, if I may.1

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Without objection, it is so ordered, and we
will welcome you as long as your schedule allows you to stay.

Mr. Nawaz, we are going to go to you first. Thank you again for
taking the time and making the effort to come from the United
Kingdom.

Mr. NAWAZ. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. We welcome your testimony now.

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1Report on the Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It: The Muslim
Brotherhood,” by Steven Emerson, Executive Director, Investigative Project on Terrorism, sub-
mitted for the Record by Senator Coburn appears in the Appendix on page 102.
TESTIMONY OF MAJID NAWAZ, DIRECTOR, THE QUILLIAM FOUNDATION, LONDON

Mr. Nawaz, Thank you, Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins. I really don’t think I can add anything more to what you have just said, so really, perhaps I should just go on now because what you just said is a very eloquent expression of what I believe. So thank you for that and thank you for having me here. I wish to congratulate the American people on the recent July Fourth celebrations. It is a shame I couldn’t be here for those.

But moving to the discussion of the day, I did join Hizb ut-Tahrir when I was 16 years old. I moved to London to recruit for Hizb ut-Tahrir. I joined Newham College, where I was elected as President of the Students’ Union, and regrettably and sadly, due to the radicalization that occurred on that campus, myself and Ed Husain were both on the campus of Newham College at the same time—he is the author of the widely acclaimed book, “The Islamist.” Sadly, that radicalization eventually led to a situation where another student was murdered on campus by somebody who was a supporter of our activities, and really, that should have acted as a warning for me in those early days because what played out in Newham College ended up being the microcosm of what would play itself out much later on with the attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States of America, and that is that people who were inspired by our ideology, Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology, but merely differed with us in tactics, decided to use that very same ideology to bring about violence and chaos in this world.

Ed Husain, when he saw the murder at Newham College, decided to leave Hizb ut-Tahrir. I very foolishly decided to stay, thinking that perhaps we could carry on with our intellectual mission rather than focusing on encouraging anyone who is violent to support us. But I didn’t realize that the problem was not in necessarily the associations we made with people who were naturally inclined to violence, but the problem was in the very ideas themselves.

I went on to, as you have mentioned, export Hizb ut-Tahrir to Pakistan from London and also to Denmark from London. I also know by personal experience that Hizb ut-Tahrir was exported from London to many other countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia. Europe generally acts as a diplomatic hub, a funding source, and a media platform for Islamist radicals, whether they be of the terrorist type or whether they be of the revolutionary or radical type.

I ended up, as you mentioned, in Egypt where I was convicted to 5 years in prison for being a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, after taking a route via their torture dungeons in the headquarters of the state security, where people were electrocuted before my eyes for being associated with us. I was thankfully adopted by Amnesty International as a Prisoner of Conscience, and that was the first step for my heart to open up for the first time in 10 years after having joined Hizb ut-Tahrir. I began to think in a way different to how I had been speaking and thinking about non-Muslims because Amnesty International extended the hand to me, despite the

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1 The prepared statement of Mr. Nawaz appears in the Appendix on page 49.
fact that I had been propagating that Amnesty International and other such human rights organizations were, in fact, the enemy to Islam and Muslims.

And as you have mentioned, I left prison in 2006, returned to the U.K., and after having joined the Leadership Committee of Hizb ut-Tahrir, finally decided that I could no longer carry on with the hypocrisy that I felt inside me because I no longer believed in the Islamist ideology, and so I resigned.

Now, what I would like to very quickly address is what I believe in the way to differentiate between Islamists and normal ordinary Muslims, and through my experience, the work we are doing in the Quilliam Foundation and also my academic studies, I went on to study for a Master’s degree in political theory with modules in terrorism, conflict, and violence, in multiculturalism, and in religion and politics at the London School of Economics. I believe that we are able to identify four core elements that Islamists will share regardless of the tactics that they employ to bring about that ideology.

I wish to discuss briefly about those four core elements, and then the different strands of Islamists who adhere to those four core principles and how they differ in their tactics, and then if there is time—I am very conscious I have to adhere to the 10 minutes—just to mention something about the role that grievances play in radicalization vis-a-vis ideology itself.

So first of all, the four core elements that I think are common to all Islamists regardless of the methodology they employ—and the first one I identify is that Islamists believe that Islam is a political ideology rather than a religion. Now, traditionally, Muslims would believe that their faith is a religion, but Islamists insist, beginning from the 1920s with Hassan al-Banna, that Islam is, in fact, a political ideology. Now, the roots of that perhaps can come out later, but just very quickly, that is traced through the influence of communism in the Arab world, especially through the Arab socialism known as Baathism. A lot of the founding members of Islamists were inspired by Baathists, Arab socialists, including the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir who used to be a Baathist.

So the first point there, the implication of Islam being a political ideology rather than a religion, is that means there must be a perennial conflict between Islam and capitalism just like there was perceived to be a conflict, as well, between communism and capitalism, and that is one of the implications.

Another implication is that because it is an ideology, it encompasses everything; there must be an Islamic solution to everything. There must be an Islamic economic system. There must be an Islamic car, as has recently been invented in Malaysia. Everything must be Islamized because it is an ideology that encompasses everything.

The second core element that Islamists will all share is the notion that the Shariah religious code, which is a personal code of conduct, must become state law, and this is again a modern innovation alien to traditional Islam. Throughout the history of Muslims, the Shariah was never once adopted as a permanent state codified law. In fact, the whole notion of codified law is modern. But the Islamists will insist that the Shariah religious code must
be state law, and if it is not, then the implication is that state is un-Islamic.

The third principle is that Islamists will identify with a global community known as the Ummah, and they will consider the Ummah, or the Muslim global community, as a political identity rather than a religious identity. Again, drawing parallels from communism, this is easily understood when remembering the whole notion of the international proletariat, this global community where workers owe no other allegiance except to fellow workers, regardless of borders and ethnicity and nationality.

Islamists have developed, again inspired by communism, the same notion of a global political community that owes no allegiance except to itself, and that is the political notion of Ummah rather than the prophetic understanding of ummah, which is as a religious community, and the Prophet himself in Medina, when he signed the Document of Medina, the famous document, used the word ummah, or nation, to refer to the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims all living together in one city. Yet today, Islamists will use it just for Muslims as a global community.

Fourth, and the final shared element for Islamists, is that this ideology with this law and that global political community needs to be represented by a bloc, like the Soviet bloc. It needs to be represented by an expansionist state, and that is the Caliphate, and this state will be expansionist because it represents that global community, and where that state's authority has not extended to look after the affairs of that global community, then it must reach them to liberate them from being enslaved either by the capitalists or the communists. Just like the USSR developed this bloc and the whole Eastern Bloc was expansionist and it had the whole notion of exporting the revolution, the Islamists, again inspired by the same ideals, have developed the same paradigm for Islamism.

So this global expansionist Caliphate is the final shared element that all Islamists believe in, and they have made these four principles fundamental to the creed of Islam. So if a Muslim was to say that I do not believe the Shariah code should become state law, they would consider him a heretic or an apostate. Or if somebody was to say, I do not believe that Islam is a political ideology, they will consider there is something deviant in his creed. They have changed the religion to make the ideology itself the religion.

Now, these shared elements, though common between all Islamists, this doesn’t imply that Islamists are all of one shade. Islamists do differ in their tactics and methodologies. I have identified three types of Islamists. They are first either political Islamists, who are those who use entry-level politics and tactics by working within the system through the ballot box to try and bring about this ideology. These are, by and large, people who are non-violent, yet they have an ideological agenda. They are in some way a fifth column. Their agenda is to infiltrate the system and Islamize the system that they are working in.

The second type of Islamist, again, from these four shared elements, are the revolutionary Islamists, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the group that I was with, and their methodology is to infiltrate the militaries, to overthrow the regimes of the Middle East through
military coups, and those in this category do not believe in using
the ballot box or working through the system.

And the final category of Islamists are the militant Islamists, or
the jihadists, who believe in an armed struggle against the status
quo.

Now, the order of these three is deliberate because they devel-
oped in this way. In the 1920s, the political Islamists came about,
and through the reaction to them, especially in the Middle East,
they eventually became more harsh, more severe, and formed into
the revolutionary Islamists, or Hizb ut-Tahrir, and from there,
again, through reaction, Hizb ut-Tahrir inspired the jihadist ele-
ments, and I know this personally because the assassins of Sadat
who I served time with in prison, those who weren’t executed in
the 1981 case, told me that their teacher was a man by the name
of Salim al-Rahhal, a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

I have to end there, so forgive me for—

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Do you want to take a minute more and
just finish what you wanted to say?

Mr. NAWAZ. Sure. Thank you for that. So Salim al-Rahhal was
a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir who taught—he was the instructor for
the group that ended up assassinating Egyptian President Anwar
Sadat. He was deported from Egypt and the group known as Talim
al-Jihad was then formed by those very same people, but minus
their instructor, they decided to then use a different tactic and that
was of assassinations.

I know this, as I said, because they spoke to me personally about
these experiences, and Islamists developed through the torture in
the Arab world from becoming political to revolutionary to
jihadists. Ayman al-Zawahiri, who served time in the same prison
that I was in, Mazra Tora prison, and Sayyid Qutb, who served
time, again, in the same prison I was held, both had exposure to
Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideas. Hizb ut-Tahrir is graffitied on the walls of
those prisons.

Ayman al-Zawahiri used to adhere to the same military method
of recruiting from the army officers to instigate a military coup,
which is why he never joined al-Gama’a al-Islamiyyah in Egypt,
who would go about through the direct action methodology of vio-
ence. These ideas came from Hizb ut-Tahrir. Ayman al-Zawahiri
speaks about the notion of how we must: One, destroy Israel; two,
overthrow every single Middle Eastern regime; and three, establish
the Caliphate. In 1953, these exact same three principles were put
out there by Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, who was the founder of
Hizb ut-Tahrir. And when you hear Ayman al-Zawahiri’s theory, it
is exactly Hizb ut-Tahrir’s theory as articulated in 1953.

Finishing off, I just wanted to mention very briefly about how
this ideology of Islamism, as has been identified, mixes with griev-
ances to lead to radicalization. There is a common misperception on
the left in the U.K. whereby they only speak about grievances as
a cause for radicalization. Now, I had my own grievances growing
up in Essex. Many of my friends were attacked, violently assaulted
by racists. My friends have been stabbed before my eyes, my white
English friends, simply for associating with me. I have been falsely
arrested on a number of occasions and released with an apology,
and I have never been convicted of a criminal offense in any coun-
try in the world. I had my own grievances. What makes somebody, who has localized grievances, turn into somebody who identifies with a global struggle in a country that has nothing to do with him?

And again, I want to give the analogy of communism. If you take a Marxist, when a Marxist analyzes the Northern Ireland conflict, what we refer to in the U.K. as The Troubles, or when a Marxist analyzes the Israel-Palestine conflict, he will analyze that conflict through a meta narrative, through a theory that he has adopted. So a Marxist cannot but see these conflicts in the theory of class conflicts, as class struggle. So a Marxist will speak about the Israel-Palestine conflict as a struggle between classes, the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat, and the same with the Northern Ireland struggle because the way in which the grievances are interpreted is through the framework or the prism that the ideology provides, and Islamists have the same thing.

So in my case, with the racism I experienced in the U.K., or the nationalist conflict that was playing out in Bosnia, how from seeing these as localized conflicts that required local solutions into perceiving them as a global struggle, and that is because the ideology came and reinterpreted those grievances for me and provided a new framework. And that framework for Islamists, unlike in the case of Marxists where it is workers versus bourgeoisie, for the Islamists, it is what is known as the perennial struggle of the truth versus the falsehood, Muslims versus non-Muslims.

My country’s intervention in Iraq is seen by Islamists as being solely inspired by non-Muslims who are attacking the Iraqis because they are Muslims. It is reinterpreting those grievances through that framework, and you can see how that framework will, in fact, end up in the radicalized person, the radicalized Muslim, in discovering grievances even if they weren’t there because the framework itself defines those grievances for him.

And what is key for us to understand is the way in which the grievances interact with the ideology to lead to a whole new set of grievances, which for an Islamist can be summarized in one sentence, and that is that God’s law does not exist on this earth.

I thank you. I have gone much over my time, so please, thank you very much for taking the time.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Nawaz. It was worth the extra time. Your testimony is very helpful, very clear, and I think very powerful.

We now go to Dr. Peter Mandaville, a professor at George Mason University. Dr. Mandaville is the author of “Global Political Islam” and has done empirical research on how Islamist groups recruit in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Thank you for being here and we welcome your testimony now.
Mr. MANDAVILLE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, and distinguished Members of the Committee, in violent Islamist extremism, the United States faces a complex, little understood, and rapidly evolving threat. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this important issue this morning and to provide some background information that I hope will help us to locate violent Islamism within the much broader and diverse universe of contemporary Islamist political thought and activism.

I would also like to address the phenomenon of Islamism in the West, more specifically in the United Kingdom, and the question of what the United States might be able to learn from the U.K.’s experience of dealing with Islamism in recent years.

So as to leave maximum time for the panel to take your questions, I will limit my remarks this morning to a brief summary of several points contained within the longer written statement I have submitted, although Senator Collins effectively delivered my testimony in her opening remarks, so I may be able to shorten that a bit.

Just as Islam cannot be said to be a monolith, the same goes for Islamism as an ideological project. While it is possible to identify certain key figures and groups as being central to the genealogy of modern Islamism, those who have subsequently drawn on their ideas or organized themselves in their mold have often done so in widely varying ways, interpreting and adapting their views to disparate and sometimes even mutually exclusive agendas. Thus, today we can say that the broad ideological current of Islamism manifests itself in activist agendas that span the complete spectrum from democratic politics to violent efforts aimed at imposing Shariah law worldwide.

There is a tendency today among many analysts of Islamism to define this ideology by very narrow reference to the most militant phase of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood’s history. While activists and agitators holding to those extremist views can still be found today in the Muslim majority world, and also in Europe and in the United States, it would be inaccurate to characterize Islamism exclusively through them.

Furthermore, it is important, I believe, to distinguish between the Muslim Brotherhood as a distinct organization and the Muslim Brotherhood as a broad current of thought. The two are not coterminous and the latter is far more diverse and varied in its ideological and activist manifestations.

In seeking to identify root causes of extremist violence in the name of Islam, I think we also need to question today the extent to which the answer is to be found primarily in ideology. Millions of Muslims have read “Milestones,” the famous work of militant Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb, or have at some point come under the influence of Islamist ideology. Only an infinitesimally small number of them, however, have gone on to commit acts of violence.
While ideas are undoubtedly important, as Mr. Nawaz has mentioned, they will only drive certain individuals to action if articulated in terms that resonate with and seem to provide solutions that address perceived life circumstances and needs. In this regard, I believe the sociological and particularly the psychological contextualization of Islamist ideology holds the key to understanding the conditions under which it potentially poses a violent threat, a topic I believe Dr. Moghaddam will address in some detail.

Based on my own study and direct observation of socialization processes in radical, although not directly violent, Islamist groups in the United Kingdom such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun, I have identified the following factors as playing a particularly significant role in leading an individual to reconfigure his world view and aspirations in terms of the goals of the movement. Needless to say, the presence and relative importance of these factors can vary considerably from individual to individual. I hope also that raising these points will go some of the way towards answering the question that Mr. Nawaz ended on, that is, how it is that local grievances come to be articulated in terms of wider global projects.

First, let me point briefly to some important generational differences around religion within Britain’s Muslim communities. Younger Muslims often see their parents’ sense of religiosity as out of touch and overly tainted by the cultures of the countries from which they emigrated. In contrast to this “village Islam,” as they call it, the younger generation looks for a universal approach to religion, untainted by sectarian bias and cultural baggage, and moreover, one that can address the specific problems they face living in the West.

This search for a universal Islam, however, can cut two ways. On the one hand, it can lead them to emphasize those aspects of Islam that resonate with universal values, such as tolerance, openness, pluralism, etc., or they can be led to equate the search for universal Islam with a focus on global Muslim causes, civilizational struggles, and fantasies of a renewed Shariah-based Caliphate.

Most worrying about the violent strains of Islamist ideology in my eyes is the fact that it travels so well. It is portable precisely because it is so decontextualized and unencumbered by local practicalities. It is very easy under the right circumstances for almost any Muslim anywhere to see himself reflected in its story.

Second, radical groups depend and prey upon those whose knowledge of religion is relatively weak. To this end, they will frequently target new converts to Islam or those who were born Muslim but whose sense of religiosity was only awakened later in life. Thus, someone steeped in traditional Islamic learning is actually better equipped with the resources needed to recognize the fraudulent and often decontextualized ideas that radical groups try to circulate as supposedly authentic Islamic knowledge. To this end, we might consider to what extent a scaling up of the right kind of religious education, rather than a wholesale deemphasizing of Islamic education in favor of secular subjects, might be an effective tool in countering violent Islamism.

Third, Islamist radicalism often succeeds in providing a sense of identity, purpose, and a framework through which to participate in confrontational politics. It is often particularly appealing to those
of hybrid or mixed identity who are well educated and newly attuned to global political issues, that is, easily influenced young people trying to find a way for themselves in the world. As we already know, recruitment into radical movements, particularly in the West, does not correlate with socio-economic disenfranchisement or low levels of educational attainment. Quite the opposite.

Those drawn to these ideologies often have a sense of Muslims as an oppressed group, drawing on, in the case of the U.K., a very tangible and real sense of social discrimination, even where they do not have first-hand experience of this discrimination themselves. In other words, there is a displaced political consciousness that convinces itself that it must fight on behalf of those who cannot fight for themselves.

Finally, moving now beyond the more structured environment of known Islamist groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and into the less-charted waters of what Marc Sageman recently called “leaderless jihad,” it is in my mind increasingly debatable whether we are dealing with a full and systematic political ideology as our chief nemesis in the realm of ideas or whether an increasing number of young Muslims drawn to violent extremism are doing something more akin to role playing themselves within a grand narrative of inter-civilizational struggle, or aspiring to some kind of superhero status, taking their pointers from larger-than-life figures in video games, movies, and popular culture as much as from religious scholars and systematic political ideologies. Such a trend, I believe, would represent a particularly dangerous development because it would point to the possibility of an individual moving very quickly to a point where he is willing to use violence without having to be systematically staged through various levels of ideological radicalization.

Let me conclude this morning by making three broad points. First, we were asked to address the question of how a more in-depth understanding of the ideology of violent Islamism can improve America’s national security. We need to recognize that violent Islamism is part of a wider ecology of Muslim and Islamist thought and practice. By developing a better understanding of that ecology, we will have a greater capacity to discern who else within that ecosystem has the capacity to work against the growth of the extremist current. I believe that our efforts thus far to address this question have failed to think effectively and creatively about the question of potential Muslim partners and allies.

Moreover, and although it may seem counterintuitive to say so, I would suggest that some of the most valuable contributions to combatting terrorism in the name of Islam have and can come from those who have passed through or who operate on the fringes of Islamist groups and movements. This is, however, very complex territory, riddled with many, and sometimes dangerous, shades of gray.

Second, I would like to highlight what I have consistently emphasized to be the growing importance and concern that I have around groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir in the post-September 11, 2001, and July 7, 2005 environments. HT in the U.K. has responded very effectively to the polarizing political environment around Islam and Muslims. In recent years, the group has also un-
dergone something of a cosmetic makeover so as to render it palatable to a constituency beyond the angry university cohorts that were its mainstay in the 1990s.

While it publicly recants violence and while the number of active HT members may not be swelling, I think it is fair to say that the ranks of the group's passive supporters have increased considerably in recent years. And while HT may not be the direct conveyor belt into terrorism that some have implied, there is no doubt that the world view it espouses is particularly divisive and can render its followers ripe for cultivation by the enablers of militant agendas. Given the particular expertise and experience of two of our other panelists this morning, I am sure we will be hearing more about this group.

Finally, we should consider the question of what the United States might be able to learn from the U.K. experience with radical Islam. In this regard, I think it would be particularly useful to look at some of the pros and cons of various policy responses of the U.S. Government and law enforcement agencies and also the efforts of various Muslim organizations in the U.K., also to mixed result. In the interest of time, I will not be able to provide a full inventorying of what has and hasn’t worked in the U.K. in terms of policy and around Muslim organizations, but would be more than happy to answer questions on this issue.

In my written statement, I addressed the crucial differences between Muslim communities in the U.K. and the United States in terms of levels of socio-economic attainment and social integration. On the surface, it would seem that many of the factors that allow violent Islamist ideologies to find a receptive audience in Europe are simply not present in the United States, and yet the number of abortive plots and arrests made in this country over the past few years suggest that the potential for homegrown terrorism exists here, as well.

While thus far these seem to be largely isolated incidents with little evidence of a more systematic trend at work, it is likely that we will continue to see efforts by limited numbers of American Muslims inhabiting the dense mediascapes of YouTube, online social networking, and jihadi websites to try to bring their violent fantasies to fruition. While the theory of leaderless jihad means that this kind of activity will be increasingly difficult for any government or law enforcement agency to detect, it is not all about self-starter, do-it-yourself terrorism. Enablers of militancy and divisive Islamist activists still play a role in priming the environment, and where the individuals, entities, and spaces to which they operate can be discerned, action can be taken.

Thank you for your attention and again for the opportunity to address the Committee this morning.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Mandaville. Excellent statement, and I promise you we will in the question and answer period ask you to talk some about what your studies of the activities of the government in the U.K. have shown and what they tell us about what might work here and what might not. Thank you.

Our next witness is Ms. Zeyno Baran, the Director of the Center on Eurasian Policy and a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute,
where she researches strategies aimed at stemming the spread of radical Islamist ideologies, particularly in Europe. Ms. Baran has done a great deal of research also on the Muslim Brotherhood movement around the world, including here in the United States, and in February published an article entitled, “The Muslim Brotherhood’s US Network,” which I would enter into the record of this hearing in full.\(^1\)

Thank you for being here and we welcome your testimony now.

**TESTIMONY OF ZEYNO BARAN,** \(^2\) SENIOR FELLOW AND DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EURASIAN POLICY, HUDSON INSTITUTE

Ms. Baran. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, and Senator Voinovich. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would like to submit my written statement, please, and summarize.

I will very briefly discuss what is at the root of violent Islamist extremism, which I believe is Islamist ideology. Mr. Nawaz has explained it in great detail, so I am grateful to him and I will skip certain parts of my presentation. Second, I will talk about the institutionalization of Islamism in America, which is, I think, a very serious problem, a growing problem. And finally, I will highlight some areas in which I think the U.S. Government has adopted self-defeating policies and then suggest some alternatives.

I understand for most Americans, dealing with Islamism is extremely difficult because it is associated with Islam. Very few people dare to question beliefs or actions of Muslims because nobody wants to be called a bigot or an Islamophobe. That is why we need to be very clear. What needs to be countered is Islamism, the political ideology, not Islam, the religion.

The religion itself is compatible with secular liberal democracy and basic civil liberties. The political ideology, however, is diametrically opposed to liberal democracy because it dictates that Islamic law, Shariah, to be the only basis for the legal and political system that governs the world’s economic, social, and judicial mechanisms and that Islam must shape all aspects of life. Although various Islamist groups differ over tactics, they all agree on the end game: A world dictated by political Islam. While many do not openly call for violence, they provide an ideological springboard for future violence.

The first modern Islamist movement, as we know, is the Muslim Brotherhood, and numerous splinter groups came out of it, often more radical, and they have in turn given rise to yet more splinter groups. So consequently, there is now an exponential growth of fairly radical Islamist organizations active all over the world, including in cyberspace. Of course, not all Islamists will one day become terrorists, but all Islamist terrorists start with non-violent Islamism.

For example, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of September 11, 2001, was first drawn to violent jihad after attending Brotherhood youth camps. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood’s motto says it all: Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The

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\(^1\)The article appears in the Appendix on page 119.

\(^2\)The prepared statement of Ms. Baran appears in the Appendix on page 68.
Koran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.

Islamism is ultimately a long-term social engineering project. The eventual Islamization of the world is to be enacted via a bottom-up process. Initially, the individual is Islamized into becoming a true Muslim. The process requires the person to reject Western norms of pluralism, individual rights, and the secular rule of law. The process continues as the individual's family is transformed, followed by the society, and then the state. Finally, the entire world is expected to live and be governed by Islamist principles. So it is this ideology machinery that works to promote separation, sedition, and hatred, and that is at the core of Islamist violent extremism.

I think it is important to underline that violent Islamists believe they are engaged in what is called a defensive jihad, which has broad acceptance among many Muslims. The logic is that under "just war theory," armed jihad can be waged when Muslims and Islam is under attack. And since the West is waging war against Islam, if not militarily then culturally, Muslims have an obligation to participate in a defensive jihad.

Now, let me very briefly discuss two Brotherhood splinter groups to show how these groups progressively become more radical. Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), was founded by a Brotherhood member who over time wanted to use a more radical methodology and started his own organization. HT's key focus has been the creation of a worldwide Islamic community, Ummah, and the reestablishment of the Caliphate. For many decades, these ideas were considered extreme. More recently, they have been adapted as mainstream by most Islamists.

HT members claim to want freedom and justice; but the freedom they want is, I believe, freedom from democracy, and the justice they want can only be found under Islamist rule. Under such rule, Muslims who do not abide by Shariah law will be, in their terms, considered as apostates and liable to punishment according to Islamic law. Or to put it more directly, they will be executed.

The freedom and justice HT seeks by overthrowing democracy can often only be attained through violence. However, HT is not likely to take up terrorism itself. Terrorist acts are simply not part of its mission. HT exists to serve as an ideological and political training ground for Islamists. That is why I have called them a conveyor belt to terrorism. In order to best accomplish this goal, HT will remain non-violent, acting within the legal system of the countries in which it operates. Actually the same can be said about many of the Islamist organizations, including the Brotherhood. These groups do not need to become terrorists because winning the hearts and minds is much more effective in achieving the ultimate goal. But, of course, they do not rule out the use of force if they cannot establish their Caliphate via non-violent means.

HT has led to the formation of even more radical and militant groups than itself, such as al-Muhajiroun. The founder, again, was at first with the Muslim Brotherhood, then became an Hizb ut-Tahrir member, and when he had a falling out with the leadership of HT over tactics, he formed an even more radical organization. Note that the difference in all these splits was not about ideas or ultimate goal. It was about how best to achieve them.
Al-Muhajiroun has direct links to Osama bin Laden, to Hamas and Hezbollah, and blatantly advocates for terrorist acts. Over the years, it has sent hundreds of British men to Afghanistan and Pakistan for jihadi training. Some of those came back and attacked their homeland on July 7, 2005.

Now, as we know, people don’t just wake up one day and randomly decide to commit a violent act. There is almost always a process of radicalization and a network of like-minded people who become enablers. In the West, Muslims undergoing an identity crisis are the most vulnerable. There are also those who are perfectly well adjusted and integrated and simply want to learn more about their religion. If these well-meaning citizens end up getting their information from Islamists, they, too, can become radicalized over time, and that is precisely why we need to be concerned that the most prominent Muslim organizations in America were either created by or are associated with the Muslim Brotherhood and are, therefore, very heavily influenced by Islamist ideology. In fact, over the course of four decades, Islamists have taken over the leadership in almost all Islam-related areas in America, and today, as a recent New York Police Department (NYPD) report also stated, there is a serious homegrown threat in the United States.

How did this happen? Muslim Brotherhood members from the Middle East and South Asia began coming to the United States in the 1960s as students, and then they received money and other support from the Gulf, mostly from the Saudis, to undertake a whole range of activities to change the perception of Islamism and Wahhabism in America from extremist to mainstream. And I think they have been fairly successful.

Following the bottom-up approach that I mentioned, focusing on education, the first organizations were created in America were the Muslim Student Associations in universities. After they graduated, the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT) was created in order to expand these radical ideas, and extend the influence of Islamism beyond college campuses. In the 1980s, several other prominent Islamist organizations were created, including the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), and after Hamas was created in 1987 in Gaza, the IAP became its leading representative in North America.

There are a whole set of other organizations that can be added to this list. I will just mention the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), which I believe was created by the Brotherhood to influence the U.S. Government, Congress, Non-government organizations (NGOs), along with academic and media groups. Despite being founded by leading Islamists, CAIR has successfully portrayed itself as a mainstream Muslim organization over the past 15 years and has been treated as such by many government officials, including Presidents Clinton and Bush.

What is critically important in all these organizations is their support for one another. The same leaders appear in multiple organizations, tend to have familiar relations, and move within the same closed, trusted circles. Outwardly, they all appear to be different entities, but they are actually part of a carefully planned Islamization effort.
It is also very important to note that despite their outwardly moderate positions, NAIT, ISNA, and CAIR were all named as unindicted co-conspirators in a Federal case against the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, which was charged with providing millions of dollars to Hamas. This trial provided us with a shocking set of documents. One document outlining the general strategic goal for the group in America explains that Muslims in America should consider their mission as a “civilization jihadist” responsibility, which they describe as a kind of grand jihad in “eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and sabotaging its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.” Clearly, in this case, jihad is not intended to be an inner personal struggle as it is often claimed by Islamists when they must explain when they are caught in calling for jihad.

Therefore it is not surprising that large sections of the institutionalized Islamic leadership in America do not support U.S. counterterrorism policy. Far from it. They denounce virtually every terrorism indictment or investigation as a religiously motivated attack on Islam instead of considering whether the individual in question actually broke any laws. They instinctively blame legal accusations on McCarthyism or anti-Muslim conspiracies.

So coming back to the title of this hearing, how can the U.S. counter this extremism and who can be the partners in this effort? First and foremost, U.S. Government entities and all those individuals tasked with so-called Muslim outreach need to know who they are dealing with before bestowing legitimacy on them as moderate Muslims. There have already been rather embarrassing cases of top government officials, including Presidents, posing with their moderate Muslim friends, only to find later that the person was providing funding to enemies of the United States.

Many of the American Islamic organizations are established to further a political agenda. They are not civil rights groups. They are not faith groups. They are political entities with a very clear political agenda. Without this understanding, I believe all kinds of mistakes will continue to be made. For example, for months now, FBI agents have been trained by CAIR to be sensitive to Muslims. This is completely self-defeating.

Second, it is an Islamist myth that U.S. support and engagement for truly moderate Muslims would discredit these Muslims in the eyes of the community. This, I believe, is a trick to keep the United States away from non-Islamists while the Islamists continue to enjoy all kinds of access and influence. Islamists thrive on U.S. support and engagement, which effectively legitimizes their self-appointed status as representatives of the Muslim community. This engagement also legitimizes their self-appointed ability to judge the Muslimness of others.

Third, the mantra that only non-violent Islamists can pull radicalized Muslims away from terrorism is completely illogical. The reason that these people were radicalized is Islamist ideology. If the Brotherhood and related groups could keep these people under control, they would have done so already. These people either left Brotherhood organizations or do not want to be affiliated
with them precisely because they have moved on to more radical platforms. So, as long as Islamism is actively spread, its ideas will continue to wreak havoc.

The only true allies in countering an ideology that is fundamentally opposed to America and its ideas are those Muslims who share American ideas, or at the very least do not work to undermine them. This group includes the pious and the practicing, the liberal, the secular, and the cultural ones; the quiet but still the overwhelming majority of American Muslims. The Muslims that need active support are non-Islamist Muslims who understand the inherent incompatibility between Islamism’s desired imposition of Shariah law upon society at large and Western society’s pluralism and equality. Non-Islamist Muslims are on the American side on the war of ideas. They can be practicing or not. That is irrelevant. After all, the issues the terrorists raise to gain support are often unrelated to Islam as a religion.

I can go on and on, but I am already over my time, so in closing, I would like to underline that to effectively counter the further spread of violent manifestations of Islamism, the United States needs to seriously engage in countering the Islamist ideology and I believe a good start would be to reveal the deception of the Islamists, especially in America, and start working with true allies. Thank you very much.

Chairman Lieberman. Thank you very much, Ms. Baran. That was, as somebody else would say, straight talk. I appreciate your testimony. I appreciate your courage, frankly, and we look forward to asking you questions, particularly about the line of your testimony regarding how the government finds organizations of what you have described as non-Islamist Muslim Americans.

The final witness on this quite remarkable panel is Dr. Ali Moghaddam, a professor at Georgetown University and Director of the Conflict Resolution Program, also a Senior Fellow at the Center for Policy Education and Research on Terrorism. Dr. Moghaddam, thank you for being here and please proceed with your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF FATHALI M. MOGHADDAM, PH.D., PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, AND DIRECTOR, CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. Moghaddam. Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Senator Voinovich, thank you for the invitation. Because ideology is a major focus here, let me begin by clarifying my own biases. Like hundreds of millions of other Muslims, I am hopeful that Islamic societies around the world, including in the Middle East, will move toward more openness in political, economic, and cultural terms. The open democratic Islamic society will be more peaceful, more productive, more affluent, more just for both women and men, and better for the global economy. To a significant degree, the higher oil prices are a result of the dictatorships, monopolies, corruption, and lack of open competition and inefficiency.

But to achieve a more open Islamic society, we need to overcome violent Islamist extremism. That is one of the obstacles. In order
to evaluate this particular obstacle, I find it instructive to review the letter of invitation I received for this panel, which states the purpose of the Senate hearing to be to explore the ideologies as the root source for the radicalization of potential followers of al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist organizations around the world.

I believe it is useful to critically assess the assumption that an ideology is the root source for the radicalization of potential followers of al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist organizations around the world. An ideology does not exist in a vacuum, nor does it arise in a vacuum, nor is it static, as religion is not static. Christianity 1,000 years ago was very different from Christianity today and we hope Islam will change in the direction that is more constructive, away from Islamist ideology, obviously.

In the Georgetown University libraries, there are hundreds of books that write about very fanatical ideologies, including fundamentalist Christian ideologies that could be used to launch terrorist attacks. Why is it that Georgetown students do not become terrorists? Well, clearly, because the availability of violent Islamist ideology serves as a necessary but not a sufficient cause for terrorist action.

We must ask, then, what are the factors that combine with a particular ideology to lead to violent Islamist extremism? How does an ideology supportive of violent Islamist extremism come to influence individuals to support and commit terrorist acts? I have addressed this question by adopting a big picture approach, exploring radicalization and terrorism in the context of both cultural evolution and globalization.

In order to clarify my viewpoint, I find it useful to use a staircase metaphor. Think of a building with a staircase at its center. There are many floors and people are on these different floors. There are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims on the ground floor. On each of the floors that lead up to a terrorist act, there are different psychological processes. I have gone into the details in my written statement. For here, what I will do is just summarize.

The millions of Muslims on the ground floor, they are, of course, potentially influenced by violent Islamist ideology, but there are many other factors. Some of the factors that I have explored are perceived injustice, relative deprivation, identity and inadequate identity in the Islamic world. I have argued that Islamic communities around the world are experiencing an identity crisis. Before us as Muslims, there seem to be two viable options at the moment. One option is to copy the West. The other option is to become a Salafist or to return to pure Islam.

Now, why is there not a third alternative option? That is a very important question, particularly in Middle East. Why is there not a secular constructive alternative option? Well, the simple answer is that the regimes of that region in particular do not allow for a separate option. If you are in Egypt and you happen to be a secular politician, particularly during election time, you had better hide because you will either end up dead or in prison or you must escape abroad. So the potential for a third constructive identity, particularly in the near and Middle East, which is at the heart of the matter, is not there at the moment. I am going to come back to this later.
So in the staircase of terrorism, the few people who do go and commit terrorist acts, they are influenced by many factors other than or in addition to the violent Islamist ideology.

Let me now turn to specifically the idea of homegrown terrorism. I discuss this particularly in relation to what I call the distance traveled hypothesis. The distance traveled hypothesis simply states that the distance that an immigrant has to travel to reach an adopted land is very much related to the material resources needed. If you are coming from North Africa or the Middle East to the United States, you need a great deal more resources than to reach Turkey or France or England.

If you look at the Muslim population in the United States, generally, this population is well educated relative to the indigenous population. It is relatively well off. The perception of openness in the United States is very important. Muslims in the United States in major centers such as Detroit and Los Angeles are doing relatively well. They perceive the system to be open in general and that is a very important factor.

Another important factor related to the relative well-being of Muslims in the United States is that Muslims here are at a greater distance from the centers of radical Islamist ideology, such as Pakistan. This is a very different situation from Muslims in Germany, France, or England. And the historic advantage of the United States in assimilating immigrants—this is another factor to keep in mind. I am an immigrant to the United States and I have been an immigrant—I lived in England for a long time. I lived in Canada for 6 years. Relative to those countries, the United States is far better at incorporating and integrating immigrants. And part of the magic here is the American dream, the ideology that anyone can make it.

Let me turn now to the final part of my testimony, and that concerns a huge challenge confronting the United States, particularly in the global context. This challenge has arisen because of globalization.

Back in 1944, the great Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal published a work that we all know, “An American Dilemma.” Myrdal pointed out that there was a contradiction between American ideology in terms of self-help, individual responsibility, equality of opportunity, freedom, etc., on the one hand, and racial discrimination on the other. Myrdal pointed out that this was a huge dilemma that would have to be resolved, and it was resolved. Eventually through legislation, through cultural reform, we have achieved equality in terms of opportunities in the United States.

There is now a new global American dilemma. This dilemma is confronting us because, on the one hand, we have had in the last three decades at least a rhetoric of support for democracy, support for freedom, support for equality, etc., a rhetoric that says that democracy is not unique to the West or a monopoly of the West but should spread everywhere. On the one hand, we have this rhetoric. On the other hand, successive U.S. administrations have continued to support dictatorships in many countries in the Middle East. This dilemma has to be resolved because globalization would not allow it to continue, and I believe that it doesn't matter whether it is a
Democrat or a Republican or an Independent in the White House——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you. [Laughter.]

Mr. MOGHADEM. What we need is a resolution of this conflict, of this dilemma, because the dilemma is reverberating around the world.

If you go to the streets of Muslim countries in the Middle East, in North Africa, if you go to the Muslim communities in France, the South Asians in England, the Turks in Germany, you will find that in the communities there, they discuss this dilemma, and it needs to be resolved. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Doctor. Very thoughtful testimony. You have been an excellent panel and I thank you all.

We will start with a 7-minute round of questions by the Members. There may be a vote going off around 11, so hopefully we will each get in a round before we have to go over.

Mr. Nawaz, again, thank you for being here. I have many questions so I am going to ask you and the others if you can keep your answers as brief as possible and still respond. I wanted to ask you, just in terms of your own experience, take a brief moment and tell us about how you were radicalized at college. In other words, what was the process? You mentioned in your testimony you had adequate grounds for grievance in your personal experience, but how did the radicalization process by HT occur?

Mr. Nawaz. I can summarize that in two points, and that is a crisis of identity and a crisis of faith. Being born and raised in the U.K., growing up in Essex in the early 1990s, there were a lot of racist troubles in my home county and there were an organized group of racist thugs who would target us with violence. And so the questions arose in my mind as to exactly who I was. Was I British? Was I English? Was I Pakistani, which is the country of my grandfather? Was I Muslim?

So these combined with the problems in the mosques—the imams of the mosques in those days were, and still are to a large extent today, imported from the Indian subcontinent. The standards of their education were poor relative to standards in the Indian subcontinent, let alone to the standards in the U.K. The tradition over there is that somebody who fails in his education is sent to become a mosque imam, and that is if he fails in his education in Pakistan. And yet this man comes to the U.K. who can't speak English and he is expected to lead a congregation in a mosque with the vast majority of the people that pray in the mosque being second- or third-generation British citizens who only speak English.

And it was at the vulnerable stage, being a teenager, being 15, 16 years old, that I happened across a medical student who didn't have any of the obstacles in communication that the mosque imams had. He was a medical student, again, educated in the U.K., who
could relate to my problems and had joined Hizb ut-Tahrir in London when he went to study. And he came across very articulately and provided the answers to the crises I had in my identity and faith and demonstrated that, in fact, my identity wasn't British and it wasn't Pakistani but these are, in fact, identities given to me by colonialists. My identity was something pre-colonial, and that was belonging to the global Caliphate. So he provided an ideology that gave me black-and-white answers to the very real grievances that I faced.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's (HT) process of indoctrination is quite intense. A member is expected to sit for two solid hours minimum every week in what they refer to as a study cell, and discuss and engage in debate in this ideology, and that is a mandatory requirement for members of HT. And then when he becomes a member of the party, he is also expected to teach for a further two hours for his own cell, and that is the minimum and it will obviously be more than that if he is committed.

So this indoctrination phase involves recalibrating those grievances, which are initially localized grievances, and turning them into something which is identified with a global struggle, and I think that we can't miss either of these. We have to consider the role that real grievances play in providing recruits who are not yet ideologues in joining the ranks of Islamist organizations and then the role that the ideology plays in reframing those grievances and turning them into some notion of a global or perennial conflict.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that answer very much.

Ms. Baran made a statement. Obviously, we are talking here about distinguishing between the religion of Islam and the political ideology of Islamism. She said something I thought quite direct and provocative and important, which is, and I paraphrase, that all Islamist terrorists start with non-violent Islamism. Would you agree with that?

Mr. NAWAZ. One hundred percent.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Let me now go to your definition of Islamism, the four characteristics you cited. Consistent with what we just said, these are not necessarily all of them violent, but they may be the precursor to violence. I was particularly struck, and I have been through this but I want you to talk about it, that you said that those who adopt the Islamist ideology are committed to making Shariah state law. So do we understand from that that the members of Islamist groups in the U.K., or in the United States, who themselves are not violent nonetheless are committed to making Shariah law the law of the U.K. or the United States as opposed to the existing law?

Mr. NAWAZ. Again, this is an ideational discussion, so in terms of practicalities and tactics, the groups will differ. Hizb ut-Tahrir does not target the Western world to establish the Shariah as state law. Rather, they don't even target the whole Muslim world. What they have decided to do practicality-wise is identify key countries, Turkey being one of them, Egypt being another, Syria being another. Iraq used to be one of them until the intervention there. Pakistan definitely is one of them, which is why I was sent there when they acquired a nuclear bomb.
They target key countries. If you notice with all these countries, they have military strength, and they target those countries with the purpose of gaining power first in those countries, which they call the starting point. The intention after that is to expand and then encompass the surrounding lands and eventually the whole world.

Now, that is HT. The Brotherhood's organization, the Brotherhood has a similar understanding——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. The Muslim Brotherhood?

Mr. NAWAZ. The Muslim Brotherhood. They will target the Muslim world first and with a view to establishing side by side a federation of Islamic countries, which will then all eventually become one and then expand from there.

The purpose of these organizations in the West, I again summarize into three points, and that is to recruit, and those recruits can then be sent back to Muslim-majority countries, as I was, to recruit in those Muslim-majority countries and they have the standing in society as being educated in the West, as speaking English, as being relatively more wealthy, and so they command that immediate respect.

The second aim is to raise funds. Now, the Pound Sterling goes a very long way in Pakistan, I can assure you. It goes quite far here in the United States, as well. So it is to raise funds.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Farther than we would like. [Laughter.]

Mr. NAWAZ. That is to my advantage. And the third is act as a political and diplomatic hub. London especially is the center for the international Arab media. Now, even before I left HT, I appeared on the media regularly, and in fact, BBC's “Hard Talk” interviewed me and I was able to use that as a platform to project what was even at the time a relatively moderate version of HT's ideology to my own internal confusions. However, HT and other Islamist organizations, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, have been very successful in using the Western countries as a media and diplomatic hub.

So those three general strands are what they are looking to achieve. But the establishment of the Shariah law as state law is focused on, for practical purposes, the Muslim-majority countries with a view to expanding after that.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Very helpful. I am really out of time, but I want to give you, Ms. Baran, just a moment to get into this discussion, if you want to add anything to Mr. Nawaz's characteristics of Islamism as opposed to Islam, and if you want to say anything about what you take to be the goals of the Islamist movement within the United States.

Ms. BARAN. I agree with Mr. Nawaz. One thing I would like to add is that I am originally from Turkey, one of the countries where the groups would like to establish Shariah law. When I was growing up there, a very different understanding of Islam was mainstream. And when I first came to this country, I was quite surprised that I saw so much Islamism at university campuses, and I do believe, because I was also very actively involved as a student activist during the Bosnian war, if it wasn’t for my background in a different type of an Islamic upbringing, I probably would have joined one of the radical organizations—probably Hizb ut-Tahrir.
In the West, including in the United States, the focus is to enable having the Shariah law for Muslim communities—so having Shariah for American Muslims, having Shariah in certain parts of Britain for British Muslims. We see more and more of these discussions coming up. In Canada several years ago, it came very close.

I think as these groups increase their activity, we will probably hear more demands for Shariah for American Muslims. They will say it will be compatible with the American legal system and probably there will be analogies made with Jewish traditions and others. But, of course, the big difference is what Mr. Nawaz said; that normally, you don’t try to impose your belief on the whole society and community. The West, including the United States, is now the best place for Islamists because of the openness, and of the tolerance of many different ways of living. This is where the Islamist communities get organized, funded, provide the structure, but the focus still is to change the Muslim-majority countries.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much. Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Ms. Baran, you gave us a very different picture this morning of the efforts of FBI agents to reach out to the Muslim community in our country. In previous hearings, witnesses have generally pointed to the FBI effort as being the model of outreach to the Muslim community. By contrast, in your testimony today, you stated, for months now, FBI agents have been trained by CAIR to be sensitive to Muslims, which you say is completely self-defeating. Could you expand on why you think the FBI’s effort is not an appropriate and worthwhile one?

Ms. BARAN. Sure. Thank you. As I mentioned, CAIR was created by Muslim Brotherhood organizations. It has ideological and other connections to groups like Hamas. It does not represent the Muslim community as a faith community; it is mostly focused on political issues. Often, we hear CAIR raising, for example, civil rights issues. But if you look at the cases, it is almost exclusively of those Muslims who are following a particular Islamist way of thinking. Issues about Muslims that are not Islamist or don’t follow a particular way of thinking are hardly ever raised.

So I can give many other examples, but ultimately, it is about what CAIR will define as sensitive, being properly respectful and sensitive to Muslims. If, indeed, the Islamist thinking is the way as Mr. Nawaz outlined, then the agents are going to be misinformed and they will be overly sensitive and they will not be able to ask certain questions or go in certain directions. They are going to be told whatever they want to ask or do will be offensive to Muslims: It is in Islam. Don’t touch this. Don’t go there. So I believe they are not going to be properly prepared for the work they need to be doing. There are other ways to reach Muslim communities. It is not just through CAIR, I believe.

Senator COLLINS. Whom should the FBI be dealing with?

Ms. BARAN. Well, if the issue is to reach to communities—

Senator COLLINS. Right.

Ms. BARAN [continuing]. Then other community organizations. There are women’s groups. There are all kinds of groups that are not organized based on an Islamic political issue. There are other forums; a whole set of non-Islamist-based organizations.
Now, going back to Chairman Lieberman’s question, where do you find those non-Islamist Muslims, or Muslim organizations? Well, as I said, some of these organizations that are there now and are easy to work with, they have been created over a period of decades with billions of dollars coming from the Gulf. So there is this established network and structure and money already there.

The alternative never has gotten support. This foundation that Mr. Nawaz is involved in was only created in January of this year, after there were homegrown terrorist attacks in Britain and after British citizens had to say, what is going on, and after people like him left these radical organizations. We don’t have that in America at this point.

Again, if you look at the NYPD report, there are many cases of homegrown extremism. We have been lucky that some of those terror attempts simply have not been successful. But I think at some point, hopefully soon, there will be people coming out and denouncing the ideology, but then the question is: Will they get money, will they get support? There is no money outside government support. The British government started to understand this and now supports organizations that are trying to help Britain. They have to somehow counter the money coming from the Gulf with other money.

Senator Collins. Thank you. Let me ask the two professors what you think of the FBI’s outreach efforts, whether you share the concerns that we have just heard. I will start with you, Dr. Mandaville.

Mr. Mandaville. Thank you, Senator Collins. I am not familiar with the specifics of the CAIR training program for the FBI and so the answer to the question, I think, would depend very much on what is going on in those sessions. If they are primarily aimed at providing basic information about Islam, Muslims, the basic beliefs, issues of cultural sensitivity, that is one matter.

I don’t share the view that CAIR as an organization is best understood primarily as a front for the Muslim Brotherhood, whose core agenda is about the realization of that ideological project. I do believe that there are individuals associated with that movement who hold those views, but I think we would be wrong to simply characterize the organization in its entirety in relation to that organization.

Senator Collins. Professor Moghaddam.

Mr. Moghaddam. I agree with Dr. Mandaville. I would also add that we are really looking at short-term issues here. I mean, in the longer term, the key to changing the situation, I believe, is to change the situation of Muslim women, and the way to do that is to make sure they have greater opportunities for equal participation in economic, political, cultural life outside the home, and when you do that, you transform the family, you transform the socialization of the next generation.

The FBI agents that I know, some of whom have been my students, former students, I don’t think they would have problems cross-examining Muslims in any way.

Senator Collins. Thank you. Mr. Nawaz, I have very little time left, but let me just read an excerpt from a report that I found very intriguing. In December 2007, the Dutch intelligence agency issued
a report warning that the Muslim Brotherhood has a strategy of covertly infiltrating social, political, and educational institutions, and the report went on to state, “rather than confronting the state power with direct violence, this strategy seeks to gradually undermine the state by infiltrating and eventually taking over civil service, the judiciary schools, local administrative units.” Do you think that is an accurate reflection of what the Muslim Brotherhood’s strategy is today in Western countries?

Mr. Nawaz. I think definitely it is an accurate description of the strategy the Muslim Brotherhood have been employing since the 1920s in Muslim-majority countries. In Western countries, they are beginning to move along this same track, and the reason why they are beginning to shift in the direction that you have just outlined is because we are now in the third generation of Muslims who are being born and raised in Western countries, such as myself, people who call themselves British Muslims, people who consider that our expression of faith is indigenously British by definition.

Now, you have at the same time Islamists who are in their third generation who express Islamism as a Western expression. They consider it something which is indigenous. So what they have decided to do, there has been a shift that the original tactics of the Brotherhood to gain power, political power in Muslim-majority countries, these guys do not belong to any of those countries. They don’t have nationality or citizenship of any of those countries. Their nationality, even their identity, is becoming Western. And so they are thinking, well, we are here to stay. What do we do if we are here to stay? This has become our home.

So a shift is occurring and we saw this in the U.K., that the institutionalization of Islamism is occurring, and what you have just described is within many factions of Islamist-inspired organizations who are not directly Muslim Brotherhood, it is the tactic that they are beginning to use.

I was the other day speaking to somebody who was a detective in our police services and happened to be Muslim. I know I have to keep this brief. And I was speaking to him about the July 7, 2005 bombings that occurred in London. This man, as I said, was serving in the police, a detective, and now he is serving as an immigration inspector at Heathrow Airport. And this man said to me, well, of course, you know it wasn’t the Muslims that committed July 7, 2005. It was the U.K. government and there is a conspiracy and these people are the ones who blew the trains up so they could further their aims and demonize the Muslim community. I said to him, my God, you really believe that? He said, of course. These people are against Muslims. And this is a policeman who is now working on the immigration patrol at Heathrow Airport.

His ideas come from somewhere. There is something we have in the U.K. called the Muslim Safety Forum, an organization that purports to advise the police. This forum has been largely influenced by Islamist ideals and these are the sorts of ideas that are coming out into law enforcement officers who happen to be Muslim. There is a concern we have.

So to summarize, I would say, yes, I am very concerned that the tactic is shifting and moving towards infiltrating with a view, because they now consider these countries their homes, with a view
to at least forming what I call Muslim-centric policies, if not to take over—that is still very much focus in the Muslim-majority countries—but to form Muslim-centric policies that only look after the affairs of the Muslim bloc as a bloc, as a fifth column.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Mr. NAWAZ. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Voinovich, a vote has just gone off and I want to propose this, that you take over and ask your questions. I think maybe Senator Collins and I will go over and vote, and if we don't get back by the time you finish your questions, please recess the hearing and I will begin again as soon as I come back.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much. Senator Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR VOINOVICH

Senator VOINOVICH [presiding]. Thank you. I want to thank both of you for holding this hearing.

One of the concerns that I have as a Senator, and a citizen of the United States, is that we have such little knowledge about the Muslim religion and the Koran. I am not here to hustle a book, but Dr. Moghaddam, I am promoting your colleague's, John Esposito's book called “What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam.” It is a fundamental book that I think lays out what the Muslim religion is about. Do you think this is a pretty good book? It answers lots of questions about Islam and what the Koran says and so forth.

Mr. MOGHADDAM. Yes. It is excellent.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK. The other is a gentleman I have met with, Imam Faisal Abdul Rauf, and he has an effort going throughout the United States now to try and prove that there is nothing inconsistent in the Koran with our Declaration of Independence and our principles here, that you can be a good Muslim and you can be a good United States citizen. They are not inconsistent with each other.

And last of all, the book “Mecca and Main Street,” by Geneive Abdo, whom I have met with. It is a very interesting book because of the fact that she, for 3 years, traveled around the United States and interviewed various Muslim people and commented on what she found, and what she said, and I would be interested in your reaction to this, is that “the younger generation of Muslims in particular is charting a different way of life. They are following new imams and placing their Muslim identity before their American one. And unlike their parents, they do not define themselves by their ethnic background as Pakistani, Palestinian, or Yemeni. Instead, they see themselves as belonging to a universal faith. Through their new organizations and websites, they exchange ideas about how to create a more Islamic lifestyle.

“Are there strident voices critical of U.S. foreign policies? Without doubt. But these voices, at least for now, have not made the leap as some European Muslims have toward violent radicalism.” That was kind of the summary of what she found while going to various communities.

And the other point I want to make is this, and it is one that you have made, Dr. Moghaddam. It is the issue of women's rights.
And I don’t know if any of you have read “Infidel.” I am finishing that book, as well as the “Nine Desires of Muslim Women.” All over the world, Muslim women are being cramped and I believe that the more we can open up opportunities for Muslim women to get out into society, the more impact we will have on moving in the direction that we would like, to see a more open secular society than we see today.

Dr. Mandaville, you said that while there is not yet evidence of a systemic or widespread threat of homegrown terrorism in the United States, it is worth considering the kind of circumstances that might allow such a situation to emerge. The real issue is what can we do to create an environment in the United States where it doesn’t happen. By the way, the people that I talk with in CAIR in Ohio, I like them. I think they are good. I don’t know what has influenced them, but I think they are pretty responsible citizens, and at least from my observation have been OK. But if these are organizations that we are not supposed to talk to or they are being influenced, who do we talk to?

Does anyone want to comment on that? Dr. Mandaville.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Thank you very much for the question, Senator Voinovich. To the point of what it would take, what circumstances would actually bring about a more pervasive or systemic problem with radicalization, this is where I think the differences between the United States, the Muslim community in this country, and Europe are very important. Muslim immigrants came to this country for the most part with high levels of education, often professional jobs in hand, and indeed, the data we have suggests that the average Muslim household income in the United States is actually at or slightly above the national average for the United States as a whole, compared with Europe, where we actually see the average Muslim family in the lowest 20 percentile of household income.

The structures for addressing grievances when Muslims here have them, I think are better available than in the United Kingdom, which again on the surface of it, as I have said in my testimony, suggests that this kind of homegrown radicalization is likely to be less of a problem here, although we obviously have seen instances of it.

My concern in part is that one thing that would lead to this becoming a more pervasive problem is an increased sense of victimization on the part of the American-Muslim community, if it increasingly feels as if it is being singled out. This is very much a dynamic that has happened in the United Kingdom and one can explain it and put the blame——

Senator VOINOVICH. And by the way, I think people should understand, it is the fastest growing religion in the United States today.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Absolutely. Yes. In the case of the United Kingdom, a number of the Muslim organizations themselves have not been particularly helpful in this regard. Mr. Nawaz mentioned the Muslim Safety Forum, and I believe that the dynamic coming out of that group has been very much as he has characterized it. There are certain self-appointed spokesmen for the Muslim community in Europe and the United Kingdom that have a tendency towards self-victimization. At the same time, however, some of the
funding and some of the outreach coming from law enforcement and government agencies in that country has been exclusively devoted to issues of radicalization and terrorism. Some, particularly the younger generation within the community being primed in this very polarized environment by some of the ideas coming out of groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, increasingly have a sense of themselves as a community being defined in relation to terrorism, being told that its sole contribution to society is to counter radicalization.

Now, this is a concern that the community has. However, the Muslim community has any number of other concerns, and so my fear is of a growing dissonance, a gap between the concerns and issues that the community sees and the priorities of those in the government and local authorities who are reaching out to them.

Senator VOINOVICH. I am going to have to recess this hearing because I have to go vote, and I am sure that Senator Lieberman and Senator Collins will be back. Ms. Baran, you did not have an opportunity to respond to my questions. Do you have real quick responses?

Ms. BARAN. I just want to be clear. I am sure an overwhelming majority of people in CAIR or other organizations I have named are good citizens, decent people, wonderful human beings. That is not the issue. I am talking about the institutions and the leadership. So I am sure the people you met are really good, wonderful people. And also being nice does not mean they don’t have a different ideology. We need to be clear about that.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK. Well, that ideology hasn’t bubbled up as far as my relationships with them.

I will be back. This hearing is recessed until Senator Lieberman comes back.

[Recess.]

Chairman LIEBERMAN [presiding]. Let us reconvene the hearing. Thank you for your patience. I know Senator Collins will return. We will go now to another 7-minute round of questions.

Dr. Mandaville, I want to bring you into the discussion particularly in regard to what your research tells us about the policies of the government of the United Kingdom in relationship to various Muslim groups or Islamist groups in the U.K. What lessons do we learn from that?

Mr. MANDAVILLE. There are two points in particular, Senator Lieberman, that I would like to make in this regard. First, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and in the wake of the July 7, 2005, bombings in London, the chief interlocutor for the U.K. government in terms of outreach to the Muslim community was an organization called the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), founded in the late 1990s. This is an umbrella organization representing some 500 Muslim organizations, national, regional, local in nature, spanning the gamut from madrassas operating in the Pakistani model essentially up in rural Yorkshire in Northern England, to quite relatively cosmopolitan, progressive, professional Muslim organizations in the southern cities of England. So there is a wide range of views within this entity, meaning that its claims to be able to say anything representative on behalf of something called the British Muslim community were always dubious.
And part of the problem here, I think, and this was a lesson that the U.K. government learned after some years, was the fact that most Muslims in the U.K., and I would argue in the United States, as well, do not understand or pursue their religiosity or their religious identity primarily through groups and organizations.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Furthermore, with the case of the Muslim Council of Britain, the leadership ranks of this organization tended to feature, in my view, a fairly disproportionate number of individuals with strong linkages to some of the Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at-i Islami, and they have managed to maintain something of a stranglehold over that organization. This is unfortunate because I believe that there are within the second and third generation of Muslims in the United Kingdom those who are ready to set off on a different course and I think could have a major impact.

Now, what happened is that the Muslim Council of Britain, for any number of reasons that I won't go into, found itself in a number of controversies and the U.K. government began to see that it was not necessarily the most effective point of interlocution with the community. So a couple of years later, the MCB was, I think it is fair to say, deprioritized as that point of contact and any number of organizations were brought into the picture, and I think that move was important simply because they began to realize that there really was no such thing as an organization that represents the Muslim community in the U.K.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So in reaching to other organizations, did the U.K. government attempt to reach out to—you posited a problem here——

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Yes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN [continuing]. Which is that most Muslims, I suppose like most other people of other religions, don't belong to organizations. So if minority views or extremist views, Islamist views are disproportionately represented, let me put it that way——

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Yes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN [continuing]. In the organizations, how do the authorities, how does the government reach out to try to create constructive linkages with the Muslim community? So were any of these other organizations—for instance, I wonder if there are not uniquely religious organizations that don't have a political agenda within the Islamic community.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Yes, absolutely. The shift that we saw 2 years ago went along two different lines, and I think there is utility in looking at that, and also, I think, looking at what the German government has been doing in recent years with its new Islamic Conference. The German government had the benefit of the hindsight of the British experience, I think, and when the Minister of Interior in Germany set up the Islamic Conference, they made sure to include within its membership a number of Muslim members at large who are not actually affiliated with any organizations per se, but who had a following, who were notable voices and figures representing particular constituents and local groups.
What the British government has done is to widen its outreach to include groups that will represent either more sectarian views or groups such as the Sufi Muslim Council, which is not at all political in orientation. Now, part of the problem that they have encountered, I think, is the question of the extent to which some of the groups they have reached out to or some of the groups that have come to them wanting to be reached out to actually represent sizeable constituencies within the community or have any legitimacy.

A more profitable line that I think that they went down is to abandon the idea of trying to find representative groups altogether and focus instead on problems, to get back to this idea that Mr. Nawaz mentioned that we are talking about local grievances that get turned into global problems.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. So let us start not by addressing or trying to find particular organizations to work with but by identifying problems and work this issue via local problems rather than particular groups and associations.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. But problems uniquely within the Muslim community?

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Yes, and in some cases these are problems that are unique to a community that is often living a highly ghettoized, insular existence in the peri-urban areas of post-industrial Northern cities in England where levels of employment are very low——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. In other words, the problems may not be uniquely Muslim. Obviously, there are non-Muslims who are experiencing high unemployment. But the governmental reaction may be directed at the problems and perhaps focused on the Muslim community.

Mr. MANDAVILLE. Absolutely right, and what my research would suggest is that a profitable line of inquiry, or a profitable line of policy in this regard would actually be to encourage Muslims and non-Muslims who share those same kinds of problems to form coalitions focused not on their religious identity, but the fact that they face a similar kind of issue regarding access to education, access to social mobility, so that the focus becomes the shared issue that we face and not the religion.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Dr. Mandaville.

Ms. Baran, let me ask you to comment on this idea that Dr. Mandaville has just suggested as one path to find the non-Islamist leadership or membership within the Muslim community. I mean, you have said to us today that most Muslim Americans are not Islamist, and yet if I am hearing you correctly, you are also saying that a lot of the established Muslim organizations are, if not dominated, disproportionately influenced by Islamist groups. I have a quote from your testimony. You have a section, and which will be part of the record of the Committee, and it is quite strong and provocative, but I think very important to listen to.

"The most prominent Muslim organizations in America were either created by or associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Wahhabis, and they have therefore been heavily influenced by Islamist ideology over the course of four decades. Islamists have taken over the leadership in almost all Islam-related areas in
America. This is scary”—these are your words—“yet almost no one in the U.S. Government deals with it.”

So I take it that in speaking about—for instance, as Senator Collins said, we had testimony here saying that—including from Muslim organizations and the FBI that they, surprisingly, do the best outreach to the Muslim-American community. So I take your testimony not to dispute that in terms of the volume or quantity of the outreach, but to say that in that outreach, they may actually be influenced disproportionately by Islamist ideology and Islamist groups.

Ms. Baran. Yes. Thank you. I think what we just heard from Professor Mandaville in the British case is a very good example, and there are a lot of parallels in terms of what those in the British system end up learning, even though at the beginning they did not want to move away from established partnerships. Moving away from these partnerships brings political cost.

For me, the question is what is the purpose of outreach? You can always have nice conversations with a whole set of people. What is the purpose? Is the purpose, as some people in the law enforcement have told me, to co-opt them? If that is the case, then I think the people who are doing the outreach are being co-opted because they are going into an area where they are not well educated or informed and they are open to learning. They are not critical and they are not criticizing because as I said, they think what is told to them is Islam and they are not qualified to judge or ask questions about a particular religion.

If the goal of outreach is to talk to the Muslim community, fine, but what is the point? The point is that we want these citizens to be happy, loyal, and, of course, also for homeland security concerns, not radicalized, not engaged in terrorist acts. Then the issue is not to reach out to them based on their Islamic identity or based on their religiosity, but based on the problems.

Chairman Lieberman. Right.

Ms. Baran. And in general, we are lucky that in America, of course, Muslims do not have the same kind of problems that we often find in Europe. So the purpose of outreach, the counterpart you choose, what you want to get out of those interactions needs to be much more clearly defined. I think after September 11, 2001, there was this urge that we have to talk to Muslims and we have to make sure that they don’t hate us. But I think now that with enough time, we understand that alone does not really answer the questions and doesn’t resolve anything. I think if we look at the
rate of radicalization among American youth and look at all the activities of outreach, we don’t see necessarily an impact.

So there is one set of outreach that needs to be done to understand the community issues and resolve them, but there are also issues that deal with the ideology and what is being supplied. I mean, ultimately, if you think about supply and the result, then we have to address both elements.

Chairman Lieberman. Thank you very much. I would like to come back to that briefly in a moment. My time is up, though. Senator Collins.

Senator Collins. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just one final question for Mr. Nawaz. Both the Chairman and I are very interested in better understanding the radicalization process and you described witnessing terrible acts of prejudice and violence and unfair law enforcement actions when you were a teenager. What would have been an effective counter message for you to have heard as a teenager?

Mr. Nawaz. On that point, I think that an effective counter message would have been for localized grievances to have an outlet to be channeled through localized, or local-based solutions and channels, especially when it came to the crisis of faith that I talked about. There needed to be a strong, firmly grounded, traditional theological leader there to be able to deal with some of these questions, who is articulate in English, fluent and able to communicate with the second and third generations. That was, and to a large extent still is, missing in the U.K. We do not have the imams that are trained and raised from within the U.K. They are still going abroad to take their training. In fact, a recent suggestion was made by our government and was very conveniently and correctly forgotten very quickly, and that was the suggestion that we should take imams and send them to Pakistan for training.

I don’t think the solution is that. I think the solution is that there needs to be an indigenous British Islam, or more generally Western Islam, that arises. There are some very encouraging movements in that direction. One of our advisors for the Quilliam Foundation is a wonderful man by the name of Usama Hasan who in his youth went to Afghanistan to train with the so-called jihad there, but has abandoned all of that and now takes very courageous theological stances.

To give you one example of his stance—this man is qualified theologically. He is an imam of a mosque and is also a university lecturer, and he says that Muslim women do not have to cover their heads from a theological perspective. One of our advisors. We need to have more people like this.

I think in the U.K., I am very encouraged by signs of the discussions coming from people like Imam Hasan, Usama Hasan, that I see, very non-Islamist messages. Though they are pious or religious in their personal practice, they are very clear not to encourage, and in fact, they critique the Islamist message. So there needs to be an indigenous growth from within the West of Western Islam, and that is something that the Quilliam Foundation has put as one of its objectives to encourage.

If that had been there for me in my crisis of faith, I don’t think I would have turned to a political ideological alternative. I was not
able to relate to the village religion of the mosque imams who did not speak my language.

In terms of the crisis of identity, and this is something where if you caught my facial expressions, I was very keen to interject. All I did is I settled for writing “excellent” on Dr. Mandaville’s book here. And that is that the whole discussion—I agree entirely with what he said, and there is something I would like to add and that is the psychological state of somebody approaching this discussion in the first place, is that when we talk about the Muslim community, that is a paradigm which we have adopted from Islamists and the British government has recently shifted in this and now they are talking about Muslim communities, and that is more accurate, because in the U.K., we have very recent immigrants who aren’t settled as the immigrants who originally came from the Indian subcontinent are, but rather we have had Somalis that have immigrated to the U.K. due to the war and the conflict that is there. There are others, North Africans that have immigrated due to the conflicts in Algeria, and others have immigrated from many different regions.

The expression of Islam from each one of these communities is very different. And in some cases, they are at conflict with each other. The default form of religious expression for the majority of Muslims in the U.K. is the Sufi Barelvi tradition coming from the Indian subcontinent, which is historically apolitical and, in fact, is anti-political.

Now, if we can grasp that there is more than one Muslim community but rather there are Muslim communities, we will not adopt the paradigm of the Islamists in dealing with this problem as a Muslim problem but rather looking at it as localized problems and trying to deal with the problems themselves rather than adopt the paradigm that it is one community that requires one solution and one representative.

The U.K. government made a mistake with the MCB. I pray that your government here does not make that same mistake. And now they have learned from that. The British Government has set up a department called the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), that has a 3-year budget of 70 million Sterling, which again is a lot of dollars. Now, that 70 million Sterling is allocated specifically for dealing with this problem. I recently met with the minister responsible for that department, Hazel Blears, and I am very encouraged by her understanding on these issues.

Now, that department is there solely to take this money and to distribute it on a localized basis through local councils, not through a centralized national body, and I think that is the encouraging way forward. If these measures were there in the early 1990s, we would not have had the situation that we had through the mid to late 1990s of Islamists pretty much becoming institutionalized.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Collins.

Unfortunately, we are going to have to move on in a moment. I did want to say, Mr. Nawaz, I am so glad you came here, but I really object to your rubbing in the dropping value of the dollar so often. [Laughter.]
All in good spirit.

Let me just see if I can ask this question because a part of what motivates this hearing is that the insight, which I quoted from the 9/11 Commission Report, that this so-called war with terrorism is really an ideological war at its essence, so that while we are fighting it in a military sense, we also have to try to figure out how to counteract the ideology.

This is not easy because it requires non-Muslim governments in countries like the United States and the U.K. to find an effective, thoughtful, and honest way to reach into the Muslim community, and I think this is part of what the outreach is supposed to be about, but it may not be working. You are absolutely right in the experience that you both reflected from the U.K. Your testimony, Ms. Baran, should really be a warning to the U.S. Government about what they are doing and whether it is really achieving the goals.

But some of the goals are pure law enforcement, there is no question about it, trying to develop links to the community, to the mainstream, law-abiding Muslim-American community so that if they hear of the growth of violent Islamist activities, that they will let law enforcement know. Some of it, I think, is also aimed—and this is not easy—at encouraging leadership to emerge from the majority, mainstream Muslim-American community. In other words, the picture that I am getting today is that there is a silent majority within the Muslim-American community and it is an American community. It is a mainstream community.

In addition, I think you have given us a good idea here, which is that we have to be not just reaching out to organizations, maybe we have to do that with open eyes, but also really to the problems within the community. How do we create a situation where when someone like Mr. Nawaz as a teenager develops these grievances—and look, teenagers of any religion and race will find various reasons to develop grievances. Yours happen to have been quite palpable and real and severe. What can we do to create an alternative vehicle for expression other than Islamism? Ms. Baran.

Ms. Baran. Well, if I can talk about my teenage rebellious years.

Chairman Lieberman. You are not under oath now, so——

[Laughter.]

Ms. Baran. I was also looking for different identities. Now, I wasn’t born in America; I was a teenager in a Muslim country and there were many different options. There were the Islamist options. There were different options. I think having the variety of options is very important and also having good role models and trusted sources. Again, I say that if I had learned my religion from the wrong people, I could have become an Islamist because the ideas are extremely attractive, partly because everything becomes so simple and understandable. In a way it empowers you because all of a sudden, from not being able to change your life or bringing meaning to it, you have a meaning and everything easily makes sense.

So there is not a single answer, and like in the British case, in America, too, I think there are multiple communities. Some of them are more religious, some of them are less religious. You can’t even say the Arab-American community. Within the Arab community, there are so many different ones.
In, again, my case, in this neighborhood, the Turkish-American community goes to the Turkish mosque, and so we don't even go to the same mosques because there are different cultures and, of course, when it comes to second generation, third generation, the issues are also different.

There are many ways that this issue can be addressed, but I think the starting point has to be that we need to define what we want in reaching out to the communities because ultimately they are citizens and there are certain citizen rights and there are certain needs for their faith, for their education. I am worried about raising my children in this country because I would not know where to send them to teach them Islam. I would have to do that at home at this point. But I would like to be able to send them to a mosque and be comfortable that what they are going to learn there is going to be about the faith and is going to anchor them in a way that they are going to be Muslim and American and will not find a conflict in the two.

Chairman Lieberman. That is a perfect and strong place to end the testimony of this panel. I thank you all very much.

Mr. Nawaz, I want to thank you really for the foundation. It seems to me that is part of the answer, so I wish you well in what you are doing. I hope that the four of you will remain available to the Committee as we continue to consider these really important but difficult questions and try to play a constructive role. Thank you very much.

Senator Collins. Thank you.

Mr. Nawaz. Thank you.

Mr. Mandaville. Thank you.

Ms. Baran. Thank you.

Mr. Moghaddam. Thank you.

Chairman Lieberman. We will now call Michael Leiter to the stand. Michael Leiter is the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, served as Deputy General Counsel and Assistant Director of the Robb-Silberman Commission and then as Deputy Chief of Staff at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, also an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. Mr. Leiter is responsible for administering the National Implementation Plan, the Federal Government’s efforts to coordinate the response to terrorism. One component of that is to Counter Violent Islamist Extremism (CVIE).

We welcome you, Mr. Leiter. Thank you for being here and we look forward to your testimony now.

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL E. LEITER, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

Mr. Leiter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator Collins, and Senator Voinovich. It is a pleasure to be here. I am happy to talk about the intelligence community's efforts to understand this very difficult problem, and most importantly, in many ways, the broader U.S. Government efforts to counter it, as well.

I am going to focus today on the role of ideology, as you asked, and I am also going to talk about the National Counterterrorism

1 The prepared statement of Mr. Leiter appears in the Appendix on page 95.
Center’s (NCTC’s) effort in that part, and I ask that my more detailed statement be made part of the record.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. LEITER. Thank you. Now, before focusing on the very specific topic today, I do want to make one clear point and that is that although clearly the greatest terrorist threat we see in the United States today is from al-Qaeda and associated ideologies, this violent extremism is not historically, nor is it today, associated only with Islam. A generation ago, the violent extremist threat came primarily from the far left and the Red Brigades, and even today we continue to see a terrorist threat from organizations like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia that are clearly terrorists and violent extremists in their own right. Thus, although I think the focus today is quite appropriate in light of the seriousness of the threat, it is not the only terrorist ideology that we face.

Now, as you have already heard this morning, the extremist ideological leanings that set the precedent for many of today’s groups were articulated first by Sayyid Qutb, a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s. Now, in the most basic sense, he argued that the notion of Islam’s primary enemies are Western cultural liberalism and its Middle Eastern ally, Zionism. Al-Qaeda continues in their propaganda to echo those same views today.

The core narratives repeated in al-Qaeda’s message to the West and repeated in the United States at times is that the West and its allies are seeking to destroy the Muslim world and Islam and that Muslims must counter this through violence and that just rule under Islamic law is the reward for expelling Western influences.

At the National Counterterrorism Center, we assess the evolution to violent extremism consists—and this is in very general terms, it does not obviously speak to every precise individual—but in general terms, it breaks down to a four-step radicalization process. Now, first, and you heard this again from some of the panelists on the first panel, an individual develops a sense of crisis and it is often brought about, or at least accelerated by, specific precipitants, depending on their environment. Second, the affected individual seeks answers to those perceived or real crises through ideological or a religious framework. Third, the individual develops contact with a violent group and that violent group establishes a sacred authority for the individual. And fourth and clearly most troublesome, the individual internalizes that group’s values and its support for violence.

Now, of note, ideology is not necessarily central to the start of this process. Other factors before ideology might be key. And rather, it gains its greatest importance in later stages and it takes on a crucial role of preserving the radical commitment to violent extremist activity.

Now, beginning with the first stage of the process, there is no single underlying catalyst for this initial period of radicalization. Although most individuals clearly reject extremism outright, personal frustration and perceived social injustices and other grievances can prompt individuals to reassess their general world view and be open to more alternative perspectives, some of which can, in fact, espouse violence. Now, the most common catalyst, but
again not the only ones, in Muslim-majority countries tend to include blocked social mobility, political repression, and relative socio-economic deprivation.

Now, the second stage begins when individuals seek answers to their sense of frustration through a politicized version—and I want to stress here a politicized version—of Islam, or in fact, it could be any other religion, and thus they become what we term religious and ideological seekers. And here again, I want to stress that in no way do I mean to suggest that seeking answers to one’s problems in life through religion is in and of itself the least bit worrisome, problematic, or negative. Rather, the key component here is not the contact with religion, it is the contact with a violent extremist group or message and is an ideology which clothes itself in some ways in religious viewpoints.

Now, the third stage of the process distinguishes between those individuals who have contact initially with that violent-prone group and those who are drawn fully into violent extremist activity, and specifically it is at this stage that an individual’s willingness to accept the sacred authority of the violent extremist, that is the extremist right to interpret Islam or provide an ideological framework for violence that marks the passage to a latter stage of radicalization and ultimately a support for violence.

Now, simply reaching step three in this process doesn’t in all explain why some individuals absorb this and adopt it for their own perspective, and some do not, and there are numerous factors that we assess, that will play into whether or not an individual will ultimately accept that violent extremist ideology. Some of those include, first, I would say, a previous knowledge of Islam. Many academic studies, and our views as well, have found, especially in the U.K., that many of the radicals, in fact, have a far lower level of religious knowledge than those who do not accept an extremist violent perspective.

Second, who are they learning from and what is their authority? What are their attributes? Sociological and psychological studies indicate that individuals and communities that emphasize rote memorization and an unwillingness to challenge authority are more likely, just more likely, to lend themselves to radical indoctrination than others.

Third, we have seen this and it is very vividly illustrated in the case studies of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, those with a technical education, that black-and-white ideology of violent extremism, often appeals to individuals with that background.

Fourth, and this is almost self-evident, but whether or not there are countervailing influences. A lack of exposure to a variety of Islamic perspectives and non-Islamic perspectives makes it more likely that individuals will fully internalize the violent extremist message.

Fifth, and again, this is, I think, obvious to anyone who has a teenager, peer pressure. Group dynamics are key, particularly in extremist study circles. Most likely, those will affect the prospects for successful indoctrination. Family members and friends with connections to extremist movements are critical in determining whether or not an individual will adopt this ideology.
And finally, a lack of exposure to extremist atrocities. In this case, studies such as a Pew poll published in July 2007 found that the confidence in Osama bin Laden among Jordanians dropped significantly, by 36 percent, between 2003 and 2007, reflecting at least in part the Jordanian population's widespread revulsion to al-Qaeda's attacks against hotels in Oman in 2005.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, this gives you a very small sense of how we look at it in this basic four-step process, and obviously there is much greater detail and we look at it differently in different places in the world. I just want to note that from my perspective, there is simply no more important issue that NCTC, and in that sense the U.S. Government, faces in the war on terror. In this regard, we have significantly increased both our analytic resources with a variety of expertise and also our planning resources to make sure the U.S. Government is pursuing this effectively, and we hope in the coming year, contingent on Congressional approval, to dedicate even more resources to this issue.

Now, I also want to note, and Chairman Lieberman, you noted this in part in your closing comments, that this is very different from classic intelligence challenges. A very small section of how we will understand this comes from the world of clandestine intelligence reporting that I deal with most of my day. To understand and combat radicalization requires new sources of information, and equally important, new partners, and it is new partners within the U.S. Government, with State and local authorities, and I want to stress with non-government officials and leaders in the Muslim community in America and abroad.

It also requires us to approach this from multiple angles, which we currently do, because we now approach this not only from a religious perspective, which is certainly critical, but from a sociological perspective, from a regional perspective, and from a psychiatric perspective. All four of those are pieces to this puzzle of understanding why an individual chooses to adopt this ideology.

Now, as we improve our analytic understanding of Islamist militancy, we can better shape our policy response to the threat, and through our responsibilities as the strategic operational planner for U.S. Government-wide efforts, what we did was we created what we have termed a Global Engagement Group, and this group's sole function is to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize all elements of U.S. power to engage and combat this ideology.

Now, I want to give you a few specific examples of what this group is doing, and I can do that—I will do that to the best extent I can here in an open session. First, the group coordinates potentially divergent department and agency responses to specific situations that might be used by violent ideological extremists in their own propaganda.

Second, we are also establishing the capability to provide situational awareness to U.S. policy makers and officials about all of the things that the U.S. Government is doing, across departments and agencies, across the world, to combat this, because without that situational awareness, we cannot actually shape what the U.S. Government is doing.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I just have another 30 seconds or so. Chairman LIEBERMAN. Go right ahead.
Mr. Leiter. Third, the group is coordinating the long-term effort to combat this, and what we are doing is identifying very specifically through means such as sociological studies, psychiatric studies, religious studies, and the like, identifying who the next generation of recruits most likely is, and that is both domestically and abroad. And then we are shaping over 5 years and beyond, attempting to shape department and agency programs and budgets to address those in the long term.

Fourth, we work extremely closely with our department and agency partners. I want to just mention two, but the Department of Homeland Security, the Civil Liberties Protection Officer Dan Sutherland has been a fabulous partner in this, and overseas, the newly confirmed Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Jim Glassman, two key partners, and also, as we have talked about before, the FBI.

And finally, and this is, I think, especially important, we work very closely with the Office of Management and Budget to identify where these programs are today, how they are coordinated, and whether or not they are actually synchronized and complementing one another for the long term.

Now, I do believe that working with partners at home and abroad that we can develop targeted and refined approaches to undermining the attractiveness of violence to certain susceptible audiences. But I don't want to leave any doubt in this Committee's mind that this is an effort that is going to take many years and many new partnerships, and I also want to note that tangible results in this area are going to be both elusive and at many times very difficult to measure with any sort of reliable metrics. But none of those make the effort any less important.

Now, we are going to require cross-government efforts, as I have already noted. This Committee is a key part of that. And it is not only going to be about words, it is going to be about a diplomacy of deeds, both domestically and overseas. And I very much look forward to working with this Committee and the larger Congress, because so many committees have a hand in this, and getting your guidance on how you believe we should approach this challenge.

Chairman Lieberman. Thanks very much, Mr. Leiter. That was very good testimony. I must say, some of the programs you describe, you have gone beyond at least what I contemplated the NCTC would be doing, which we saw in its creation as the central place to make sure that all the dots were connected of intelligence in a way that was not done before September 11, 2001. But what you are doing also seems to me to be directly related to counter-terrorism, which is what your defining mission is, so I appreciate it and I am interested in asking some questions about it.

Let me first talk about the language we use here, because it is significant and has some substance to it. You said at the outset that what we have been calling this morning Islamism is not the only terrorist ideology we've faced, and, of course, I agree with that, nor is it historically the only terrorist ideology we have faced. But it does seem to me that it is the most significant terrorist ideology we face now. In fact, it motivated the attacks of September 11, 2001, which are the very reason that we created the NCTC in the 9/11 Commission legislation. So do you agree with that, that we
are dealing more with Islamist, what we have called this morning Islamist, ideology-inspired terrorism than any other kind?

Mr. Leiter. Undoubtedly and without question, the greatest threat we face today and in the world of terrorism is from Sunni extremist ideology. I will say one thing, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Lieberman. Sure.

Mr. Leiter. I think part of the challenge here is about words, and I think just from the four panelists you just heard from, there are not insignificant differences in how individuals and professionals would define Islamism. So I think that is a challenge. But undoubtedly, Sunni extremism is the greatest terrorist threat we face today.

Chairman Lieberman. As you know, in March, there was a State Department document released that said, “Words that Work and Words that Don’t: A Guide for Counterterrorism Communication,” and the document recommended that government officials not make references to Islam when talking about terrorism. And, of course, our whole focus today has been to try to distinguish between the religion Islam and this radical political ideology which we have called today Islamism.

I think that there was some misunderstanding, I hope, of what that report intended to say, but I just wanted to ask you whether you agree that—because I think if we don’t—just listening to the four witnesses on the first panel, three of whom are Muslims themselves, that we are not going to be able to deal with the problem unless we describe it as what it is, which is originating from a radical political version of Islam which we have called today Islamism. So how do you understand that State Department guidance?

Mr. Leiter. Senator, that State Department guidance, I think was a policy choice by the Department as to how they believed individuals should speak about it. I would say that I don’t agree with everything that was in that document. I do think that you cannot separate out the fact that the terror fight we are fighting today involves Islam as a religion. But the ideology which motivates these terrorists has very little to do in reality with the religion of Islam. It is the difference between a religion and a violent ideology that has motivated these individuals. But we can’t simply ignore the fact that there is a link to the religion.

Chairman Lieberman. I thank you for that and I appreciate it personally. Let me go on to something you talked about, really interesting, which is a quote again from your testimony. “Much of NCTC’s growth over the past 2 years and much of our planned growth in the coming year is dedicated to government-wide coordination and analysis to counter radicalization,” exactly what we are talking about today. I think it is very important. You talked about it some in your opening statement, but I want to ask you to expand on it, if you would, for the Committee.

What kind of people are you hiring? What will improvements of government-wide coordination look like, and a little bit more about what other agencies you are working with and how you are working with them. We know, for instance, that the State Department cannot be involved in domestic counter-radicalization, but still they have international experience that is relevant. So talk to us a little bit more about your counter-radicalization efforts, because it seems
to me that they are really at the heart of what the U.S. Government should be doing now.

Mr. Leiter. I am happy to, Mr. Chairman. First, on our analytic front, the intelligence side, we are significantly increasing our analytic resources, and the people that we are hiring come from a variety of backgrounds. I have an individual with me today who has a Ph.D. in political science who has looked at these issues and lived in the region throughout the Arab world for many years. That is one example. I also actually have an M.D. psychiatrist trained at Harvard who has spent significant amounts of time speaking with individuals who have become radicalized from a psychiatric perspective, and so on down the line. So the stress in hiring has been to get a wide variety of views, people who have an understanding of domestic issues and foreign issues because as you well know, our mandate is transnational, United States and abroad.

Now, on the coordination side, we have also attempted to bring in people from—the lead from our team of the Global Engagement Group is a State Department Foreign Service officer who has spent a significant number of years in Arab countries and Africa. But working alongside him are individuals from the FBI and Department of Homeland Security, so we can take those lessons from places like Africa or the United Kingdom and see the degree to which they do or do not apply to the United States, and they are very different situations and much of our work is trying to understand where the threat has been, how it does or does not apply to the United States.

In terms of concrete efforts, as I said, one of our biggest efforts is to actually understand what everyone in the U.S. Government is doing on counter-radicalization on any given day. Understanding what the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, FBI, and on down the list are doing globally is important because anything is said anywhere in the world today can also be circulated in the world anywhere today on the Internet. So I like to think of it as we have to think about this globally, to borrow a phrase from another era, think about this globally but act locally. We have to think about the global challenge of violent extremism, but then we have to apply it to individual local circumstances. And by gaining that situational awareness and working with State, FBI, DHS, and others, we can then shape those messages in a way that is consistent and appropriate for the target community.

Chairman Lieberman. Because you have no doubt that we do have to confront the threat of homegrown terrorism here in the United States.

Mr. Leiter. Senator, I would agree with some of the—from the prior panel of comments. We certainly have not seen the same threat of radicalization here in the United States that we have overseas, in particular the United Kingdom and other nations. That being said, we have seen some instances, and I will certainly not rest on our current good situation to assume that will continue into the future.

Chairman Lieberman. Thank you. Senator Collins.

Senator Collins. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I want to follow up on your comments that you provide situational awareness and intelligence analysis that helps other government agencies forge a counterterrorism message. This morning, we heard from one of our witnesses, and I believe you were monitoring the hearing, as well——

Mr. LEITER. I prefer not to use the “monitoring” phrase. [Laughter.]

Senator COLLINS. Good point. FISA has been passed now. [Laughter.]

But I know that you were following the hearing and one of our witnesses was quite critical of the FBI’s outreach efforts. The FBI has been on the front lines of trying to develop a liaison to the Muslim communities in this country and it was interesting to hear from this one expert’s opinion that we are reaching out using the wrong groups or the wrong organizations. What was your reaction to that testimony, since you, after all, are the agency that is doing the analysis to provide the situational awareness that groups like the FBI use in their outreach?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I think that outreach by both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security to both groups within the United States and individual leaders within the Muslim-American community is critical. I think that understanding that there are certain groups that might have individuals with whom the U.S. Government might not want to associate does not and cannot stop us from doing the outreach that this government needs to do both to understand the communities more effectively, but also, frankly, to provide these communities with a sense that they do have a voice in how their government operates, that they do not feel disenfranchised because it is just that disenfranchisement that we heard from some of the other panelists that has contributed and acted as one of the precipitants to give people a sense of crisis and a lack of connection to their government, and outreach is one way to ensure that does not occur.

Senator COLLINS. So what criteria should the Federal Government use in determining who or which groups are useful allies in developing a counterterrorism message? If you listened to our previous panel, there are some who believe that if a group holds an Islamist ideology, then even if it has renounced violence as a means to achieving the goals of that ideology, that we should not interact with that group. Others are saying that as long as the group is non-violent, it does not matter what its basic ideology is.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I want to be a bit careful because ultimately this obviously is a decision for Director Mueller, the Attorney General, and Secretary Chertoff about exactly what that line should be. I will say one clear line is if a group espouses violence, it is quite clear that the U.S. Government should not be talking to them.

Senator COLLINS. But that is the——

Mr. LEITER. That is the extreme.

Senator COLLINS. Right.

Mr. LEITER. Exactly. Beyond that, I think that the U.S. Government, as a general matter, has to become more comfortable speaking with more groups who may be opposed to many policies that the U.S. Government has, and it may be slightly uncomfortable,
but we have to think of this as a full-spectrum engagement, and what I mean by that is we have to be willing to engage with most people on most of the spectrum regardless of how they view U.S. policy. You are going to have to talk to some people that make you uncomfortable.

I analogize back to my days as a Federal prosecutor. I would have gotten very few prosecutions successfully—I could have brought a lot. I would have had very few successful prosecutions in the world of drugs or organized crime if I never dealt and spoke to individuals who at one point in their life had or had not been associated with drugs or organized crime.

Senator COLLINS. You talked about the four steps of radicalization. The third step that you outlined was the development of contact with radical groups. It used to be that contact involved a face-to-face meeting or perhaps going to Afghanistan or Pakistan for training. But today, it is far more insidious and far easier to accomplish because one has only to go to the Internet to make contact with a radical group. How much of our effort is directed toward providing a counter message through the Internet?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, before answering that question, I just want to note how well the NYPD has done in some of their work, so well that we actually brought an inspector from the NYPD who is now a full-time analyst at NCTC deployed from the New York Police Department. So this is another example of a new sort of partnership that in 2000 we never would have imagined having.

Senator COLLINS. I am very glad to hear that, because we have pushed to have more involvement with State and local law enforcement.

Mr. LEITER. Absolutely.

Senator COLLINS. I am very happy to hear that.

Mr. LEITER. In terms of the Internet, the Internet certainly is key and I would say that it tends to be key at the earlier stages when the individuals—they are experiencing the precipitants. They have that sense of crisis and they start looking around and the Internet gives them those initial ideas.

Now, we have seen some cases, more overseas than in the United States, where there was kind of a complete transformation in the process of radicalization that occurred almost solely from the Internet. But that still tends to be the exception rather than the rule. Again, it can be key for that initial guide towards this world, but more often than not, we still see the contact with a charismatic leader who adopts it, that face-to-face contact being very important. And I would actually venture that is most people’s experience with the Internet, regardless of violent extremism, that once you have that face-to-face contact with a product or people, it becomes slightly greater pull than just from the Internet.

Now, we spend an enormous amount of time both looking at the Internet and then working with various parts of the U.S. Government on countering messages through the Internet. I will say you rather rapidly enter in a very difficult area both in terms of legal policy and the First Amendment. I am certainly no expert anymore on these issues. But you run into many difficult challenges there, most particularly because anything you put on the Internet is by definition a global message.
So what the U.S. Government does and says overseas is often quite different from what it says here in the United States. The Internet doesn't give you the option necessarily to limit your message in the same way. So this is a new challenge with policies and legal challenges that we really do have to address more over the coming years.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thanks very much for being here today. From a management point of view, I am quite pleased with what I have heard in terms of your efforts to coordinate the various agencies and the fact that you have a connection with OMB because I have found that there are many areas where we need coordination to get the job done and my feeling is that you have to have somebody at OMB that you can talk with and talk about the various agencies and how important their budgets are in regard to various aspects of the work that you are doing. We don't have it all in one place.

Mr. LEITER. Right.

Senator VOINOVICH. Second, I was thinking about low-hanging fruit in terms of things that you can do to influence people, and one of the things that you mentioned at the end was the violence and the impact that it has. I was there in Jordan and absolutely, they know who these people are right now. And I think that my two colleagues are aware of the fact that the Sunnis in Iraq found out who these people were and now have turned against them because they don't like them at all. I wonder, could we be doing more in that area to get across how violent these people are and who are the real victims of their activity?

And then the other one, is the issue of women's rights here in the United States and even over in various other countries. There is a woman named Madsen, who is a leader trying to elevate the rights of women within the Muslim community in the United States. I wonder whether or not that is something that we should be more focused on or maybe that is something that we should stay out of.

I guess the last thing would be the issue that Senator Collins brought up, and that is, who do we deal with? One of the things that we have done in my State, we have had a very aggressive effort to reach out to the Muslim community. In Cleveland, for example, we have the Ishmael and Isaac Organization.

But we need some help. Who are the groups that we ought to be talking to in our respective States and you have identified as people that we should be talking to, because I think it is important that we talk to them, too, so that they know that they are a political constituency out there and that we are interested in what they have to say and make sure that we are talking to folks that we ought to be talking to.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, thank you for all three. I will try to take them in order. First of all, I agree with you. I think one of the most critical underlying messages that we have to get out is that this is not—the war on terror is not us versus them, West versus Islam, and there is no point that illustrates that more effectively than
that more than 50 percent of the individuals who are the victims of al-Qaeda’s terrorist violence are Muslims. Whether you look at Oman or Iraq or Afghanistan, the individuals being killed tend not to be Westerners. In fact, they are Muslims. Al-Qaeda is killing Muslims and we do have to get that out more effectively.

We work with the State Department on an annual report of terrorist incidents. We post that on our own website and the State Department website and we have to get that out more effectively, and I would say that we have to get it out more effectively through non-traditional means because it isn’t just about doing press conferences in embassies. It is about getting it on YouTube and the like so we are hitting the target population that we are actually most concerned with.

Now, as to your second question, I am going to admit that as we were monitoring the hearing in the anteroom, and I listened to your questions about women, I spoke to some of my analysts about that, and frankly, I think we have not focused the same attention on it that we probably should, so we already have it as a do out to go back and think more clearly about how the issue of women’s rights does apply to this. We look at the issue of women in the Islamic world in some other contexts, and I think that the idea of empowering individuals to participate in their political system and political life, in this instance women, is again one of those powerful elements which starts to reduce the possible precipitants for people to go down this path in the first instance. Creating that opportunity to express themselves in the political system, whether or not they are women or men, is a key element and it is one that I would like to come back to you in the future and speak to you more about it.

Now, on your last point about with whom should you deal, and I would agree with you, far be it from me to set your agenda and your schedule, but I think it is critically important for elected representatives at all levels of government, from the U.S. Senate down to the city councilman—I should say council person—to go out and engage with their communities and understand the issues and make sure that their concerns are being reflected in the public discourse.

Now, I would be happy both to offer you experts from the National Counterterrorism Center and I am also more than happy to help serve as a conduit with you with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI and other agencies to figure out groups and leaders who you might want to engage with, people who you might want to consider whether or not you should engage with them, and what concerns other people in the U.S. Government should have, recognizing that you engaging with people, you might have a very different set of standards than, say, the Department of Homeland Security, and that is entirely appropriate. But I am happy to both offer our expertise and also help you work with DHS, Secretary Chertoff, and Director Mueller in determining who you and other Members of Congress might wish to engage with.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you. Under Secretary of State Glassman now is our public diplomacy lead. Our earlier witness indicated that there is a dilemma today, and that is that we talk about democracy and freedom, and the President articulated that in his
second inaugural address, but it appears that we have backed off substantially from that. Is that having any influence at all on folks here in this country?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I have to apologize. This may have been one of the moments that I was not monitoring. But I will say that the idea of democracy is certainly a key characteristic of any public diplomacy message that we have, but it is one part of the message, because——

Senator VOINOVICH. When we began the global war on terrorism, the President said that we wanted democracy in Iraq. That is one of the goals that we had. Now, we seem to be talking just stability.

Mr. LEITER. Yes, sir.

Senator VOINOVICH. And there is an appearance out there that we just kind of backed off this effort after we had elections.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I don’t want to dispute people’s perceptions because perceptions are reality in this case. Certainly, my experience with the President and senior leadership is that democracy agenda has not changed in the least. Now, I do believe we have to make sure if people perceive that it has, that will be a challenge.

I also want to stress that is one part of a message that will appeal to one section of the community. We have to have many other messages and speak to the entire community, because there are some individuals who could be at risk for the activities we have talked about, for becoming violent extremists, that may not actually be drawn or stopped or countered through a pure democracy message. It is a series of messages that—one of which we may feel a little bit uncomfortable with at times. But if we are serious about countering that radicalization process, we have to be ready to do that.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Voinovich. Thanks for giving time to this hearing.

Director Leiter, thank you for your testimony. I think we are going to have to close the hearing here, but I really appreciate what you are doing, particularly this, I think, pioneering work on counter-radicalization. I think you are really on the front lines of the attempt to get at the ideological underpinnings of Islamist extremism and terrorism, and I hope you will come back at some point and tell us what your conclusions are and how you are trying to transport the product, if you will, the result, down to the field so that if there is a young Muslim American, like Mr. Nawaz in England, growing up with grievances, that he not turn to violent Islamist extremism as the expression of those grievances. But I thank you very much for your work.

We are going to leave the record of the hearing open for 15 days for additional questions from Committee Members or statements that witnesses want to add to the record.

For now, that concludes our business. The hearing is adjourned.

Mr. LEITER. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:25 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]
APPENDIX

Testimony of Maajid Nawaz
Director of The Quilliam Foundation, London

The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter it

Before the US Senate committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Thursday July 10th 2008
The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter it

Chairman Lieberman, ranking member Collins and esteemed members of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs committee, please allow me this opportunity to thank you all for inviting me here to testify before you today. I convey to you warm salutations from all our staff at the Quilliam Foundation in London, and in particular from my friend and co-Director Ed Husain who is currently in Egypt on an official FCO delegation on behalf of the British Government. Violent Islamist extremism is truly the bi-partisan issue of the day. This phenomenon affects those on all sides of the political spectrum, and as such it is one of those rare issues concerning which people of differing political persuasions and backgrounds can find common ground, especially through independent voices.

As director of The Quilliam Foundation, Britain’s first counter-extremism think tank, I have made it my aim to spare no effort in directly challenging the Islamist ideology wherever I happen upon it. I believe that my staff and I are uniquely placed for this endeavour due to our past involvement, at a senior level, with various Islamist organisations. In fact, my own history involves thirteen years as a committed activist with the extremist Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (The Liberation Party). I served on Hizb ut-Tahrir’s UK leadership and personally exported the group from London to Pakistan and Denmark. My international activities eventually lead to my witnessing torture and a five-year conviction in Egypt as an Amnesty International adopted prisoner of conscience.

The makings of an international Islamist ideologue: my story

Having been born and raised in the boisterous county of Essex, the early nineties exposed me to situations that I never should have had to witness as a teenager. Despite my liberal British upbringing, I was subject to an appalling level of racist violence by a minority of thugs. Many of my white friends were stabbed before my eyes simply for associating with me. Arrests were made but repetitive procedural errors amidst boasts of ‘contacts’ in the police meant that the perpetrators were never convicted. By the time I reached fifteen I had been falsely arrested at gunpoint by the police because somebody had earlier seen my older brother, himself only sixteen at the time, playing with a plastic pellet gun. We were released the next morning with an apology, and the plastic gun was returned to us broken. The culmination of such incidents eventually led me to a crisis of identity. Not feeling fully accepted in the country of my birth left me wondering whether I was British, English, Pakistani, Muslim or even something else entirely. What I did know was that I could not relate in any way to the Pakistani heritage of my grandfather. The religious mosque imams could not speak English and I in turn found it almost impossible to relate to what they preached. Whilst such a crisis of identity initially concerned only racial and ethnic dimensions, the tragic slaughter of white Muslims that was to eventually play out in Bosnia brought to the fore of my mind Europe’s Muslim Question. Through this rude awakening, and for the first time in my life, I became critically aware of a Muslim identity. I could not, however, relate to my religion as taught by the poorly educated mosque imams. I began instead to relate to a mid-nineties trend whereby American rappers would use radical Islamic messages through Hip-Hop to engender a sense of empowerment and identity into African-Americans. The early Malcolm X, with his radical and uncompromising message, quickly became my inspiration as I became more and more disillusioned with my own society. I somehow conveniently ignored that even Malcolm tempered his views before he was assassinated - and I believe that a great deal can be still be learnt from this man’s late change of heart.

At this critical juncture in my life, whilst already feeling quite anti-establishment, I stumbled across an articulate medical student from my hometown who had gone to London and returned as a Hizb ut-Tahrir activist. Here was a man who could speak my language, who felt my pain and who most importantly of all could answer my questions concerning identity and faith in radically
thought was Islam, was in fact a modern political ideology masquerading as the ancient faith of Islam. I now refer to this ideology as Islamism, so as to distinguish it from Islam the faith.

After I joined Hizb ut-Tahrir, I immediately decided to leave my hometown for London so as to enrol at the heavily Muslim populated Newham College for the purpose of using this campus as a recruitment ground. On this campus, after joining forces with Ed Husain, I was quickly elected as President of the Students’ Union with my union committee all being Hizb ut-Tahrir activists too. Now, as this powerful collective and with Students’ Union funds at our disposal we embarked upon radicalising the campus and recruiting more activists. My time at Newham College was brought to a sudden end when one of our non-student associates used our rhetoric to justify murdering a non-Muslim student on campus. The entire Students’ Union committee were subsequently expelled from this college, but my reputation grew amongst party ranks.

Soon I was to become a national speaker, and then an international recruiter to Hizb ut-Tahrir. In 1999 the global leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir requested that I personally travel to Pakistan to set up the group there. Pakistan had just acquired a nuclear bomb and I was told that the Caliphate would benefit immensely from this development. I duly took leave from my UK law degree and moved to Pakistan, moving from city to city leaving party cells in my wake. After my return to the UK in 2000, the group again requested that I travel to Denmark to aid with recruitment there. In between resuming my law degree I would fly out every weekend on the Hizb ut-Tahrir expenses until I had set up a sufficient amount of recruits for the Danish branch of the group to take over. My travels eventually led me to Egypt, where in 2002 my house was subjected to a dawn-raid and I was taken blind folded to the Egyptian State Security headquarters in Cairo, a building known as the Al-Jihaz - in Arabic. After being subjected to witnessing torture and held incommunicado in extended solitary confinement I was eventually convicted by Egypt’s Supreme State Security Emergency court to five-years imprisonment.

My time in Egypt’s notorious Mazra Tora gave me the opportunity to finally study Islam myself from its primary Arabic sources. I also had the opportunity of debating with some of Egypt’s most well known convicted terrorists, such as the surviving assassins of late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, or such as the founders of al-Gama’a al-Islamiyyah – formerly Egypt’s largest terrorist group. I also had access to imprisoned liberals such as runner-up to the Egyptian Presidential elections Ayman Noor, and the then imprisoned Sociology Professor Saad el-Din Ibrahim. My adoption by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, and in particular the tireless efforts of one Amnesty activist - John Cornwall - served to open my heart to non-Muslims again for the first time in 10 years. My mind, however, would still not follow without rigorous investigation.

After four years of daily debate and organised studying with the whole spectrum of reformed political prisoners I gradually came to the realisation, subconsciously at first, that what I had thought was Islam, was in fact a modern political ideology masquerading as the ancient faith of Islam. Islamists had taken modern day political paradigms and superimposed them onto religion. I now refer to this ideology as Islamism, so as to distinguish it from Islam the faith.

Upon returning to the UK in March 2006 I continued in my activities with Hizb ut-Tahrir at the leadership level. At this stage I was in psychological denial, after thirteen years of Islamist activism, that I could have been so wrong. The more my status grew on the Islamist circuit, the
more I felt hypocritical for no longer believing that Islam was a divine political ideology. I had become one of the most well recognised figures amongst Islamists generally and in Hizb ut-Tahrir ranks specifically, yet I could not face the fact that I no longer believed in the ideology. I eventually learnt that the group was preparing me for leadership of the UK branch, and this news led me to my final tipping point. In May 2007, thirteen years after joining, I unilaterally announced my resignation from Hizb ut-Tahrir, and in September 2007 I appeared on national television to declare that I now recanted Islamism itself.

Understanding the ideology of Islamism

In understanding what the ideology of Islamism is, it would help to begin with the name. The suffix ‘ism’ has been added to Islam so as to draw attention to the political nature of the subject matter. Islam is a faith; Islamism is an ideology that uses Islam the faith as a justification. Some of you may be reluctant in calling this ideology Islamism. There exists an understandable concern of not wanting to alienate Muslims. It is my contention however that only by using Islamism can one popularise the notion that the ideology is indeed distinct from the faith, and that Islam is innocent from the excesses of Islamism. The presence of Islam in Islamism, like social in socialism, indicates the justificatory claim made by the ideologue rather than an admission of the validity of such a claim. I firmly believe that by claiming the word Islamism, and helping shape how it is used, one can direct the debate in the right way with the intention of distinguishing the ideology from the faith. Finally, for all their feign of offence, Islamists use this word in Arabic when differentiating themselves from other Arab political trends, just as Bathism.

When dealing with this question one must remain cognisant of the fact that the majority of Muslims are not Islamists. Generally, non-Islamist Muslims are from the conservative camp, such as traditionalist Sufis or Deobandis, or the literalist Wahhabis. This camp holds to socially conservative views and is historically apolitical. Non-Islamist Muslims could also be of the progressive camp, such as many leading theologians and academics today. Many in this grouping, and some from the conservatives, may even be politically active. These form the nascent post-Islamist movement of morally inspired politically active Muslims, or Muslim Democrats. However, the majority of progressives are simply secular legal positivists, believing that religion and morals cannot be a basis for strictly defining legal and political decisions. Key to the political activism of the above Muslims is that their politics is not driven by ideology.

The natural question then arises: what is the difference between an Islamist and an ordinary Muslim who may be politically active? Here some identifiers will be highlighted, not as hard and fast rules, but general guidance on the fundamental beliefs that the vast majority of Islamists will hold dear to. It is important to note that just as there is no one single definition to Communism, it is likewise for Islamism. This, of course, does not mean that Communism does not exist just as it does not mean that there is no such thing as Islamism. If, as is claimed, Islamism is a modern ideology, it follows that there must be some basic ideational factors that help shape it, ideas that can be clearly traced as being modern. In this endeavour, I aim to identify an Islamists ideology, law, people and state.

The first identifier of Islamism is the Islamists belief that Islam is not a religion, but a divine political ideology surpassing Communism and Capitalism. An implication of this is the Islamist assertion that Islam must have provided a detailed and divinely pro-ordained stance on matters such as political structure or the economy and these must lie, by definition, in contradistinction to structures already available in Capitalism and Communism. If these structures and systems are deemed absent, the Islamists will work to bring them about. Hence the Islamist desires to 'Islamise' all aspects of society and life. This also carries with it the Islamist assertion, subsequently also subscribed to by prominent non-Muslim commentators, that Islam is in perennial conflict with other ideologies, just like Communism in the cold war. In fact, the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir used to be a Bathist or an Arab Socialist, which is where he found much of his
political inspiration. Moreover, Islamists have long suffered due to their lack of theological legitimacy having been founded by political activists rather than theologians. The founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, was a school-teacher. The founder of the Indian subcontinent offshoot of the Brotherhood, Jamat-e-Islami, was a journalist by the name of Abul 'Ala Mawdadi. Osama Bin Laden is an engineer and Zawahiri a medical doctor, as was the man who recruited me to Hizb ut-Tahrir all those years ago, the current head of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the UK. Due to Islamists' emphasis on modern political thought they tend to attract those who have a modern education, those who can grasp discussions on sovereignty, statehood and economy yet whose disciplines are not these social science subjects themselves, thereby explaining their willingness to adopt political ideas that lack nuance. A qualified theologian would rarely claim that Islam is a political ideology, unless he has been reared exclusively by an Islamist party to become a theologian so as to reinterpret the theology in light of the ideology, such as the Brotherhood reared Qardawi.

The second identifier is the Islamist claim that the Muslim religious code, known as the Shari'ah, demands implementation on state level as codified law. In other words, the legal and illegal of state law must be synchronised with halal (permissible) and haram (impermissible) of the religious code. This again is a modern innovation unheard of in traditional Islamic sources. Muslim history is in fact bereft of examples of any type of Shari'ah being wholesale adopted as state law. Despite this, Islamists place so much emphasis on synchronising the Shari'ah with codified state law that they consider it a matter of apostasy if someone were to claim otherwise. Such a demand gives rise to Islamist claims of un-Islamic, hence illegitimate, laws that subsequently need to be Islamised. On the contrary, normal Muslims are perfectly happy for the Shari'ah to remain a personal code of conduct.

The third identifier is the Islamist notion of the ummah, or Muslim community, forming a political rather than simply a religious identity. This has parallels to the Communist idea of the international proletariat. The subsequent implication for Islamists is that loyalty and allegiances are owed to this global community above all else. Hence, an Islamist will not consider a non-Muslim as being from 'his people', nor will he accept any national identity. Normal Muslims, on the other hand, consider the ummah as a religious community; hence they are free to adopt as their political identity any of a number of things. In fact, the Prophet himself declared – as a civil leader - that Jewish, Christian and Muslim residents of his city-state were all "one ummah", as "citizens".

The final identifier is the Islamist dream of having an ideological entity to represent the above three elements in the form of an expansionist Muslim bloc, the Caliphate. Its ideology will be Islamism, its law an adoption on Shari'ah and its people the global Muslim political bloc. Just as the international proletariat, the global political bloc for Communists, required an expansionist state to proactively 'liberate' workers from the tyranny of Capitalism, likewise the Caliphate must proactively intervene in the affairs of other states so as to 'liberate' Muslim residents from the yoke of 'kafir', or disbelief. Normal Muslims have no such expansionist dreams. Muslim theological authorities in each country have time and time again made the point that the days of religiously inspired expansionism went out with the Middle Ages.

It is not strange that a modern-day supremacist ideology with aspirations of a super-state and a higher people emerged in the Middle-East post World War I. The end of the age of empires led to the same phenomenon in Europe. Whereas European Fascist, Communist and Nazi parties emerged form the ashes of defeated European empires, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire lead to Islamist parties emerging in the Middle East. The very same characteristics of expansionist super-states, a higher-people, and political party organisation are to be found in each of these supremacist phenomena. Such a development can be explained in the crisis of identity experienced by collective peoples in the aftermath of the old-world order empires collapsing.

Trends in Islamist movements
The above four elements, in general, form common ground for all types of Islamists. Despite sharing these core ideological goals however, Islamists may differ in both the intensity and candour with which they advocate them. Moreover, they certainly do differ in their strategic methodology of bringing about these four. There are three overarching strands of methodology employed by Islamists, political, revolutionary and militant. There is a great deal of both intra and inter rivalry between the many groups of each strand.

Political Islamists form the original expression of religion as ideology. Founded in 1928 by a school-teacher, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood now employs entry-level tactics to gain power in Muslim majority countries through the ballot-box with a view to gradually “Islamising” the political structure and laws via a fifth column of committed activists. The Muslim Brotherhood — *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* — encompassed a social movement more than an ideology, though the party was very well disciplined. In 1941 a journalist by the name of Abu ‘Ala Mawdudi founded the Indian Jamat-e-Islami. By building on the Brotherhood’s generalised expression Mawdudi articulated a clearer intellectual case for Islamism with slightly more conservatively religious tendencies, but still adhered to entry-level tactics.

Revolutionary Islamists are those, such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (1953), who are fundamentally anti-establishment. This category believes in instigating military coups against regimes with the purpose of coming to power in one clean sweep. They advocate that to use the ballot box legitimises the system of ‘*Kufri*’ - or apostasy- and hence is absolutely forbidden. Founded by Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, a former Arab Socialist - or Bathist, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* crystallised the generalised ideological expression of the Brotherhood by heavily borrowing from Communist ideological paradigms and Bolshevik party political theory. Uniquely, Nabhani was the only qualified Islamic jurist amongst the founders of major Islamist movements and had served as a *Shari’ah* court appeals judge in Jerusalem. His academic background allowed Nabhani to skilfully weave European political thought with *Shari’ah* legalisms, combining them with the Bathist tactic of military coups. Through *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, Islamism had found its polemists. In 1964 Sayid Qutb, having met and debated Nabhani in Jerusalem, marked a departure from the Brotherhood’s generalised ‘social movement’ by exporting a combination of Nabhani’s revolutionary Islamism and Mawdudi’s conservative Islamism into Egypt through his book, *‘Milestones’*. Nabhani’s ideas were also shared by his good Iraqi friend Baqir al-Sadr, a hugely revered Shi’ah theologian, who popularised Islamism to many Shi’ah in Iraq through his book “Our Philosophy”.

Militant Islamists – or Jihadists - built on the solid theoretical grounds provided to them by Nabhani and Qutb but believed in creating their own army – instead of using Nabhani’s theory of revolution by exporting a combination of Nabhani’s revolutionary Islamism and Mawdudi’s conservative Islamism into Egypt through his book, ‘Milestones’. Nabhani’s ideas were also shared by his good Iraqi friend Baqir al-Sadr, a hugely revered Shi’ah theologian, who popularised Islamism to many Shi’ah in Iraq through his book “Our Philosophy”.

**Islamist roots behind the tactic of terrorism**

Not all Islamists employ terrorism as a tactic, but Islamist terrorists are by definition a product and offshoot of Islamist groups. This in no way implies that non-violent Islamists should be legally proscribed; rather it highlights the need for civil society to challenge Islamists even if they are to remain legally tolerated. Civil tolerance must be and always has been distinct from legal tolerance. In the UK the BNP are legal, but are shunned in civil society. Such a shift in tolerance attitude is only possible through education about what it is that Islamists actually believe, and how their beliefs act as ideological inspiration to terrorists. The heritage of Islamist terrorists can be traced both via the ideational inspiration behind key terrorist leaders and via the historical evolution of terrorism as a tactic.

**Ideational roots:**
In 1953 it was Nabhani, and *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, who first expressed the three aims most commonly associated with al-Qaeda and Ayman al-Zawahiri today. These three aims, stated clearly in Nabhani's early works, are to i) overthrow Muslim majority regimes, ii) establish in their wake an expansionist Caliphate ruling by 'Shari'ah', and iii) destroy Israel and then conquer the rest of the available word via 'Jihad'. It was Nabhani who first classified the entire world as *Dar al-Harb* - the abode of war - due to the dominance of 'Kufr' throughout. It just so happened that Nabhani's methodology in fighting this war was by using pre-existing militarys rather than creating his own army. Only a return to ruling by the 'Shari'ah' would restore *Dar al-Islam* - the abode of peace to the world. Nabhani also considered that no legitimacy could be granted to the existing rulers, as they were violating God's mandate by ruling with 'Kufr'. Hence, forcibly removing them was legitimate and no international treaty or law of theirs was to be recognised. It doesn't take a long leap in the imagination to move from *Hizb ut-Tahrir*’s stance of recruiting from an existing army to al-Qaida’s stance of recruiting their own.

**Historical evolution:**

The above ideational history is born out by historical cases where many violent off-shoots have indeed emerged from Islamist groups where ever they have operated. It is important to note that Islamism began as a non-Wahhabi, Salafist reform movement in Egypt. Politically, it grew into a rigid dogma, yet socially it remained relatively liberal, even through the emergence of the political ideology. In fact, much to the protestations of non-Islamist conservatives, Islamists dressed in Western dress, listened music and did not oblige women to cover their faces. These modern political ideologues eventually found themselves seeking asylum in the Gulf. Here, the political rigidity of Islamism fused with the social rigidity of conservatives, in this case Wahhabis, and it is through this powder-keg that Islamist terrorism emerged.

The historical evolution from Islamism to Jihadism, after mixing with conservatism, requires proper attention. In the Egypt, Sadat’s assassins, known as Tanzim al-Jihad, eventually split into al-Gama’a al-Islamiyyah and al-Jihad al-Islami. These groups are Wahhabi in creed. The teacher of the parent group, the terrorist Tanzim al-Jihad, was a non-Wahhabi *Hizb ut-Tahrir* Islamist member known as Sa‘id al-Rahhal. To cite another example, the Islamist Mohammad Quth, Sayyid Quth’s brother, was Wahhabi Osama Bin Laden’s teacher. Abdullah Azzam, the first leader who so inspired Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan was also a non-Wahhabi Islamist Muslim Brotherhood member. In Great Britain, Omar Bakri, the former leader of Islamist but non-Wahhabi *Hizb ut-Tahrir* UK began glorifying terrorism after becoming a Wahhabi. The same phenomenon – of Islamism merging with conservatism to produce terrorism – occurred in the Indian sub-continent. The very conservative Deobandi denomination was exposed to Islamism via Pakistan and the Afghan Jihad, leading to the emergence of the Taliban.

The above submission has focused till now on the Islamist ideology, or the pull factor behind terrorism. What cannot be ignored also are the grievances that may be exploited by Islamists to further aid their recruitment. It is noted that the aforementioned evolution of political Islamism to the more extreme revolutionary Islamism, ending with militant Islamism, largely occurred through Egyptian prisons. However, what is noteworthy is the way in which ideology interacts with grievances. Ideology serves to reinterpret local grievances as a global ideological struggle, in turn ‘discovering’ more grievances where the ideological solution is deemed absent. If such local grievances could be minimised, the fodder that ideologues use to plant new pastures would be denied to them. Policy grievances, however, must only be changed if they form bad policy, not merely because terrorists hold a country hostage.

**Concluding recommendations**
The Quilliam Foundation has been established in London as a counter-extremism think tank aimed at simultaneously providing advice on policy reform where needed, and to provide a thorough counter-narrative to the Islamist ideology for the first time. An alternative of Western Islam, which would be at one with its host society, is encouraged as the long-term option.

In concluding this submission to the Senate, I recommend that the US government does not enter into the 'representative' game with the organised minority who have hijacked, as I once did, the voice of the silent non-Islamist majority. I recommend that work must be done to solve this problem without subconsciously accepting any Islamist premise. Hence, a 'Muslim' based approach by government — seeking to find the 'Muslim political voice' will only serve to aid the Islamist cause of identifying Muslims as a political bloc rather than religious community. Such a mistake falls for the assumption that Muslims must indeed have one political stance on any given matter, as they form one ideological bloc defined by religion. Rather, a problems-based localised and bottom-up approach, treating Muslims as citizens, is advised. This approach has been adopted by the British government and involves networking amongst normal non-Islamist local Muslims who are working in their communities to make better neighbourhoods for all. Governments cannot win arguments in communities; only civil society can achieve this. Governments can, however, empower civil society to make the necessary arguments and some very encouraging efforts towards this already exist. Existing State Department fact-finding missions to Europe should be encouraged and broadened so that networking and support can truly be facilitated for Europe's nascent voices rising against the dominant Islamist discourse. Banning non-terrorist Islamist movements is counter-productive, provides them kudos and would merely drive them underground. However, government cooperation with Islamist groups provides them with much-craved legitimacy and should be avoided. Rather, civil society should be fully equipped in dealing with and challenging Islamist ideas and groups where they emerge.

Senator Leiberman, ranking member Collins, Committee members and staff I thank you all for your time and for presenting me with the opportunity to address you here today. I hope that my contributions serve to distinguish the noble faith of Islam from the scourge that is Islamism, so that adequate policies can be adopted when dealing with this problem without targeting or alienating normal ordinary Muslims, who are as much victims to this scourge than anybody else. The Quilliam Foundation's staff stand ready to be called upon whenever they may be required, and hope to assist in any way possible to liberate Islam from Islamism.
Mr. Chairman, Senator Collins, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

In violent Islamist extremism, the United States faces a complex, little understood, and rapidly evolving threat. I am therefore particularly grateful for the opportunity to address this important hearing, and to provide some background information that will help us contextualize and locate violent Islamism within the much broader and diverse universe of contemporary Islamic political thought and activism. I would also like to address the phenomenon of Islamism in the West (more specifically in the United Kingdom) and the question of what the United States might be able to learn from the UK’s experience of dealing with various manifestations of Islamism—violent and otherwise—in recent years.

Just as Islam cannot be said to be a monolith, the same goes for Islamism as an ideological project. While it is possible to identify certain key figures and groups as being central to the genealogy of modern Islamism, those who have subsequently drawn on their ideas or organized themselves in their mold have often done so in widely varying ways—interpreting and adapting their views to disparate and sometimes even mutually exclusive agendas. If our goal today is to make some definitive determination as to whether Islamism as a political ideology fosters or hinders violent extremism, then we are likely to be disappointed. Having lived the better part of my life in the Muslim world and having spent the last fifteen years researching political Islam across a wide range of geographic, cultural, and political settings (including, since the mid-1990s, close observation of Islamist groups in the UK, both radical and non-radical), I find myself in the following dilemma, analytically: I can point to any number of occasions when I have seen individuals and groups that can be said to represent, or to be influenced by, Islamist ideology engage in behaviors that push fellow Muslims “up the staircase” of terrorism—to invoke a metaphor commonly used by another of our panelists—and, likewise, I can provide an equal range of examples of situations where I have seen Islamists or those influenced in some way by Islamist ideology do things that I am convinced played a vital role in keeping young Muslims from falling under the sway of radical beliefs. In short, in seeking to understand and counter violent Islamist ideology, I do not believe it to be a useful task for us to sit as judge and jury over Islamism more generally.

In seeking to identify root causes for violent Islamic extremism, I think we also need to question today the extent to which the answer is to be found primarily in ideology. While ideas are undoubtedly important, they will only drive an individual to act if articulated in terms that resonate with and seem to provide solutions that can address a person’s own life circumstances and needs. In this regard, I believe that the sociological
and psychological contextualization of Islamist ideology holds the key to understanding
the conditions under which it potentially poses a violent threat. Let me move on now to
provide some background information on modern Islamism and the evolution of its
radical and violent variants before going on to address the issue of Islamism in Europe
and the experiences of those charged with addressing the various challenges it poses.

In 1928, a schoolteacher in Egypt named Hassan al-Banna established a group
known as the Muslim Brotherhood (hereafter ‘MB’). The MB sought to ensure a
continued role for religion in society and saw itself as an antidote to the Westernizing
and secularizing tendencies of the country’s dominant political actors in the early postcolonial
period. Many Islamist leaders at the time also argued that the doctrine of modern
nationalism was incompatible with the teachings of Islam and the ideal of the umma (the
community of believers, potentially global in scope). While not initially established as a
political party, the Brotherhood very quickly became implicated in the rapidly evolving
political landscape of Egypt in the 1930s and 1940s. Branches of the Brotherhood were
established throughout the Arab world, and it also inspired the founding of similar groups
in countries such as Pakistan (the Jamaat-i Islami) and Turkey (the Refah Party). With
its enormous popularity and rapid inroads into the country’s new educated and middle
classes, Nasser began to see the MB as a political threat. Banned and driven underground
from the 1950s, the movement became radicalized. This phase of its existence is most
commonly associated with its chief ideologue at the time, Sayyid Qutb. Qutb—whose
ideas went on to become very influential on successive generations of radical Islamists
(including groups such as Al-Qaeda—see below)—had become convinced, like a number
of his contemporary Third World activists, that it had become impossible to work within
the existing political system to ensure a political role for Islam. Revolutionary politics
and armed struggle (jihad—from the Arabic word for ‘strive’), in Qutb’s teaching, were
the required paths to achieve social change in the Muslim world.

Yet Qutb’s views appealed only to a fringe minority in the Muslim world and, in
the successive generation, to only a very small fraction of Islamists. His views on jihad,
for example, were regarded by most Muslims (and by most Islamic scholars) as a highly
unorthodox departure from traditional understandings of that concept as purely defensive
in nature. In other Muslim-majority countries during this period, Islamist parties had
evolved into opposition movements. While some of them still continued to question the
legitimacy of the secular state, they did not embrace violent tactics. In Egypt, under
Nasser’s successor Anwar Sadat, the Muslim Brotherhood was once again permitted to
operate as a charity and social movement (but not as a political party) after its leadership
renounced violence. This shift prompted some within the group who were still beholden
to Qutb’s views to split off from the MB and form radical splinter groups, some of which
in more recent years have become integrated into Al-Qaeda. Banned from formal politics
in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood instead began to build a strong base of social support
at the neighborhood and municipal levels, establishing vast social service and charity
networks, and gaining control of all leading professional associations and syndicates.

While these may seem to be highly localized, domestic developments, it is
interesting to note that an important part of what allowed the Islamists to build up this
kind of support within Egypt’s civil societal spaces was the set of forces we refer to today
as globalization. As Sadat opened up Egypt’s economy to world markets and the country
undertook neoliberal economic reforms at the behest of institutions such as the
International Monetary Fund (IMF), the scale of state welfare and employment provision was scaled back significantly. This created 'gaps' in the provision of basic services that the Islamists were able to fill very skillfully, gaining widespread support and popular legitimacy in the process.

The 1980s saw a significant increase in the global visibility of political Islam as it became increasingly entwined with Cold War geopolitics. Three events from this decade are particularly noteworthy in terms of their importance to understanding the contemporary interface between Islam and global politics. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, a number of volunteer fighters from the Arab world traveled to Afghanistan assist in repelling what they interpreted as an atheist incursion into Muslim territories. These 'Arab-Afghans,' as they came to be known, were important insofar as their experience during these years (1980-88) helped to crystallize the ideological and geopolitical vision that would later define Al-Qaeda. Among this cadre from the Middle East was to be found Usama Bin Laden, a member of the wealthiest commercial family in Saudi Arabia who had renounced his family's business in the name of what he saw as a larger struggle against new forms of global, imperial atheism. The eventual withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan was interpreted by Bin Laden and his ilk as a victory and as evidence of Islam's ability to triumph over the world's superpowers. From the crucible of this experience was hence born Bin Laden's vision Al-Qaeda: an effort to globalize the Afghan experience.

As we can see from the preceding discussion, Al-Qaeda—for many, the group that most readily springs to mind today when speaking of Islam and violent extremism—needs to be situated within a diverse and multi-faceted ecology of world political Islam. Al-Qaeda was established in Afghanistan by Arab-Afghan fighters following the decision by the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from that country after a failed occupation effort. Emboldened by this seeming victory, Al-Qaeda sought to export the Afghan model to other countries in which Muslims were understood to be fighting foreign invasions or resisting imposed secularism. The move to establish the group also represented a major shift away from the worldview of earlier radical Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb and the groups he inspired. For them, the goal was to successfully attack and supplant the "near enemy," that is the leaders of secular-national regimes in the Middle East and other Muslim majority countries who were perceived as the proxies of Western powers. Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda’s new emphasis on the “far enemy,” inspired by the Afghan experience, emphasized instead the idea of directly attacking what they understood to be the source of global imperialism and atheism—namely, the United States. Al-Qaeda’s goals are the liberation of Muslim territories from occupying infidel forces and the making of a world that is “safe for Islam”—understood to mean a world in which a social political order based on shari ’ah (Islamic law) can be realized. Some within this camp understand this to mean the re-establishment of centralized political authority in the Muslim world via new Caliphate, an institution that had existed since the seventh century but had been abolished by Mustapha Kemal at the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Al-Qaeda today is in many ways better thought of as a particular discourse of resistance whose material reality is to be found in a transnational coordinating network highly skilled in forging temporary operational ties with local/regional movements or individuals in many global settings in order to engage in violent activism. Far from
representing a crude, kneejerk reaction to globalization, Al-Qaeda actually appropriates the logistical and communicative infrastructures of globalization to pursue the fulfillment of a narrative, a “story,” internalized by its leadership, about the necessity and inevitability of Islam’s triumph over the infidel (unbelieving) forces of world power—particularly the United States and its allies in Europe and elsewhere. Al-Qaeda as a radical Islamist group is in many ways quite unorthodox even within the ranks of the wider jihadist movement, many of whose members did not agree with Bin Laden’s decision to carry out the September 2001 attacks on the United States. While Al-Qaeda’s model of global Islamic politics has attracted only a few thousand of the world’s 1.25 billion Muslims in terms of actual members, some in the Muslim world are drawn to Usama Bin Laden as a symbol of anti-Americanism (even while they usually disagree with the methods he employs). In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001 (and a number of subsequent bombings in Europe and elsewhere—such as the London bombings of July 2005—attributed to Al-Qaeda and its affiliates), we have seen an increased politicization of Muslim identity around the world—particularly among Muslim populations in Europe and North America. This has meant that debates around Islam and Muslims have come to take on wider significance beyond the question of terrorism and violence, reinvigorating discussions of whether ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’ are compatible in cultural or civilizational terms—as per Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilizations’ thesis (see below). We have seen aspects of this in events such as the 2006 Danish cartoon affair and the controversy surrounding the Pope’s speech later that same year. As Olivier Roy has noted in his book Globalized Islam, it is possible today to identify two distinct generations of Al-Qaeda activists. The comparative sociology of these groups is telling in terms of what it allows us to discern about the evolving nature of the jihadi discourse and movement. The first generation of Al-Qaeda operatives, those who constituted the bulk of the organization in the late 1980s and very early 1990s, were generally citizens of Muslim countries and had direct prior experience of political or militant activism either in their home countries, as Arab-Afghans, or—most commonly—both. They generally had very little experience of the West and their axis of movement was generally confined to Afghanistan, Muslim conflicts in neighboring countries, and their countries of origin.1 The second wave of Al-Qaeda personnel, from the 1990s, by contrast, tended to have strong connections to the West. Many were recruited in Europe (and to some extent North America) or were citizens of Muslim countries who had spent some time living, studying or training in the West as expatriates. Important to note about this second generation, Roy tells us, is the “deterritorialized” nature of its Muslim identity. Where the original Al-Qaeda activists were firmly socialized in a nation-state environment and had developed their Islamist consciousness primarily in terms of its circumstances, this new generation of jihadis often had weak senses of national and religious identity. For many in the first wave, transnationalism was something of a reach, an idea they needed to get their heads around; for the second generation, however, it was a natural way of life—the “jihadi jet set.”2

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2 O. Roy, op. cit., p. 302.
In order to better understand this new mode of malignant cosmopolitanism, we need to look more closely at how and why radical religious discourse resonated with these deterritorialized identities. We will discuss these processes primarily in the context of the recruitment and socialization of young Muslims in Western contexts since Al-Qaeda and other radical groups seem to have relied heavily on these settings to provide many of the foot soldiers for their second generation operations. In terms of the first wave, the socialization into jihad occurred primarily through existing radical Islamist structures whose activities and leaderships became increasingly transnational from the 1980s. When looking at the second wave, however, we are confronted with a situation in which ideologues and recruiters are often handed a tabula rasa Muslim identity (in the form of a new convert or an immigrant Muslim experiencing new-found sense of religiosity) upon which they employ a range of discursive and disciplining techniques to inculcate certain worldviews and activist tendencies. This may sound like we are referring to something akin to brainwashing, but at work here is actually a much more sophisticated process of socialization that leverages existing cognitive, ideational, and identity formations to sculpt a very particular form of global Muslim subjectivity.

Several observers have already noted the “deculturing” or “universalizing” dimensions of Salafi Islam. These two terms refer, respectively, to the analytical and normative aspects of a similar phenomenon. Salafism, with its hostility towards religious innovation (bid’a) aims to rid Islam of anything that has entered the faith through contact with various local, “cultural” beliefs and practices. There are no schools of jurisprudence to debate between, Salafis insist—there is only Islam. In a normative sense this has proven very appealing to many young Muslims living in the West who feel alienated by their parents’ understanding of Islam. To them, their parents seem trapped in an understanding of Islam as it was practiced in, for example, the village in Bangladesh from which they migrated twenty years ago. They seem obsessed with trivial details relating to how one should hold one’s hands while praying, saints days, various festivals—but nothing to do with religion, modern life, or political questions. Rejecting the “village Islam” of their parents they go in search of a form of Islam that speaks to the issues and challenges of living as a Muslim in a global world—and, moreover, a Muslim caught between two senses of identity. The second and third immigrant generations have generally been born and raised in the West and are well versed (and often comfortable with) its cultural patterns and norms. At the same time, they are aware of belonging to a Muslim identity (in the West), and that will also help to provide them with some sense of meaning and purpose.

This search for a universal idiom of Islam can lead in two general directions. In some cases it prompts young Muslims in the West to emphasize those aspects of their religion that reflect global human rights norms, democracy and political and cultural pluralism: the umma as an integral part of a common global humanity. But this same search for universal Islam can also lead towards a universalism defined, religiously, in

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salafi terms—and, politically, in terms of Muslim struggles the world over: the umma as a righteous community under assault. While there is no sure way of determining which of these two general currents will prevail when it comes to a given individual, it is possible to make observations about how and why the salafi discourse in particular may seem appealing under certain circumstances. It is also important to note that only a very tiny minority of those drawn to salafi Islamist circles in the West ever get anywhere near the battlefield of jihad. For many, political salafism is a “phase” they go through before either slipping into a conservative but non-Islamist mode of religious practice, or, in some cases, becoming so disillusioned with the movement that they begin to question the very basis of salafism or even Islam. We have already referred above to the deculturing nature of salafi Islam. Several other aspects of the radical discourse merit our attention in terms of their interaction with identity and shifting religious norms in Western contexts.

For those Western Muslims who experience their dual identities as confusing and destabilizing, radical Islamic discourses can provide a matrix of meaning that permits them to derive a clearer sense of purpose and worldview. By shifting the focus of their identity away from the apparent tension between being, for example, simultaneously British and South Asian, and orienting it instead towards a resolution of this tension in a universal, salafi Islam and membership in the global umma, radical ideologues help culturally disoriented Muslims (or recent converts, as yet unsure of their way in Islam) to experience their lack of clear identity foothold not as a weakness or an absence, but rather as something empowering that invests them with the ability to be a “real” Muslim—and, moreover, to prove it by becoming politically engaged on behalf of the embattled umma. Describing the appeal of the radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir, one former member put it this way:

They had a very profound analysis of why the Islamic world is in such an abysmal state, how it declined and most importantly how we can elevate ourselves from this position, and break free. The group was not allied to any political regime, it was not operating on the basis of personal or financial motivation, it didn’t have a sectarian approach. As long as you are a Muslim and are committed to its beliefs and its causes, you are welcome to join the party.4

A previously liminal identity thus rediscover itself as part of the vanguard of a new global movement. Radical salafism accomplishes a gradual “desocietization” whereby adherents withdraw further and further from the ambient mainstream community, associating exclusively with other “real Muslims” and gradually detaching themselves from the national-societal contexts in which they live.

Another dimension of Muslims’ attraction to radical movements relates to the personal charisma associated with the scholars and leaders of these movements. Various observers have noted that within Al-Qaeda’s second wave, some of those recruited in the West have been living on the margins of society—often coming from broken homes and families, unemployed, involved in petty crime and so forth. The leaders of the radical

groups, as one analyst has documented, tend to display a genuine sense of care for those who come into their circle. For many young Muslims living in the margins, frequently subject to racism and discrimination, this will represent the first time someone has ever seemed to take a genuine interest in them and the direction of their lives. The personal charisma of radical ideologues hence seems vitally important in terms of creating an emotional bond with members of the group.

Many drawn to the radical movements are not by any means marginalized members of society. Rather, they often have very high levels of education, are employed, and even have families in some cases (compare with the demographics of mainstream Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood). Theirs is not a lack of social integration, but rather a seemingly successful integration process that has gone awry. Elements of the identity and worldview crises alluded to above begin to enter the picture and they come to the radical circles in search of a clearer sense of meaning. Well aware of the educational background of these potential recruits—many of whom will have graduated from top scientific and engineering schools—the religious scholars and intellectuals will often articulate radical Islamist ideology in a form that fits comfortably with the “cognitive style” and methods of analysis to which their students are accustomed. Salafi Islam is particularly conducive to this approach. The grammar of salafism suits the structure of modern scientific knowledge production. When teaching salafi Islam to such a group, for example, a sheikh will diagram it on a board such that it closely resembles problem-solving methods or engineering flowcharts. Given that much of the salafi discourse can be explained in terms of discrete categories of analysis, it becomes a relatively straightforward matter to communicate its teachings in a way that allows a follow with a techno-scientific education to work methodically through a given situation (framed in terms of religiously-given normative categories) and to eventually achieve—just as science does—a single, correct answer at the end of that process. This answer, it should be noted is not subjective and nor is it open to interpretation. It is the end result, again, just like science, of an “objective” method whose infallibility is beyond reproach. Faith in science as a technical method becomes faith in salafism as a religious method.

Observers and analysts of radical Islam have speculated as to the process that leads an individual to become willing to engage in violence, or other forms of “high risk” activism. Is it the religion itself that “radicalizes” them? Is it the teachings of a senior religious scholar who eventually convinces them that violence in the name of Islam is not only permitted, but required of them? Limited anecdotal evidence actually suggests that many individuals come into radical circles having already decided that they want to engage in some form of confrontational politics. Some, in fact, may only very recently have become Muslim, or “reactivated” a previously dormant sense of religiosity.

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7 Q. Wiktorowicz, op. cit., p. 4.
is not salafism, Islamist ideology, or the authority of religious scholars that serve as the “radicalizing agents,” but rather prior life experiences and worldviews that have culminated in a decision to actively seek participation in confrontational politics or even violence. The religious authority of salafi sheikhs, in any case, is anything but absolute. While those who engage in jihad do seek religious justification for their actions, they may sometimes do so after having already decided to act. In this regard, given the lack of religious hierarchy in Islam, it becomes easy for them to shop around—via the Internet or personal connections—to find a sheikh who will authorize and, moreover, provide textually grounded (and hence irreproachable) evidence as to why violence is permitted or even required in a given situation. It is also worth recalling here Sayyid Qutb’s teachings about how activist interpretations are privileged above those of religious scholars. For someone strongly molded in the “Qutbist” worldview, there is the potential that they may even untether themselves from formal sources of religious authority altogether. This phenomenon is illustrated in testimony given by the widow of a jihadi accused of planning the 2002 Madrid train bombings: “Sometimes we received texts [by religious scholars] from the Internet, but my husband did not read them, his relationship to jihad was instinctual.” Thus while activists may operate in frameworks whose general normative parameters are defined by a given religious authority, their willingness to engage in violence is not necessarily a learned behavior accruing exclusively from their participation in this network. Moreover, it seems that under certain circumstances they may disconnect from, or simply ignore, those aspects and teachings emanating from formally trained religious scholars that are dissonant with the activist orientation to which they have committed.

While the responses of the United States and its allies have severely damaged Al-Qaeda in important ways, there are those who believe that Bin Laden’s movement still represents a significant threat to the United States. Quite aside from the important question of Al-Qaeda’s operational capacity, there are other ways in which we can think of Al-Qaeda as harboring important symbolic power today—particularly in the eyes of some young Muslims in the West:

(1) Al-Qaeda as ideology: a worldview or mindset consisting of a general critique of the prevailing world system shared by a wide range of radical Islamist groups (some affiliated with Al-Qaeda, some not), and also a desire to actively strike at the perceived sources of global injustice and enforced secularism—mainly the United States and its allies.

(2) Al-Qaeda as mythology: the worldview described above can also be marketed as a legendary status symbol well after Al-Qaeda’s own active career (or the life of its leader) has come to an end. The Al-Qaeda “brand name” continues to inspire not only radical Islamists, but all manner of popular anti-systemic movements who now have evidence, based on Al-Qaeda’s example, that it is possible to mount successful attacks on the sources of world hegemony.

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9 F. Gerges, op. cit., p. 8.
(3) **Al-Qaeda as technology.** Bin Laden’s movement provides a basic model or template for networked organization and activism, aspects of which can be emulated by various “franchises” across various scales—local, national, regional, and global.

As ideology, mythology, and technology, it seems likely that some aspect of Al-Qaeda will continue to exert influence in radical Islamist circles even if and when its operational capacity is destroyed or disappears. The popular appeal of radical Islam, particularly in its activist variant, will continue to be limited to a very small and highly extreme minority of Muslims. Many of the symbols it champions and aspects of its overall critique, however, will still resonate more widely in the Muslim world.

Some of the more prominent manifestations of “Al-Qaeda 2.0” have appeared in Europe in recent years, with the Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London attacks of 2005 being the most important. These events have prompted European governments to essay a wide range of counter-terrorism strategies, some focused quite specifically on known individuals or institutions, others on general outreach to European Muslim communities and various preventive measures. U.S. partners on the other side of the Atlantic have at times been very creative in their outreach efforts, but have also encountered major challenges. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) played the role of “Muslims-in-chief” for Tony Blair’s government until a number of controversies around the group—not least of all the presence within its ranks of a number of mosque councils associated with intolerant views and Council leadership’s ties to Islamist “legacy groups”—sent Whitehall in search of alternative interlocutors. In fact, the MCB, in terms of its membership, is undoubtedly the largest and most diverse Muslim body in the country. Its problems, however, lay precisely in the challenges associated with reconciling within the discourse of a single umbrella body the views of over 500 member organizations, ranging from South Asian-style Deobandi madrasas in rural Yorkshire to cosmopolitan progressive Muslim groups in southern English cities. One result of this persistent ideological-sectarian divide within the UK’s Muslim community has been the formation of the British Muslim Forum (BMF) in 2005, a body established to give voice to the majority (by a slim margin) Bareli—that is, traditionalist/Sufi—current within British Islam. British government efforts, most recently under the auspices of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), moved away from exclusive reliance on the MCB to focus on highly localized issues and initiatives via, for example, the Preventing Extremism Together (PET) program.

Part of the problem, however, is that the majority of Muslims living in the West, and particularly the younger generation, do not identify with any of the groups in question. This insight was at least partly reflected in the conceptualization of one of the more creative initiatives to come in the wake of the July 7, 2005 London bombings, the Radical Middle Way project. Combining public messaging, multimedia outreach, and traveling roadshow events, the Radical Middle Way—a partnership between several youth-oriented Muslim organizations (including Q-News, the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, and the Young Muslim Organisation—the latter two having some historical ties to Islamist groups) and the British government—showcases the views of
several leading Muslim scholarly and intellectual voices. The figures involved, such as Tariq Ramadan and the American neo-traditional scholar Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, are noteworthy for the size of their following among younger Muslims and for their strong credentials as authentic voices of Islam willing to criticize Western governments and their policies. Sheikh Ali Goma’a, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, is also on the roster. Very few of the speakers connected to the project have strong ties to or could be considered representatives of particular Islamic—or Islamist—groups, reflecting the aforementioned tendency within the younger generation to seek out independent voices. While this initiative is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, it would seem that the impact has been minimal insofar as those attending the events or picking up lectures on CDs already subscribe to the views being presented. Again, one has to question whether this is a meaningful space for engaging young Muslims whose sense of anger, disaffection, confused sense of identity, and desire for confrontational politics may have them looking towards radical—and potentially violent—alternatives. In some sense it would be unfair to place that burden on a program such as the Radical Middle Way whose original purposes were more in line with bolstering the morale and confidence of young, independent and creative Muslims in the West rather than acting as a bulwark to radicalism.

Another relevant example here and one that is particularly useful in illustrating the complexity of the questions at hand relates to the London Metropolitan Police’s Muslim Contact Unit (MCU). Under the leadership of Robert Lambert, the MCU was in the frontline of outreach and coordination with Muslims in the British capital around issues of radicalism and terrorist threats. In this capacity, Lambert worked with and cites the contributions of various Islamists, including the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB—the British branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) as central to the successful rehabilitation of the notorious Finsbury Park Mosque, previously the HQ and chief pulpit for salafi-jihadi scholar Abu Hamza al-Masri. Lambert also acknowledges the contributions of salafi leaders at the Brixton Mosque in south London for their role in bringing to his attention and working to counter the sources and influence of hateful preaching. The most prominent Islamist current to be found in the UK comes from South Asia and the various “legacy groups” associated with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi branches of the Jama’at-i Islami movement. These influences are to be found in groups such as the UK Islamic Mission, the Islamic Forum Europe, Young Muslims UK and the Islamic Society of Britain. But one cannot simply understand the role of these groups today through the ideological positions of their founders. With most of them now at least a generation removed from the South Asian immigrants who first established them and with the younger generation coming into positions of prominence, one begins to detect in certain of these groups—such as the Islamic Society of Britain and the Islamic Foundation (previously the UK publishing wing of the Jama’at-i Islami)—the contours of a new and distinctly British approach to Islam. This is a discourse that emphasizes the compatibility between being British and being Muslim. As operationalized “on the streets,” this vision involves the local leaders of these groups serving a role akin to social workers and “big brothers,” taking vulnerable and disaffected young Muslim men under their wing. And yet the tendency, in some cases, to encourage socializing in exclusively Muslim circles and, in others, a seemingly exclusive preoccupation with foreign policy and political issues abroad, leads one to wonder to what extent a sense of Muslim identity
as something “separate” from mainstream British society might not be reinforced through the efforts of these groups. In short, is there a trade off between public order/security and social cohesion at work here?

Finally, what might the British experience of Islamism teach about how patterns could evolve within the Muslim population of the United States? We need to first recognize that the two communities are very different. While Muslim immigrants to the United States were mostly highly educated, employed in professional vocations, and generally well integrated, the same cannot be said of the Britain’s immigrant Muslim population. The issues and challenges faced by the two communities have hence been very different. There is a much larger historical “pool of discontent” from which British Muslims have been able to draw inspiration and see themselves reflected (even when relatively successful in terms of education and employment). We would consequently expect the threat from home grown terrorism in the United States to be much lower. Indeed, the comprehensive surveys undertaken as part of the Pew Research Center’s 2007 study of Muslim Americans indicated that the vast majority of Muslims in this country are moderate, mainstream in their social and political values, and well integrated. But one cannot ignore the fact that we have seen in recent years isolated incidents that suggest the presence of another dynamic: the Virginia Jihad Network, the Lackawanna Six, the Fort Dix plot, and others. While there is not yet evidence of a systematic or widespread threat of home-grown terrorism in the United States, it is worth considering the kind of circumstances that might allow such a situation to emerge. The ideological precursors, as we already know, are widely in circulation on the Internet and elsewhere. But as we have already argued, ideology alone is not a sufficient variable to explain radicalization. In the case of the UK, the experience of Muslims in that country as being a community subjected historically to discrimination and, more recently, as singled out and defined in terms of the threat it potentially poses to security, has provided a tangible basis on which to graft violent Islamist ideology. Heretofore, such a “grievance base” has been largely absent among Muslims in the United States. Should Muslims in this country begin to feel more markedly singled out and/or defined in terms of terrorism and threats to national security, the easier it may be for some among them to understand the worldview and vision of Islamic extremism as something that addresses their life circumstances. Finally, given the extremely broad and diverse nature of Islamism as an ideological movement, there is little doubt that among their affiliates and sympathizers are still to be found figures in the United States who act as fundraisers and financiers to groups currently classified as terrorist entities. In other cases, individuals associated with groups in the Middle East and elsewhere have fomented community tensions and divisive attitudes by “channeling” views and agendas from abroad directly into the streets of America. Such individuals, however, represent a fringe minority within a movement whose core agenda has been undergoing significant transformation in the younger generation. To define Islamism exclusively or primarily in terms of their activities would therefore be akin to throwing out an enormous baby with very little bathwater.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee.

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11 One thinks here, for example, of the 2006 controversy involving Muslim taxi drivers at the Minneapolis airport.
Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. This issue is very important for me personally and professionally and I am honored to have a chance to share my views with you.

Violence is only one of the tools used by extremist Islamists in the broader “war of ideas” against Western liberal democracy. Winning the war against terrorism is not possible unless, as the 9/11 Commission Report correctly stated, the U.S. “prevail[s] in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.” In order to succeed, we must first come to understand the roots of this ideology: namely, Islamism.

This is not to say that all Islamists will one day become terrorists; the vast majority will never engage in violence and in fact are likely to abhor terrorist acts. Nevertheless, the first step on the path to jihadi terrorism is instruction in Islamist ideology. Nearly all individuals involved in terrorism—whether as a foot soldiers executing the attack or as upper-level strategists, financiers, or recruiters—start out as non-violent Islamists. Therefore, the deciding factor in determining which Muslims can be allies in the so-called “long war” cannot be based on tactics—that is, whether or not a group embraces violent methods. The deciding factor must be ideological: Is the group Islamist or not?

Although various Islamist groups quarrel over means (and often bear considerable animosity towards one another), they all agree on the endgame: a world dictated by political Islam. While many do not openly call for violence or terrorism, they provide an ideological springboard for future violence.

The prime example of these groups is the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Founded in 1928, MB is the first modern Islamist movement; out of it have come numerous splinter groups, which in turn have given rise to yet more splinter groups. Consequently, there has been an exponential growth of fairly radical Islamist organizations active all over the world, including in cyberspace.

It is important to note that the “long war” concept was first used by the Islamists, and not the Bush administration. For example, in late 1998, Osama bin Laden’s second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri explicitly wrote that “we have resolved to fight... in a long battle... Generations will pass the torch to the following ones...” Michael Scheuer, Through Our Enemies’ Eyes, Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006, p. 25.
Over the 60 years since its founding in Egypt, MB has spread across the Middle East and expanded into every corner of the world. The tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood may be nonviolent in the West, and less violent than other groups in the Muslim world, but the ideology behind those tactics remains fundamentally opposed to the Western democratic system and its values. The worldview MB promotes can lead those exposed to it become excited to the point of engaging in violence. For example, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks, told US interrogators that he was first drawn to violent jihad after attending Brotherhood youth camps.7

Muslim Brotherhood motto says it all: "Allah is our objective, the Prophet is our leader, the Qur'an is our law, jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."3

After I briefly discuss the ideology and ideas of Islamism, I will then talk about two key MB splinter groups, Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun, before turning to the institutionalization of Islamism in America, which poses serious risks to the safety and stability of the country. Finally, I will highlight some areas in which I think the US government has adopted self-defeating policies and then suggest alternatives.

Islam vs. Islamism

Since 9/11, there have been various policies developed and numerous initiatives undertaken to counter so-called “violent Islamist extremism”. However, the most important first step—education about Islam and Islamism—has never taken place. I simply cannot understand how one can cure a disease without understanding its root cause. So far the US government has simply dealt with the symptoms, while the problem itself is getting worse.

The starting point has to be distinguishing between Muslims and Islamists, and between Islam (the religion) and Islamism (the political ideology). Islam, the religion, deals with piety, ethics, and beliefs, and can be compatible with secular liberal democracy and basic civil liberties. Islamists, however, believe Islam is the only basis for the legal and political system that governs the world’s economic, social, and judicial mechanisms. Islamic law, or sharia, must shape all aspects of human society, from politics and education to history, science, the arts, and more. It is diametrically opposed to liberal democracy.

The term “Islamism” was coined by the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Hassan al-Banna, in an effort to politicize Islam. Broadly, the label Islamist applies to individuals or groups who believe that Islam should be a comprehensive guide to life (for either Sunni or Shiite background). Islamists do not accept that the interpretation of Islam can evolve over the centuries along with human understanding or that the religion could be influenced or

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4 “Muslim Brotherhood Movement,” http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan.
modified by the cultures and traditions of various regions. Nor do they recognize that Islam can be limited to the religious realm, or to simply providing its followers with a code of moral and ethical principles. In this view, there is no such thing as religion being a private matter; all aspects of life are about Islam and for Islam.

I understand that for most Americans, dealing with Islamism is extremely difficult because it is associated with Islam. Very few people dare to question the beliefs or actions of Muslims for fear of being called a bigot or an Islamophobe. Since American culture is disposed to accepting all religions and cultures, when someone says, "This is my religion," there is a tendency not to question it. Oftentimes, there are no further inquiries about what being a follower of that religion entails or about how many different sects or interpretations of that religion exist. That is why we need to be clear: what needs to be countered is a political ideology, not a religion.

Today's Islamists adhere first and foremost to the works of the Muslim Brotherhood's most famous ideologue, Sayyid Qutb, and are not necessarily concerned with Islam's spiritual or cultural aspects. Qutb, like his ideological predecessors Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, was preoccupied with the relative decline of the Muslim world. All three believed that this deterioration was a result of Muslims straying from the tenants of "pure Islam." Qutb argued that Islam's crisis could be reversed only if "true" Muslims, emulating the ways of the Prophet Muhammad, worked to replace existing governments in the Muslim world with strictly Islamic regimes. Accordingly, followers of Qutb desire the overthrow of their current governments and declare armed jihad against non-Muslim states.

It is important to underline that this step is often viewed as "defensive jihad," an interpretation which has broad acceptance among many Muslims. Traditionally, questions like who can declare jihad and under what conditions has been widely debated and a broad consensus has emerged: armed jihad is a form of "just war" to protect Muslims and the religion of Islam when under attack, but can only be declared by a legitimate authority. Today, as Islamists argue that contemporary political leaders lack the legitimate authority to order armed jihad, various independent actors have taken this responsibility into their own hands. This logic has been used to justify attacks in Western countries that are deemed to be waging war against Islam—not just militarily but also culturally.

It is also very important to understand that Islamism is ultimately a long-term social engineering project. The eventual "Islamization" of the world is to be enacted via a bottom-up process. Initially, the individual is Islamized into a "true" Muslim. This process requires the person to reject Western norms of pluralism, individual rights, and the secular rule of law. The process continues as the individual's family is transformed, followed by the society, and then the state. Finally, the entire world is expected to live, and be governed, according to Islamic principles. It is this ideological machinery that works to promote separation, sedition, and hatred, and is at the core of Islamist terrorism.

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