



House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

Roots of violent radicalisation

Nineteenth Report of Session 2010–12

Volume I

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The Home Affairs Committee

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Contents

Report	<i>Page</i>
1 Introduction	3
The Committee's inquiry	3
Context	4
Definitions	4
The terrorist threat	4
Delivery of the Prevent Strategy	6
2 Who is at risk of radicalisation?	7
The scale of radicalisation	7
The drivers of radicalisation	8
3 Where does radicalisation take place?	13
Universities	13
Religious institutions	15
The internet	15
Prisons	16
Other fora	18
4 The Prevent Strategy	19
The Prevent Review	19
Targeting resources proportionate to the threat	19
Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation	21
Universities	21
The internet	23
Prisons	26
Supporting vulnerable people	28
Funding	28
Methods	29
Community responses to Prevent	30
Proscription	32
Annex A: Conference note	35
Annex B: Note of visit to Belmarsh	38
Annex C: Note of SOAS meeting	41
Conclusions and recommendations	43
Formal Minutes	48
Witnesses	49

List of printed written evidence	50
List of additional written evidence	50
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	51

1 Introduction

The Committee's inquiry

1. On 7 July 2005, 52 people were killed and more than 770 others injured in attacks on the London transport network carried out by four men from West Yorkshire who had been radicalised by the ideology and rhetoric of Al Qa'ida. The nature of the current, deadly threat facing the UK from home-grown terrorism was fully exposed for the first time. This was only one of a number of terrorist plots which caused the British authorities to shift their attention over the past decade from external threats to national security to those lying within the UK borders. Radicalisation is one of four strategic factors identified in the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST, that have enabled terrorist groups to grow and flourish.¹ Yet four years after 7/7, the reasons why some British-born and raised individuals are vulnerable to violent radicalisation remain unclear.
2. On taking office in 2010, the Coalition Government announced a wholesale review of the Prevent Strategy (often referred to simply as "Prevent"), which was drawn up to tackle violent radicalisation in the UK in the wake of the 7/7 bombings.² The original strategy had attracted criticism for its alleged exclusive focus on Muslim communities, spying, and unhealthy conflation of law enforcement with integration policy. The outcome of the Prevent Review was published in June 2011.
3. In anticipation of this, we decided in May 2011 to launch an inquiry that would test the evidence base for the Prevent Review and explore issues regarding its implementation. We undertook to examine the root causes of violent radicalisation in the UK, the individuals and groups particularly vulnerable to radicalisation and the locations where this radicalisation tends to take place, in relation to the primary terrorist threats facing the UK. Specifically, we intended to:
 - determine the major drivers of, and risk factors for recruitment to, terrorist movements linked to (a) Islamic fundamentalism (b) Irish dissident republicanism and (c) domestic extremism;
 - examine the relative importance of prisons and criminal networks, religious premises, universities and the internet as fora for violent radicalisation;
 - examine the operation and impact of the current process for proscribing terrorist groups;
 - consider the appropriateness of current preventative approaches to violent radicalisation, in light of these findings, including the roles of different organisations at national and local level; and
 - make recommendations to inform implementation of the Government's forthcoming revised Prevent strategy.

¹ HM Government, *Contest: The UK's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 2011. The other three factors are conflict and instability; ideology; and technology.

² "Prevent" is one of four strands of CONTEST. The others are "Protect", "Pursue" and "Prepare".

4. To this end, we took oral evidence on seven occasions between September 2011 and December 2011 and received 17 written submissions. A list of those who gave evidence is appended to our Report. We visited Belmarsh prison to speak to prisoners and staff and held a round-table discussion with a group of students from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. We also held a conference at De Montfort University on 13 December 2011, attended by around 200 people involved in Prevent, including police officers, local authority workers, prison and probation staff, academics, faith leaders, students, community groups and politicians. The conference was addressed by, amongst others, Rev. Jesse Jackson and by Dr. Dipu Moni MP, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, and allowed us to hear a wide range of views which have informed our inquiry to a significant extent. We are grateful to all those who contributed to our inquiry. We are particularly grateful to De Montfort University and the Barrow Cadbury Trust for hosting and supporting our conference.

Context

Definitions

5. Much of the language used to talk about the issues we consider in our Report is itself the subject of debate. However, whilst we briefly consider the use of language in chapter four, in general we use the Government's definitions as set out in legislation and the Prevent Strategy:

- Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000 defines terrorism as “the use or threat of action ... designed to influence the Government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public ... for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.”
- Radicalisation is defined in the Prevent Strategy as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.”
- Extremism is defined in the Prevent Strategy as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.”³
- “Violent extremism” is considered by the Prevent Strategy to mean the endorsement of violence to achieve extreme ends.

The terrorist threat

6. The Government concluded in its Prevent Review that the Strategy should continue to focus on radicalisation linked to the main terrorist threat facing the UK, from groups that are usually collectively referred to as Islamic fundamentalist, Al Qa'ida-related, or Islamist terrorists (we will use this last term). Other than the 7/7 bombings, some of the most high-

profile Islamist plots discovered by the authorities involving British citizens or residents over the last decade included:

- the attempt by Richard Reid to detonate explosives in his shoes while on board a flight from Paris to Miami in December 2001;
- the conviction of Kamel Bourgass for his role in a plot to produce ricin for use in a terrorist attack in London in 2003;
- the conviction of five men in 2004 for attempting to produce explosives to attack utility companies, the Ministry of Sound nightclub, Bluewater Shopping Centre and Amec construction firm;
- the conviction of four individuals who tried and failed to detonate bombs on London's transport network on 21 July 2005;
- the conviction of seven individuals in connection with the Bojinka II Plot to blow up six to ten flights from the UK to the US;
- the discovery in June 2007 of two improvised devices in a car outside the Tiger Tiger club near Trafalgar Square—the following day the two perpetrators drove a Jeep packed with gas cylinders into the lounge at Glasgow Airport; and
- the jailing of Rajib Karim for 30 years in March 2011 after he joined British Airways in order to plan suicide bombings.

The threat level from such groups has reached the highest level of CRITICAL over the past decade (meaning an attack is expected imminently) but was most recently lowered in Great Britain from SEVERE (meaning an attack is highly likely) to SUBSTANTIAL (a strong possibility) in July 2011.⁴

7. However, the Government also believes that “Prevent should be flexible enough to address the challenge posed by terrorism of any kind” and cited two further forms of terrorism in the Strategy.⁵ Firstly, it noted the threat from Northern Ireland-related terrorism had “increased significantly” over the past two years.⁶ The current threat level from Northern Ireland-terrorism is set separately from that for Great Britain and currently stands at SEVERE. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has responsibility in government for Northern Ireland-related terrorism with most relevant policy areas the responsibility of the devolved administration.

8. Secondly, the Strategy cited extreme right-wing terrorism, which in the UK has been “much less widespread, systematic or organised than terrorism associated with Al Qa’ida”;⁷ however, there are 17 people in Britain currently serving prison sentences for terrorism offences who are known to be associated with extreme right-wing groups.⁸ Although the

⁴ The Security Service website, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/threat-levels.html#history>.

⁵ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 6.11

⁶ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 5.6

⁷ HM Government, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, July 2011, p 30

⁸ Ev 89, para 1.18

last major terrorist attacks by a right-wing extremist in the UK took place in 1999,⁹ there have been more recent convictions for offences connected with planning terrorist attacks, including:

- Nathan Worrell, jailed for at least seven years in December 2008 for possessing material for terrorist purposes and racially aggravated harassment;
- Neil Lewington, convicted and sentenced for a least six years in September 2009 on seven separate charges, including preparing acts of terrorism;
- Martyn Gilleard, sentenced to 16 years in prison in June 2008 for preparing for terrorist acts and possessing articles and collecting information for terrorist purposes;
- Ian and Nicky Davison, convicted in May 2010 of preparing a terrorist attack to target Jews, Muslims and ethnic minorities using ricin poison; and
- Terence Gavan, jailed for 11 years in January 2010 for assembling one of the largest arms caches found in England in recent years.¹⁰

Delivery of the Prevent Strategy

9. The Prevent Strategy is coordinated by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office and delivered in partnership with a number of other Government Departments and statutory agencies and community groups at a local level. The Home Office currently funds Prevent coordinators in 25 priority local authority areas and also provides grant funding for project work within these areas. The Home Office provides further funding to police forces for officers to fulfil Prevent coordination and engagement roles. Key to local Prevent delivery is the Channel programme, a multi-agency programme coordinated by the police to identify individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and direct them towards appropriate support, supplied by a Channel provider. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides funding for Prevent work overseas (which we do not consider in our Report).

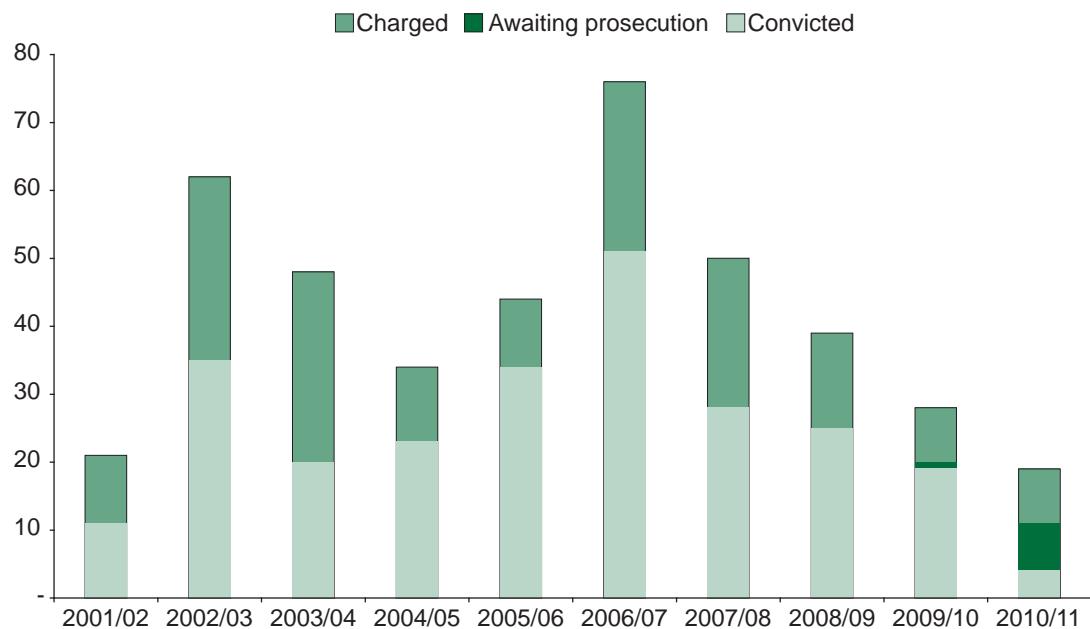
9 Hansard, 26 April 1999, col. 37ff.

10 Alexander Melegrou-Hitchens and Edmund Standing, *Blood and Honour: Britain's far right militants*, Centre for Social Cohesion, January 2010, pp 36-7; HM Government, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, July 2011, p 30

2 Who is at risk of radicalisation?

The scale of radicalisation

10. In 2007, the Director-General of MI5 said that there were “at least 2,000 people” in the UK who posed a threat because they supported terrorism, a figure that had increased by 400 from the previous year. Charles Farr, Director-General of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism at the Home Office, told us that, more recently, “we have seen that sympathy for violent extremism is declining rather than increasing”.¹¹ Most witnesses were more or less in agreement, in relation to Islamist terrorism. Professor Peter Neumann, of the International Center for the Study of Radicalisation, said that is it “definitely” on the decrease, citing a large decline in the number of people mobilised by organisations like Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun.¹² Witnesses did not consider that this was necessarily reflected in the conviction data;¹³ however, we note from the most recent statistics published in December 2011 that only four people were convicted of terrorist or terrorism-related offences in Great Britain in the 2010/11 financial year, compared with 19 the previous year and a peak of 51 in 2006/07. Even allowing for the fact that some cases are still awaiting prosecution, only three individuals were charged for these offences in the year ending June 2011, compared with 27 during the previous year.¹⁴



Source: Home Office (see footnote)

¹¹ Q 299

¹² Q 349

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Home Office, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes and stop and searches, Quarterly update to June 2011, Great Britain*, December 2011, Table 1.04; Home Office, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes and stop and searches, Great Britain 2008/09*, November 2009, Table A

11. Charles Farr thought that the reasons for this decline were unclear. While we received no definitive answers, it was suggested to us by a student from SOAS, during our round-table discussion, that supporting violent extremist preachers had been a “novelty” for some young Muslims, which had largely worn off.¹⁵ Ali Soufan, a former FBI agent who now runs a counter-radicalisation organisation, also posited that the Arab Spring had contributed to the waning appeal of global jihad.¹⁶

12. However, some witnesses were concerned about a growth in *non-violent* extremism, including Maajid Nawaz of the Quilliam Foundation.¹⁷ Jamie Bartlett of the think-tank Demos told us:

Other types of extremism appear to be on the increase. Part of that may be what Professor [Roger] Eatwell [of the University of Bath] calls cumulative, that groups feed off each other. Classic examples are the English Defence League and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, who require each other’s presence in order to justify their continuing existence and just continually spur each other on.¹⁸

The Government cites in the Prevent Strategy examples of where those who have previously been members of non-violent extremist groups have gone on to support terrorism.

13. Some witnesses and participants in our conference at De Montfort University suggested that the threat from the far right was increasing in two ways. The number of supporters for non-violent extremist groups was growing, and, while support for more explicitly violent groups remained low, Dr Matthew Goodwin, of the University of Nottingham, asserted that “the far right is becoming far more confrontational and willing to engage in violence”.¹⁹ Much of the current discourse about the far right tends to focus on the self-styled English Defence League, which recent research estimates has 25,000–35,000 online supporters but is not seen as a terrorist threat.²⁰ Dr Matthew Feldman, of the University of Northampton, made the point that there are other groups that are far more extreme, such as the Aryan Strike Force, four members of which have been convicted of various acts of preparation for terrorism.²¹

The drivers of radicalisation

14. The Prevent Strategy cites research suggesting that, in relation to Islamist terrorism, the following groups are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation:

- young people and people from lower income and socio-economic groups;

¹⁵ Annex C

¹⁶ Q 105

¹⁷ Q 93

¹⁸ Q 349

¹⁹ Q 205

²⁰ Q 359 [Mr Bartlett – citing his own research published by Demos, 2011]

²¹ See Annex A

- those who distrust Parliament and who see a conflict between being British and their own cultural identity; and
 - those who perceive discrimination, experience racial or religious harassment, and have a negative view of policing.²²
15. It became apparent during our inquiry that radicalised individuals come from a wide range of backgrounds: recent research described them as “demographically unremarkable”.²³ For example, although only five women were convicted of Islamist offences between 1999 and 2009 and over 90% of referrals to the multi-agency Channel programme, which evaluates referrals of individuals at risk of radicalisation, were male,²⁴ we heard that Al Qa’ida is “specifically launching and targeting women for violent acts of radicalisation” and that “there is absolutely no gender imbalance whatsoever” in terms of support for extremism.²⁵ The majority of individuals referred to the Channel programme were aged between 13 and 25 and just over two-thirds of all terrorist offences since 2001 were committed by those under 30, but the age of offenders ranged from 16 to 48.²⁶ Education levels and economic status vary.²⁷ Those particularly vulnerable to radicalisation include converts to the Muslim faith, meaning they may originate from many different ethnic communities rather than what we would regard as “traditional” British Muslim communities. Rashad Ali, of the counter-radicalisation organisation Centri, concluded that “I don’t think there is a typical profile ... It actually could be anybody”.²⁸
16. Evidence to our inquiry suggested that there were also many drivers of, and routes into, Islamist radicalisation. We initially heard that there were four main pathways: ideology, theology, grievance and mental health problems.²⁹ Further evidence emphasised grievance³⁰ and its links to social exclusion.³¹ Arguments about social exclusion were not entirely convincing, given that 42% of offences were perpetrated by individuals either in employment or full-time education, and the recent Home Office research finding that individuals tend to have similar socio-economic status to the broader population in which they live.³² Genuine theology also appeared to play a very limited role: Alyas Karmani

22 HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, paras 5.26-5.30

23 Home Office Occasional Paper 98, *Understanding vulnerability and resilience in individuals to the influence of AQ violent extremism*, November 2011

24 Robin Simcox, Hannah Stuart, Houriya Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections*, Centre for Social Cohesion, 2010

25 Q 55 [Mr Ali; Mr Nawaz]

26 HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 9.23; Robin Simcox, Hannah Stuart, Houriya Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections*, Centre for Social Cohesion, 2010

27 Q 214 [Sir Norman Bettison]

28 Q 53

29 Qq 45, 54 [Mr Ali]

30 See for example Q 139 [Mr Hassan Shaikh]

31 See, for example, Q 139 [Mr Karmani]

32 Robin Simcox, Hannah Stuart, Houriya Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections*, Centre for Social Cohesion, 2010; Home Office Occasional Paper 98, *Understanding vulnerability and resilience in individuals to the influence of AQ violent extremism*, November 2011

noted that the Islamic understanding of individuals at risk of radicalisation seen by his organisation, STREET, “equated to a primary school level”.³³

17. Charles Farr argued that “we have a fairly good idea about what is driving radicalisation”.³⁴ However, a recent Home Office-commissioned research paper contradicted this:

The empirical evidence base on what factors make an individual more vulnerable to Al Qa’ida-influenced violent extremism is weak. Even less is known about why certain individuals resort to violence, when other individuals from the same community, with similar experiences, do not become involved in violent activity.³⁵

The weakness of the evidence base came across strongly during our inquiry. Jamie Bartlett said that there were three reasons for this: the difficulty in generating primary evidence because of the lack of research subjects and their unwillingness to participate; the fact that research tended to be theoretical rather than evidence-based; and the difficulty in analysing personal stories in a rigorous, scientific way.³⁶ Much of what is cited as “evidence” is often anecdotal. Professor Peter Neumann, of the International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, told us there was some good understanding of the “ingredients” for radicalisation but “do we not know absolutely everything about how these ingredients fit together, how to cook the recipe”.³⁷

18. However, most people with whom we spoke mentioned the centrality of grievance to the radicalisation process.³⁸ The Prevent Review found that sources of grievance included ‘stop and search’ powers used by the police under counter-terrorism legislation; the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy more generally; a perception of biased and Islamophobic media coverage; and UK foreign policy, notably with regard to Muslim countries, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq.³⁹ This was supported by evidence to our inquiry. Maajid Nawaz, who was formerly a member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, told us:

I had many grievances, including experiencing violent racism on the streets of Essex as a teenager before the age of 16; being stabbed at in the street by Combat 18; being falsely arrested by Essex police authorities. I saw what was happening in Bosnia.⁴⁰

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh, of the Averroes Institute, argued in particular that “the common denominator is not the foreign policy but the perception, whether it is perceived or real,

³³ Q 139. STREET is a Brixton-based project working with young Muslims at risk of criminality, social exclusion and violent extremism. It was until recently funded as a Channel provider by the Home Office.

³⁴ Q 306

³⁵ Home Office Occasional Paper 98, *Understanding vulnerability and resilience in individuals to the influence of AQ violent extremism*, November 2011

³⁶ Q 347

³⁷ Q 348

³⁸ See also Annex A, Annex B, Annex C

³⁹ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 5.27

⁴⁰ Q 48 [Mr Nawaz]

that there is an attack or a targeting or a singling out or a discriminatory attitude towards Muslims and Islam.”⁴¹

19. Charles Farr told us that the drivers of terrorism in Northern Ireland-related terrorism, Al Qaeda-related terrorism and far right extremism tended to be “comparable in type but not in detail” in terms of the combination of ideology and personal vulnerabilities.⁴² In Prevent, the Government claims the drivers for extreme right-wing terrorism include a combination of supremacist ideology—which in recent years has increasingly encompassed Islamophobia—peer pressure, and the prospect of personal benefit, with individuals involved tending to be male, poorly educated and unemployed, in some cases with a criminal record.⁴³ Dr Goodwin stated that, while their demographics might vary dependent on the organisation they supported, far right supporters were:

United through a heavy preoccupation with immigration, profound levels of concern over the effects of immigration on British society, high levels of dissatisfaction with all of the mainstream parties and anxiety over the role of Islam and British Muslims in wider society.⁴⁴

As with supporters of Islamist terrorist groups, however, “not enough systematic, longitudinal research has been done to paint an accurate picture of who they are, how they come to be radicalised”.⁴⁵

20. Violent extremists reject mainstream methods of political participation. Dr Goodwin argued that “the vast majority of far right supporters are so dissatisfied with mainstream parties, and so distrustful of the political system generally that they either refuse to believe anything is being done or they simply take the view that what is being done is insufficient”.⁴⁶ Akeela Ahmed, of the Muslim Youth Helpline, considered that the summer riots had highlighted some of the challenges facing young Muslims: they do not feel like they are being heard; they do not have the tools to express their grievances in the right way; and they feel disempowered and unable to effect change or influence what is going on in their lives.⁴⁷ A student from SOAS told us that Muslims felt particularly targeted by the police in legitimate protests.⁴⁸

21. We suspect that violent radicalisation is declining within the Muslim community. There may be growing support for nonviolent extremism, fed by feelings of alienation, and while this may not lead to a specific terrorist threat or be a staging post for violent extremism, it is nevertheless a major challenge for society in general and for the police in particular. There also appears to be a growth in more extreme and violent forms of far-right ideology. Indeed it is clear that individuals from many different backgrounds

⁴¹ Q 140

⁴² Q 309

⁴³ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, paras 5.43-5.45

⁴⁴ Q 187

⁴⁵ Q 187

⁴⁶ Q 189

⁴⁷ Q 145

⁴⁸ Annex C

are vulnerable, with no typical profile or pathway to radicalisation. However, there is a lack of objective data, much of the evidence inevitably being anecdotal. Only 250 people have been convicted in the UK of terrorism-related offences since 11 September 2001. However, there is a wealth of knowledge held by people working with individuals judged to be vulnerable to violent radicalisation at a local level that could better inform our understanding of why some of these individuals do become radicalised and, crucially, why some do not. One of the aims of the increased auditing demands to be placed on Channel providers should be the collection of a wider range of data to contribute to this evidence base. We recommend that the Government publish the methodology whereby this data will be collated and analysed, and make arrangements for suitably de-sensitised data to be made available to the wider research community.

22. One of the few clear conclusions we were able to draw about the drivers of radicalisation is that a sense of grievance is key to the process. Addressing perceptions of Islamophobia, and demonstrating that the British state is not antithetical to Islam, should constitute a main focus of the part of the Prevent Strategy which is designed to counter the ideology feeding violent radicalisation.

23. The Government notes in the Prevent Strategy that individuals “who distrust Parliament” are at particular risk of violent radicalisation. This appeared to be borne out in our inquiry, both in terms of Islamist and extreme far-right- radicalisation. Individuals are frustrated because they feel unable to participate in the political process and feel that mainstream parties do not recognise their concerns. This may not be true and we stress that we are talking about perceptions. Clearly there is much to be done by Parliamentarians and by the political parties to ensure that there is a nonviolent outlet for individuals throughout society, but we also consider that there is an insufficient focus within Prevent on building trust in democratic institutions at all levels. This should be emphasised more strongly, including how work currently being undertaken by the Government Equality Office to implement the 2010 recommendations of the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation feeds into Prevent.

3 Where does radicalisation take place?

24. The revised Prevent Strategy lists a number of sectors and institutions where the Government believes there to be particular risks of violent radicalisation or where it believes radicalisation can be identified: education, the internet, faith institutions and organisations, health services, the criminal justice system, the charitable sector and overseas. In our terms of reference, published before the Prevent Review, we identified universities, religious institutions, the internet and prisons for particular inquiry and we consider each of them below.

Universities

25. In the Prevent Review, the Government drew a link between university education and terrorist activity, but our evidence suggests that there may be a much less direct link than was thought in the past, and a recent Home Office document suggests that individuals involved in violent extremism are little different to others around them in terms of their education. The Prevent Review says this:

More than 30% of people convicted for Al Qa'ida-associated terrorist offences in the UK between 1999 and 2009 are known to have attended university or a higher education institution. Another 15% studied or achieved a vocational or further education qualification. About 10% of the sample were students at the time when they were charged or the incident for which they were convicted took place. These statistics roughly correspond to classified data about the educational backgrounds of those who have engaged recently in terrorist-related activity in this country: a significant proportion has attended further or higher education.

We believe there is unambiguous evidence to indicate that some extremist organisations, notably Hizb-ut-Tahrir, target specific universities and colleges (notably those with a large number of Muslim students) with the objective of radicalising and recruiting students.⁴⁹

26. The Henry Jackson Society , whose staff carried out some of the analysis on which this was based, highlighted several specific cases:

- at least four individuals involved in acts of terrorism in the UK were senior members of a university Islamic Society (Kafeel Ahmed, Waseem Mughal, Yassin Nassari and Waheed Zaman);
- Omar Sharif, a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv in 2003, was radicalised during his first year at King's College London after he attended Hizb-ut-Tahrir meetings on campus;
- Anthony Garcia, convicted for his role in the 2004 'fertiliser' bomb plot, attended religious talks in the late 1990s at the University of East London Islamic Society; and

⁴⁹ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, paras 10.61, 10.66

- Mohammed Naveed Bhatti, convicted for his role in Dhiren Barot's 2004 'dirty bomb' plot, was studying at Brunel University and met Barot in the university's prayer room.⁵⁰

27. However, Universities UK expressed concern that:

Simplistic linkages have been made between violent radicalisation and the fact an individual has attended university without acknowledgement that the radicalisation process is far more nuanced and difficult to predict ...

What is not taken into account is that the proportion of young men now participating in higher education stands at 41%, a fact that indicates that attending university may actually reduce the risk of vulnerability to violent radicalisation.⁵¹

A Home Office Rapid Evidence Assessment of open source empirical studies published more recently found that individuals involved in Islamist violence "tend to be educated to a similar level ... as the broader population in which they live".⁵²

28. When asked whether attending university meant an individual was more at risk of extremism, Professor Geoff Petts, representing Universities UK replied that universities "acknowledge the threat, but we do not see evidence to support that". Nabil Ahmed, of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, added:

There are various myths surrounding the issue of campus extremism. There is far too much sensationalism and insufficient evidence or expertise in this wider discussion ... There is a notion that campuses are hotbeds of extremism, which is unfounded in the expertise and experience of the sector and the experience of students. There is a notion that, just because these people who have gone on to become terrorists went to university, in some way those two things are connected—the evidence suggests not. There was an independent inquiry, for example, into the case of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who went to UCL, which showed that he was not actually radicalised at university.⁵³

Professor Petts argued that the evidence that extremist groups were actively targeting universities was "circumstantial" and Nabil Ahmed said that he had not come across any instances of campus preaching that would be in breach of British law.⁵⁴ Other students we met through SOAS, including practicing Muslims, were adamant that they had not encountered anyone on campus who supported terrorism.

29. Hannah Stuart of the Henry Jackson Society said that she understood why the Federation of Students Islamic Societies felt the need to defend Muslim students against the media focus on them, but pointed out that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was a former president of his University's Islamic Society, who had been convicted in the US in October 2011 for a failed bomb attack on an aircraft. She said:

50 Ev 106

51 Ev 109, Ev 112

52 Home Office Occasional Paper 98, *Understanding vulnerability and resilience in individuals to the influence of AQ violent extremism*, November 2011

53 Q 238

54 Qq 239, 245

I think it is not just about the admittedly very small number of Muslim students who have gone on to commit terrorist acts but it is about the atmosphere that is created sometimes on campus by Islamic societies or other organisations who consistently invite a certain type of speaker that does not reflect the plurality of Islam in this country.⁵⁵

30. Charles Farr claimed that the Prevent Review had *not* stated that terrorists themselves were active recruiters in universities, but rather that the Government was concerned about people “who are speaking regularly against core UK values and whose ideology incidentally is also shared by terrorist organisations” and the fact that this appeared to be going unchallenged.⁵⁶ Other witnesses gave examples of such individuals who were allowed to speak on campus, for example Raed Salah, who is banned from entering the UK for his anti-semitic views but was admitted to the country by mistake in June 2011, and Al Qa’ida supporter Anwar Al-Awlaki who, we were told, addressed a UK university by video link.⁵⁷

31. Professor Neumann undertook a study in 2007 for the European Commission which came to the conclusion that:

Like prisons or like the internet, universities were places of vulnerability ... because you get people of a certain age, often away from home for the first time, often feeling quite lost and often experiencing a sort of crisis of identify and so on. That makes it easy for extremist groups to pick them up.⁵⁸

Religious institutions

32. Charles Farr told us that violent radicalisation in mosques or other religious institutions comprises “no more than 1% or 2%” of the total cases of radicalisation.⁵⁹ Our witnesses tended to agree that there was very little threat from the mosques. Alyas Karmani, for example, argued that “mosques are completely disconnected from young at risk Muslims”.⁶⁰ The Prevent Strategy states that community resistance has reduced the open operation of radical preachers and driven many to operate out of private homes or the internet. Consequently, while the Strategy cautions ongoing vigilance against potential threats, its focus on mosques is more as a tool to help in countering extremist ideology by presenting competing points of view.⁶¹

The internet

33. Many of our witnesses cited the internet as the main forum for radicalisation.⁶² Sir Norman Bettison, the Association of Chief Police Officers’ lead for Prevent, told us that

⁵⁵ Q 369

⁵⁶ Q 334

⁵⁷ Ev 119

⁵⁸ Q 369

⁵⁹ Q 302

⁶⁰ Q 171

⁶¹ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, paras 10.116-7

⁶² See, for example, Q 171 [Mr Karmani]; Q 174 [Mr Hassan Shaikh]

“the internet does seem to feature in most, if not all, of the routes of radicalisation”.⁶³ It was regarded as particularly dangerous as it was now one of the few unregulated spaces where radicalisation is able to take place. According to the Home Office, the internet “plays a role in terms of sustaining and reinforcing terrorist ideological messages and enabling individuals to find and communicate with like-minded individuals and groups”.⁶⁴ This seemed to be contradicted by more recent Home Office-commissioned research, which concluded that the internet “does not appear to play a significant role in Al Qa’ida-influenced radicalisation”.⁶⁵ Even those witnesses who attributed a significant role to the internet tended to support that report’s conclusion that some element of face-to-face contact was generally essential to radicalisation taking place, including with regards to the extreme far right, but by definition this does not deal with the issue of self radicalisation which by its very nature takes place in isolation and concerns have been expressed about the impact of ‘Sheikh Google’ on individuals who may be vulnerable, but have not been identified as starting on a journey of self radicalisation.⁶⁶

Prisons

34. The Prevent Strategy states that:

We know that some people who have been convicted and imprisoned for terrorist-related offences have sought to radicalise and recruit other prisoners. We also know that some people who have been convicted for non-terrorism-related offences but who have previously been associated with extremist or terrorist networks have engaged in radicalising and recruitment activity while in prison. The extent to which radicalisation which takes place in prison will endure beyond the confines of the prison environment is not yet clear.⁶⁷

The Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, Michael Spurr, told us that the Service had “some evidence of individual prisoners who may have attempted to say things or have indicated views that could attract people to a radical cause” but no evidence to suggest it was on the increase.⁶⁸ We were given the following example of an individual who had been radicalised in prison:

An individual who went into Belmarsh on remand was three cells away from Abdullah al-Faisal when he was there. Within three days, Abdullah al-Faisal had convinced him to undertake a martyrdom mission. He left prison—he was acquitted of his offence—went straight to Yemen, desperately looking for jihad, desperately seeking a training camp. Fortunately, the handlers there in Yemen channelled him

⁶³ Q 232

⁶⁴ Ev 91, para 2.19

⁶⁵ Home Office Occasional Paper 97, *Al Qaida-influenced radicalisation: A rapid evidence assessment guided by Situational Action Theory*, November 2011

⁶⁶ Q 193 [Dr Goodwin]

⁶⁷ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 10.155

⁶⁸ Qq 266, 269

into an appropriate kind of madrassa ... who taught him the correct understanding and sent him back to us.⁶⁹

35. It is clear that a time in prison can lead to a young person being drawn into friendships and networks which increase the likelihood of them being involved in criminal activity. Prison has often been described as an instrument for ‘making bad people worse’ and short prison sentences, in particular, have been identified as leading to serious unintended consequences in terms of life choices and behaviour. There are plenty of examples of recruitment of vulnerable inmates to gangs and there are specific examples—for instance from Los Angeles—of recruitment through gangs being linked in some way to terrorist purposes. It is difficult to find firm evidence or to quantify the impact, and from our visit to Belmarsh it does appear that being recruited to a self-identified Muslim grouping within prison is more about association and personal safety than about radicalisation, but the authorities would do well to work closely with Muslim organisations to understand what is happening within the prison community and its links with the outside world. Professor Peter Neumann’s study of radicalisation and de-radicalisation in the prisons of 15 countries found that:

- prisons are “places of vulnerability ... highly unsettling environments in which individuals are more likely than elsewhere to explore new beliefs and associations”;
- “radicalisation is driven by behaviours and conditions that are typical of the prison environment, especially religious seeking, defiance and the need for protection”; and
- “over-crowding and under-staffing amplify the conditions that lend themselves to radicalisation”.⁷⁰

While Michael Spurr disagreed about the effects of overcrowding, he did agree that there is a potential in prisons for “people to be manipulated because they are vulnerable” and that the risk was exacerbated if people’s negative perceptions of society were reinforced while in prison.⁷¹

36. However, it is difficult to judge the extent to which radicalisation in prisons a) is genuine and b) endures beyond release. Staff at Belmarsh believed that extremist views were widely disseminated but found it hard to know how far they were adopted.⁷² The Home Office noted that “the formation of temporary and opportunistic alliances between offenders is a commonly observed behaviour in prisons, and not necessarily indicative of radicalisation”⁷³ and this was repeated to us in conversations with prison staff. There are frequently-cited examples of prisoners who became terrorists, such as the shoe-bomber Richard Reid, who spent time in Feltham Young Offenders Institution, in which it is in fact unclear whether radicalisation actually took place in custody.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Q 142 [Mr Karmani]

⁷⁰ Peter Neumann, *Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 countries*, ICSR, 2010, pp 1-2, 7, 25

⁷¹ Q 277

⁷² Annex B

⁷³ Ev 90, para 2.4

⁷⁴ Peter Neumann, *Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 countries*, ICSR, 2010, p 27

Other fora

37. In most of the fora we examined, the evidence as to whether there was a real problem with radicalisation seemed ambiguous at best. Charles Farr told us that:

Most radicalisation does not take place in fora at all; it takes place in private premises, simply because the people who are doing the radicalising are now much more aware of the activities that we are conducting, which you are investigating, than was the case two or three years ago when, as they saw it, it was much more possible to conduct radicalisation in the margins of religious institutions: mosques, madrassas, and others.⁷⁵

There was one further forum which came to our attention where radicalisation appeared to be a particular risk, although we were not able to explore it fully. According to Alyas Karmani, in cities, gang members are another critically vulnerable group because of the significant numbers of converts in gangs and the kind of ideology prevalent within these groups.⁷⁶

38. As with the scale and drivers of radicalisation, it proved difficult for us to gain a clear understanding of where violent radicalisation takes place. In terms of the four sectors we explored—universities, prisons, religious institutions and the internet—we conclude that religious institutions are not a major cause for concern but that the internet does play a role in violent radicalisation, although a level of face-to-face interaction is also usually required. The role of prisons and universities was less obvious. Much of the uncertainty relates to the fact that a number of convicted terrorists have attended prisons and universities, but there is seldom concrete evidence to confirm that this is where they were radicalised. The Home Office told us that violent radicalisation is increasingly taking place in private homes, particularly as the authorities clamp down on radicalisation in more public arenas. Given this, we are concerned that too much focus in the Prevent Strategy is placed on public institutions such as universities, and that it may be more accurate, and less inflammatory, to describe them as places where radicalisation “may best be identified”. We consider that the emphasis on the role of universities by government departments is now disproportionate.

39. One further issue that came to our attention was that there may be a particular risk of radicalisation linked to membership of some criminal gangs, of which there is no mention in the Prevent Strategy. Given the fact that elsewhere some terrorist organisations appear to have identified recruitment to gangs within prison as providing an opportunity for radicalisation, we suggest that the authorities should be alert to the potential for a future threat in this area. We recommend that the Government commission a piece of research to explore these issues in more detail.

⁷⁵ Q 301

⁷⁶ Q 181 [Mr Karmani]

4 The Prevent Strategy

The Prevent Review

40. The revised Prevent Strategy was published in June 2011. It has three objectives: challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it; protecting vulnerable people; and supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.⁷⁷ Witnesses tended to broadly welcome the outcome of the Prevent Review, favouring the clearer split between counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation work; the separation out of activity between the Home Office, focusing on violent extremism and the Department for Communities and Local Government, focusing on non-violent extremism; and the fact that more care would be taken to ensure that funding was not given to groups that opposed British values.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, some reservations about the strategy were raised and some regarding its implementation. We explore each of these below.

41. On the whole, witnesses supported the outcome of the Prevent Review. We too welcome many aspects of the new Strategy, which appears to address some of the major criticisms levelled at its predecessors.

Targeting resources proportionate to the threat

42. As previously stated, the revised Prevent Strategy is designed to address all forms of terrorism, whereas the original focus of the strategy dealt only with Islamist terrorism and therefore almost exclusively focused on Muslim communities. Resources are to be allocated proportionate to the threat. To a certain extent Prevent has already begun to address other threats; for example, 8% of those referred to the Government's Channel programme as being potentially vulnerable to violent extremism were referred owing to concerns around right-wing violent extremism.⁷⁹ However, some witnesses, and a number of participants in our conference, disputed whether the Strategy and in particular its implementation accurately reflected the threat, arguing in particular that the threat from extreme right-wing terrorism is played down by the authorities.⁸⁰

43. The Government does not publish a threat level for any non-Al Qa'ida or Northern Ireland-related forms of terrorism. There is some disagreement as to whether there is a "terrorist" threat from the extreme right-wing. In its most recent EU terrorist threat assessment, Europol stated that:

Some incidents that occurred in 2010 could be classified as right-wing extremism. These raised public order concerns, but have not in any way endangered the political, constitutional, economic or social structures of any of the Member States.⁸¹

77 HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011

78 Q 350 [Professor Neumann; Mr Bartlett; Ms Stuart]; Ev w23 [Lord Trimble]

79 HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 9.23

80 See, for example, Q 155 [Ms Ahmed]; Q 156 [Mr Hassan Shaikh]; Annex A

81 Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2011*, 2011, p 29

However, concern about extreme right-wing terrorism grew in 2011 following the killing of 77 people in two terrorist attacks in Norway in July 2011 by Anders Breivik, whose extreme right-wing views were linked to Islamophobia.

44. The Community Security Trust and Board of Deputies of British Jews jointly argued, in relation to the 17 right-wing extremists currently serving prison sentences for acts of terrorism, that their plots “involved the use of military explosives, biological warfare and firearms, indicating a capability not hitherto used by Islamist terrorism in the UK.”⁸² Mike Whine, their representative, added in oral evidence that “one should not belittle the far right’s capacity to engage in really serious terrorism and, if you look within Europe generally, then there have been even more serious cases.”⁸³ Dr Goodwin suggested the focus on Muslim communities in the delivery of Prevent had left a “noticeable gap”:

I think even though far right parties and movements like the EDL are not overtly violent in their ambitions to the same extent that Al Qa’ida-inspired groups are, I would make a case that this movement contains the potential for violence. It gives its followers a specific set of narratives that under certain conditions validate the use of violence.⁸⁴

45. Dr Goodwin further warned of the need to pay closer attention to the interplay between different forms of extremism and take more seriously:

The potential for a spiral of violence between different forms of extremism. What I mean by that is something that we have not seen since Northern Ireland, which is the potential for far right extremisms to enact violence or confrontation against, for example, an AQ-inspired group, to bomb a mosque or something of that nature and then for that action to be retaliated. It wouldn’t really take too long for a spiral of violence to emerge.⁸⁵

This was reiterated by Professor Nigel Copsey, of Teesside University, at our conference.⁸⁶

46. A view was expressed by some of those giving evidence to us, and those to whom we spoke less formally, that the revised Prevent Strategy only pays lip service to the threat from extreme far-right terrorism. We accept that Prevent resources should be allocated proportionately to the terrorist threat, and that to an extent we must rely upon the intelligence and security services to make this judgement. However, we received persuasive evidence about the potential threat from extreme far-right terrorism. The ease of travel and communications between countries in Europe and the growth of far-right organisations, which appear to have good communications with like-minded groups within Europe, suggest that the current lack of firm evidence should not be a reason for neglecting this area of risk. The Prevent Strategy should outline more clearly the actions to be taken to tackle far right radicalisation as well as explicitly acknowledge the potential interplay between different forms of violent extremism, and the potential

82 Ev 95

83 Qq 183-4

84 Q 186

85 Q 205

86 See also the evidence of Jamie Bartlett of Demos , referred to at paragraph [11] above.

for measures directed at far-right extremism to have a consequential effect on Islamist extremism, and *vice versa*.

Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation

Universities

47. The Government argued in the Prevent Strategy that:

We accept that universities and colleges of further education will need guidance, information and best practice to address these issues ... But we are concerned that some universities and colleges have failed to engage in Prevent.⁸⁷

Professor Neumann agreed that “universities have been a little bit complacent ... in the past”.⁸⁸ Universities UK acknowledged that “universities can and should do more” and drew our attention to the recommendations contained within their 2011 report, *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*, which have sought to redress this. Professor Petts told us:

We are all very aware that, in an environment where we have a very large cohort of young, potentially vulnerable people, there is a threat, and we are very alert to that threat. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to those young people ...

What this report has done is refocus institutions’ minds on how we deliver practically freedom of speech in an environment that is safe and fair to all people.⁸⁹

48. On the basis of a survey undertaken by Universities UK, Professor Petts considered that “the vast majority of institutions” have “signed up wholeheartedly” to the Prevent Strategy.⁹⁰ He gave some examples from his own institution, the University of Westminster:

We have a detailed process in place and we check all organisations that wish to become engaged with our students, and we draw a line. To give you an example, I believe that we are one of the few universities in the country where, in the last year, we actually said no on one occasion, and we engaged with an organisation on another occasion to change the programme of events to ensure that our students were not exposed to radical extremism ...

In my own institution, we have a team of four individuals who are responsible for ensuring that we have the right protocols in place, that staff are aware of those protocols and that students are aware of those protocols through the student charter,

⁸⁷ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 10.86

⁸⁸ Q 369

⁸⁹ Qq 238, 249

⁹⁰ Q 263

which explains to students their responsibilities to each other and the staff's responsibilities to them.⁹¹

Universities UK contended that "selective media reporting and reliance on an evidence base that frequently ignores the positive work universities have undertaken in addressing this issue ... has resulted in universities being disproportionately targeted in the broader debate."⁹²

49. However, some university and student representatives also expressed broader concerns about the role they were expected to play. The Federation of Student Islamic Societies stated that it was:

Gravely concerned over the impact the revised strategy will have on freedom of expression on campuses across the UK. All higher education stakeholders ... are obliged by Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights to allow the expression of opinions as long as they do not compromise public safety.⁹³

The National Union of Students (NUS) expressed the view of many students with whom we met in arguing that "universities are one of the only places where [extremist] views and opinions can be challenged effectively in open forums and debates."⁹⁴ At our conference, Dr Richard Hall cited Cardinal Newman's description of universities as places of "collision of mind with mind".⁹⁵ However, a case study undertaken at City University by the Quilliam Foundation found that, where students and academics had tried to challenge the activities and views of the Islamic society, they were subject to intimidation.⁹⁶

50. The NUS has produced guidance for student unions which seeks to provide information and advice on their legal implications as charities, the safety and welfare implications of visiting speakers and how to manage associated risks of external speakers speaking or presenting at events organised by the union. However, NUS representative Pete Mercer was concerned that support from the NUS was the only form of guidance available to students but that the Union were not experts on extremism. More generally:

Our conversations with staff in institutions and the HE sector indicate that they are unclear about what is expected of them.

It is NUS' view that the government should provide clearer guidance for the sector on what role they expect institutions to play in the delivery of Prevent.⁹⁷

51. We accept that some universities may have been complacent about their role, and, while we agree in principle that universities are ideal places to confront extremist ideology, we are not convinced that extremists on campus are always subject to equal

91 Qq 241, 264

92 Ev 109

93 Ev 104

94 Ev w26

95 Annex A

96 Quilliam Foundation, *Radicalisation on British university campuses: a case study*, October 2010

97 Ev w26

and robust challenge. We recommend that the Government issue clearer guidance to universities about their expected role in Prevent, following consultation with university and student representative bodies. We would hope that college authorities and student bodies will recognise that individuals or groups expressing hatred against any particular race or nationality is simply not acceptable on a British campus, and certainly needs to be challenged immediately.

52. We further recommend that, a designated contact point with relevant expertise within Government is provided to student unions and university administrators to assist them in making difficult decisions about speakers on campus.

The internet

53. The Home Office launched a Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit in 2010 to investigate internet-based content which might be illegal under UK law and take appropriate action against it, although Sir Norman Bettison described it as “a pebble thrown into the World Wide Web ocean”.⁹⁸ It had received 2,025 referrals thus far, about 10% of which led to websites or web pages being taken down. Sir Norman believed that the referral site needed greater publicity which would in turn require greater capacity: at the time of our inquiry it consisted of around a dozen officers.⁹⁹ Charles Farr told us:

Every internet service provider (ISP) has acceptable behaviour codes for use on their systems. So having that conversation, even where the website is operating in a broadly legal space, is not unusual for them. Governments all around the world have those conversations with ISPs every day, and the public will very often make their own representations to ISPs about particularly unacceptable content that may still be legal on websites around the world.¹⁰⁰

He later clarified that Governments would only make representations if websites were breaching the law.

54. Under the Terrorism Act 2006, if a law enforcement agency approached a hosting provider in respect of the Act’s provisions regarding liability for hosting terrorist content, they would be compelled to take it down and if an internet service provider failed to remove the content upon receipt of a valid notice under section 3 of the Act, it would be committing an offence.¹⁰¹ The Internet Service Providers’ Association argued that:

When section 3 notices of the Act are invoked to remove material then there is no issue; when they’re not invoked it becomes more problematic. As in other areas, ISPs are not best placed to determine what constitutes violent extremism and where the line should be drawn. This is particularly true of a sensitive area like radicalisation, with differing views on what may constitute violent extremist.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Q 233

⁹⁹ Q 233 [Sir Norman Bettison]

¹⁰⁰ Q 319

¹⁰¹ The type of material in respect of which a section 3 notice may be issued is defined in sections 1 and 2 of the Act.

¹⁰² Ev w24

55. Professor Neumann, who co-authored *Countering Online Radicalisation* for the International Center for Radicalisation in 2009, told us that the Government had implemented a number of their recommendations:

One of our recommendations was to bring strategic prosecutions—not necessarily taking down websites but to prosecute the people who are producing the content for the websites. That has happened, to some extent. There is also a mechanism that the Government have introduced for deciding what kind of content should be taken down and that has also been done. Most importantly, we believe that there is no technical solution to this problem and that this problem needs to be addressed differently, and the Government have followed us there.

However, he considered that more remained to be done:

The most profitable way for any Government to address this problem is to bring political pressure, in some cases, to bear on internet providers-big internet companies who are hosting extremist videos in places like YouTube, Google, Facebook ... They do that to some extent but they could do it more consistently. I believe that, for example, all the measures that have been taken by YouTube to clean up its act have always been in response to political pressure, both from the United States and the United Kingdom ...

This is not about freedom of speech. All these websites, whether it is YouTube or Facebook, have their own rules. They have acceptable behaviours. They all say, "We are against hate speech" and they are very effective in removing sexual content or copyright content. Why can they not be equally effective at removing, for example, extremist Islamist or extremist right-wing content? Primarily, I believe it is because it is not in their commercial interest and that is why it is so important that politicians and Governments bring political pressure to bear.¹⁰³

The Internet Service Providers' Association argued that it would be "impractical" for ISPs to be expected to proactively monitor material, given the sheer volume of content online, as well as undesirable, given the implications for freedom of expression.¹⁰⁴

56. Assistant Chief Constable John Wright, the National Prevent Coordinator for the police, added that there was a need for greater international cooperation, given that most of the websites are hosted outside the UK's jurisdiction.¹⁰⁵ The Internet Service Providers' Association confirmed that if material was hosted outside of the UK, a UK intermediary would be unable to remove it. They agreed that "to improve this, greater international cooperation could be explored, although what constitutes violent extremist under the law in one country is not necessarily the same elsewhere."¹⁰⁶

57. Given the impossibility of comprehensively controlling the internet, it is necessary to employ other methods to tackle the issue. Alyas Karmani argued:

¹⁰³ Qq 370-2

¹⁰⁴ Ev w25

¹⁰⁵ Q 233

¹⁰⁶ Ev w24

If you are thinking about banning the internet, you have just got to provide a counter-narrative. That is what we do at STREET, so what we do is we identify their narrative and then you have to put an equally effective counter-narrative, because if you ban one site, 10 others emerge, and the sophistication of various ideologues in terms of promoting on the internet and through social media is highly proficient.¹⁰⁷

The Government has been attempting to counter terrorist ideology, this work being led by the Research, Information and Communications Unit at the Home Office; however, Charles Farr admitted that:

Getting that message across ... to a group of people who would rarely read the media that we would normally work with, is very challenging.¹⁰⁸

The Government's focus will be on "increasing the confidence of civil society activists to challenge online extremist material effectively and to provide credible alternatives."¹⁰⁹

58. Jamie Bartlett was also concerned that children were not developing the skills that would enable them to sift critically material on the internet:

A lot of the information that looks very trustworthy and accurate—and people tend to go on aesthetics of websites—is absolutely bogus but we are not taught this in schools because it has happened so quickly. People are not being taught in school how to critically evaluate internet-based content and I think that is one of the biggest weaknesses that we face at the moment.¹¹⁰

59. The Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit does limited but valuable work in challenging internet service providers to remove violent extremist material where it contravenes the law. We suggest that the Government work with internet service providers in the UK to develop a Code of Conduct committing them to removing violent extremist material, as defined for the purposes of section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2006. Many relevant websites are hosted abroad: the Government should also therefore strive towards greater international cooperation to tackle this issue.

60. Given the impossibility of completely ridding the internet of violent extremist material, it is important to support defences against it. We support the Government's approach to empowering civil society groups to counter extremist ideology online. The whole area of communications technology and social networking is complex and extremely fast-moving. A form of interaction that is commonly used by thousands or even millions of people at one point in time may only have been developed a matter of months or even weeks earlier. It follows that legislation and regulation struggle to keep up and can provide a blunt instrument at best. Leaders in fields such as education, the law and Parliament also need to be involved. Evidence taken by this committee in regard to the riots in London last August showed that some police forces have identified social networks as providing both challenges and opportunities, with the

¹⁰⁷ Q 181

¹⁰⁸ Q 313

¹⁰⁹ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, para 8.62

¹¹⁰ Q 373

message from one chief constable that the police recognised that ‘we need to be engaged’. In respect of terrorism, as in respect of organised crime, the Government should seek to build on the partnership approach to prevention that has proved successful in the field of child abuse and child protection.

Prisons

61. As well as recommending more staff training to recognise the signs of radicalisation and cautioning against an over-reliance on imams, Professor Neumann’s study of radicalisation and de-radicalisation in prisons concluded that “there exists no systematic programme” in the UK for the de-radicalisation of prisoners and that prison services should be “more ambitious in promoting positive influences inside prison”, and develop “more innovative approaches to facilitate prisoners’ transition back into mainstream society.”¹¹¹ When asked about progress to implement these recommendations, Richard Pickering, of the National Offender Management Service, told us:

I have discussed Peter Neumann’s book with him and that was right at its time ... since 2009/10 when he was doing the background work for this and since 2010 when it was published, we have made significant advances, not least in the areas of training and of interventions.¹¹²

Professor Neumann agreed that a lot of his recommendations were being implemented and that NOMS had “got the emphasis right” in focusing on staff training, aftercare for prisoners and providing mainstream-based services.¹¹³

62. We heard, both in evidence from the National Offender Management Service and also during our visit to Belmarsh, that systems were in place to gather intelligence and thereby identify at-risk prisoners.¹¹⁴ Staff appeared to be well briefed on the issues and there was an evident focus on the Decency Agenda, so as not to exacerbate prisoners’ potential sense of grievance. However, Alyas Karmani considered that practice varied across the estate; some prisons welcomed the support that could be provided by expert organisations, whereas in other institutions “doors are completely closed, with a lack of awareness”.¹¹⁵ Some of the Muslim prisoners with whom we spoke also felt stereotyped by prison staff.¹¹⁶

63. Ten terrorist or terrorism-related prisoners were discharged between January and June 2011; the numbers of non-terrorist prisoners leaving prison having been radicalised are unknown. The aftercare provided for these prisoners is very important. Ali Soufan, whose organisation has carried out a comparative study of initiatives to counter radicalisation, considered that the involvement of families and the wider community in rehabilitation was the key to successful aftercare.¹¹⁷ Given this, it may be unhelpful for offenders to be moved

¹¹¹ Peter Neumann, *Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 countries*, ICSR, 2010, p 20

¹¹² Q 284

¹¹³ Q 375

¹¹⁴ Q 267; Annex B

¹¹⁵ Q 143

¹¹⁶ Annex B

¹¹⁷ Q 121

into hostels far from their families, which we heard has happened with some Belmarsh inmates. At our conference it was suggested that when inmates are released back into the community there is a lack of resettlement projects or community-led projects that would provide them with the necessary support.¹¹⁸ However, Ahtsham Ali, Muslim Advisor to the National Offender Management Service, said that probation officers often asked him for assistance in signposting individuals to mosques who can help them with family reintegration; there are also various Muslim community organisations who provide this support.¹¹⁹ The Community Chaplain programme also works alongside prisoners in their transition to the community.

64. One further issue that was highlighted to us during our visit to Belmarsh concerned the sharing of information. Prison authorities share information about prisoners who have been potentially vulnerable to radicalising influences with police officers embedded in the prison and multi-agency public protection partners upon release but receive little information back.¹²⁰ We were told that, at Belmarsh at least, the prison authorities would find it helpful to receive feedback about what happens to these inmates after their release, to add to their understanding of prison radicalisation. When we raised this in evidence with Charles Farr, he agreed that this should happen.¹²¹ The Governor of Belmarsh, Phil Wragg, noted a few intelligence breakdowns between different agencies—and told us that they had no links at all with the UK Border Agency.¹²² He advocated development of a portal which would allow all the relevant agencies to share intelligence more quickly.¹²³

65. Good aftercare is critical to ensuring that prisoners who may have been vulnerable to violent extremist ideology in prison can make the transition safely into the community, and family involvement is critical to good aftercare. We are concerned that The National Offender Management Service has not paid more attention to ensuring that conditions of release do not unnecessarily restrict family contact and indeed actively encourage positive family support and engagement. Where there is a tendency for a family to reject the offender it can be important for the mosque to encourage the family to provide support and engagement. We are not convinced that the work of the chaplaincy in facilitating the transition from prison to the home community is as effective as it needs to be, although we were impressed with the hopes and aspirations which were described to us by the Imams we met and it is clear that there are serious moves within the Muslim community to create the necessary structures and arrangements.. We recommend that this is always taken into account. We also heard conflicting evidence about the level of support available in the community and recommend that resources are prioritised towards closing any gaps.

¹¹⁸ Q 441 [Iman Sikander]

¹¹⁹ Q 296

¹²⁰ Q 296 [Mr Pickering]

¹²¹ Q 322

¹²² The National Offender Management Service clarified subsequent to the visit that they had a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the UK Border Agency on information sharing about TACT offenders of common interest but little contact with UKBA specifically in relation to prisons.

¹²³ Annex B

66. The National Offender Management Service must be an equal participant in the Prevent strategy, alongside other agencies. We are very concerned that prison authorities are not receiving feedback about prisoners vulnerable to radicalisation after their release. Such information would be critical to improving understanding of prison radicalisation and prison processes for monitoring and dealing with it. We recommend that the Government should a) implement a system whereby this information is fed back into prisons and b) develop a portal that would allow the relevant agencies dealing with prisoner intelligence, including the UK Border Agency, to share data more quickly and easily.

Supporting vulnerable people

67. The Government has used, and will continue to use with some adaptations, the Channel programme as a means to identify and support people at risk of radicalisation. Identifications are made against a range of possible indicators, including expressed support for violence and terrorism; possession of violent extremist literature; attempts to access or contribute to websites; possession of material regarding weapons; and possession of literature regarding military training, skills and techniques. Some 1,120 people were referred to the Channel programme between April 2007 and the end of December 2010. The majority of referrals were made by education partners, the police and youth offending services.¹²⁴ Both coordination of the Channel programme by the police and Channel interventions themselves are funded by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism.

Funding

68. Several community-based Channel providers have lost funding since the new Prevent Strategy was published, including STREET, who gave evidence to us. There was some speculation in the media that this was as a result of the Government withdrawing funding from extremist groups but, according to Charles Farr, while this has sometimes been the case, organisations have also lost funding because they were not providing value for money.

69. Maajid Nawaz—whose organisation also lost funding—was concerned that there was insufficient capacity on the ground to deliver counter-radicalisation programmes and queried how the strategy would be implemented.¹²⁵ This was supported by what we heard anecdotally. Charles Farr, however, told us that only a “small number” of groups have had their funding withdrawn and that he was “completely confident” that other organisations would be available to take their place. He later confirmed that Home Office had withdrawn Prevent funding from 9 of the 17 organisations that provided support to individuals at risk of radicalisation.¹²⁶

70. Jamie Bartlett recognised there had been problems in the past with local authorities lacking the right information to make judicious decisions about which groups to fund, but cautioned that:

¹²⁴ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, paras 9.11, 9.28

¹²⁵ Qq 65, 79

¹²⁶ Q 342

If it comes to a situation where groups that are doing very good and documented work in preventing terrorist activity are accused of being extremists, for whatever reasons and from whoever, and that money is then withdrawn, that could be a problem for everybody.¹²⁷

Maajid Nawaz noted that the new Prevent strategy does not contain criteria as to who *should* be engaged¹²⁸ and the Henry Jackson Society recommended that the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism should “circulate centralised criteria to all Prevent partners for identifying group’s whose ideology, trustees, senior members or previous speaker record would disqualify it from engagement.”¹²⁹

Methods

71. Jamie Bartlett considered that the best way to defeat non-violent extremism was “probably funding projects that are not about extremism, that bring communities together for completely unrelated reasons to extremism”.¹³⁰ Both in formal evidence and in informal conversations, those involved in the delivery of Channel agreed that the best way to engage with young people at risk was via some other form of “hook”:

We use anything in our toolkit that enables us to connect and hook up with young people. For example, we’re doing a lot of work around sexual violence at the moment, the reason being that our sexual relationship education workshops were the most popular with young people, and it provided a safe space environment for them to talk about issues where they didn’t have any other opportunity. That is a hook for us. In the same way, sport, football, boxing is a hook for us to engage young people, to connect with them, build relationships with them and engage them in more complex and challenging issues.¹³¹

After they are drawn in, then the relevant experts can tackle the ideology, theology, emotional support needs and so forth. Akeela Ahmed cautioned that a too-narrow focus risked dealing with the symptoms rather than the causes of radicalisation.¹³²

72. This fits into a broader argument that favours mainstreaming Prevent provision. A representative of the London Borough of Harrow stressed at our conference that mainstreamed support provided for at-risk individuals by youth workers, delivered by good partnership working between police and local authority, was a recipe for success; and raised the question of whether more of the Prevent agenda should be mainstreamed. The police also considered that “we will be successful in Prevent policing only when it is mainstreamed” into neighbourhood policing.¹³³

127 Q 351

128 Q 79

129 Ev 108

130 Q 351

131 Q 165 [Mr Karmani]

132 Q 166

133 Q 219 [Sir Norman Bettison]

73. Channel is modelled on other multi-agency risk management processes and uses processes which also safeguard people at risk from crime, drugs and gangs. It was mentioned in informal discussions and at our conference that at a local level Prevent is becoming increasingly viewed as part of the safeguarding agenda. One individual suggested that Prevent should be re-named “safeguarding”.

74. We fully agree with the Government that public money should not be used to fund groups who hold views that contradict fundamental British values. However, we are concerned that the parameters for this policy are not sufficiently clear and that the situation could arise whereby risk-averse public authorities discontinue funding for effective groups because of unfounded allegations of “extremism”. The Government should draw up and issue guidelines with clear criteria to potential funders. We also note that several Channel providers have recently lost funding and there is currently a lack of capacity on the ground to deliver the Strategy. This should be rectified urgently.

75. The view came across strongly in our evidence that Prevent is most successful at the local level where it is mainstreamed into local safeguarding procedures, youth services, neighbourhood policing and so forth. We support this approach and encourage the Government to do the same.

Community responses to Prevent

76. We got the distinct impression that for many Muslim communities, radicalisation was not a problem that they recognised. Murtaza Hassan Shaikh told us:

On the community level in mosques and in community organisations there is a general sentiment that Muslims don't see the problem themselves in their communities. So when they see in the news or when they see the issue of violent extremism being raised at the political level or national level they wonder where it actually is. It is not to say it does not exist, but the examples are so few that people develop a sense of paranoia and many conspiracy theories because they themselves are not exposed to these ideas in their own community.¹³⁴

As a result, and because of the way in which the original Prevent Strategy was phrased and communicated, Muslim communities felt unfairly targeted by Prevent. Nabil Ahmed criticised a “disproportionate and unfair focus on Muslim students”.¹³⁵ A number of Muslims attended our conference and made it very clear that considerable suspicion about the Prevent Strategy remained within their communities, including the suggestion that it was used to spy on them. In the words of Sir Iqbal Sacranie, of Muslim Aid, the impression created by the first Prevent Strategy remained “the lasting one”.¹³⁶ At our conference, the potential to rename the Strategy was discussed, with Ian Paisley MP suggesting a more appropriate term for this part of CONTEST would be “partnership”.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Q 136

¹³⁵ Q 251 [Mr Ahmed]

¹³⁶ Annex A

¹³⁷ Q 444

77. Sir Iqbal Sacranie also felt that the current Government had not learnt from its predecessor in terms of engaging Muslims: certain individuals continue to be selected by the Government to act as “Muslim spokesman” who are not representatives of the varied Muslim communities throughout the UK.¹³⁸ Cage Prisoners told us that “Muslims will continue to reject any such [Prevent] strategy if they feel their voice has not been heard” and argued that “the names/organisations of those involved in supporting Prevent should be published in order for the Muslim community to see where advice has been sought. Without this, they will assume that the various communities that exist in the UK have not been adequately consulted”¹³⁹

78. Dr Colin Roberts, speaking at our conference, suggested that resistance of the community to Prevent had been overstated: Muslim attitudes to police are broadly comparable with those of the general population.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, research cited by Dr Sara Silvestri at our conference suggested that communities felt that it was the general public, rather than the police, who were discriminatory. Where there was resistance, it tended to be against “national” rather than “local” Prevent policing in a kind of “reverse nimbyism”.¹⁴¹ Communities are being gradually won over but this has been inhibited by the lack of a positive campaign to counter some of the negative press surrounding Channel.

79. Language remains a huge issue. The Averroes Institute posited that:

Conflation [of Muslims with terrorism] only serves to reduce the chances of cooperation with the Muslim community in opposing the violent ideology as the community itself feels at risk of being identified as those with terrorist tendencies even though they are against it ... The use of terms that link violence with religion are ... unproductive given that they legitimise extreme elements of society to attack aspects of Islam that have nothing to do with ‘violence’, but merely on an ideological basis.¹⁴²

At our conference, Sir Iqbal Sacranie stated that, while he welcomed much in the tone of the Prevent Review, this did not always tally with Government statements. Alyas Karmani of the STREET Project considered that the type of language used by the media explained why some young Muslims might be particularly exposed to extremist media on the internet:

The end result [of a perception of Islamophobia] is that people access alternative media, so they become completely disillusioned with mainstream and they go to layers underneath that.¹⁴³

80. Despite the Government’s efforts to remedy this perception, there is a lingering suspicion about the Prevent Strategy amongst Muslim communities, many of whom continue to believe that it is essentially a tool for intelligence-gathering or spying. This

¹³⁸ Annex A

¹³⁹ Ev w11, paras 3.2-3.3

¹⁴⁰ Q 440

¹⁴¹ Annex A

¹⁴² Ev 116

¹⁴³ Q 140

might be mitigated if these communities felt more ownership of the strategy: the Government should be even more open and transparent about whom it engages with in the UK's varied Muslim communities and should seek to engage more widely. Only through engagement will the Government be able to get communities on their side and really prevent radicalisation. It would also be assisted by adopting a more pro-active approach to combating negative publicity, particularly in respect of the Channel programme. We saw plenty of evidence during our enquiry both of engagement and of considerable expertise within the Muslim community. This needs to be acknowledged and respected by the authorities in order to strengthen the foundations of the partnership approach, which is proving effective in many places. Finally, we believe there is a strong case for re-naming the Prevent Strategy to reflect a positive approach to collaboration with the Muslim communities of the UK, for example the Engage Strategy.

81. The language used to talk about Prevent, and counter-terrorism more generally, can have a detrimental effect on Muslim communities' willingness to cooperate with Prevent where it conflates terrorism with the religion of Islam. The Prevent Strategy largely manages to avoid this. However, those engaged in public life must ensure that the language they use reflects the same tone.

Proscription

82. A further issue we considered in our inquiry is the usefulness of the proscription regime in deterring people from joining extremist groups, and how the regime is working. Professor Clive Walker, an expert on counter-terrorism legislation from the University of Leeds, stated that:

Successive governments have called in aid three arguments for proscription: First, it has been, and remains, a powerful deterrent to people to engage in terrorist activity. Secondly, related offences are a way of tackling some of the lower-level support for terrorist organisations. ... Thirdly, proscription acts as a powerful signal of the rejection by the Government—and indeed by society as a whole—of organisations' claim to legitimacy.¹⁴⁴

83. Under Part II of the Terrorism Act 2000, the Home Secretary can proscribe any organisation she believes "is concerned with terrorism". An organisation "is concerned in terrorism" if it commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes or encourages terrorism (including unlawful glorification) or is otherwise concerned in terrorism. If this statutory test is met, the Home Secretary must consider whether the organisation should be proscribed on policy grounds. The five policy criteria are:

- the nature and scale of the terrorist threat;
- the specific threat that it poses to the UK;

¹⁴⁴ Hansard HC Standing Committee D, col 56 (18 January 2000), Charles Clarke, cited in Ev [Professor Walker],

- the specific threat that it poses to British nationals overseas;
- the extent of the organisation's presence in the UK; and
- the need to support other members of the international community in the global fight against terrorism.

There are 48 proscribed international terrorist organisations in the UK in addition to 14 organisations proscribed in relation to Northern Ireland.¹⁴⁵ There are no proscribed organisations relating to extreme far-right terrorism. Most recently the Home Secretary proscribed Muslims Against Crusades, on 10 November 2011, on the grounds that she was satisfied it was simply another name for an organisation already proscribed under a number of other names.¹⁴⁶

84. While he acknowledged some of the weaknesses in the current proscription regime, for example the propensity of some groups to change their names, Charles Farr argued that it was effective based on the 20 convictions for proscription-related offences since 9/11.¹⁴⁷

85. As part of the review of Counter-Terrorism Powers that reported in January 2011, the Government considered widening the basis for proscription so that incitement to violence or hatred should become reasons for proscribing organisations that openly espouse this sort of behaviour: this proposal was rejected. This was supported by our evidence. Such a change in the law may have allowed for the banning of groups including Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the English Defence League. Some witnesses argued that it would not be advantageous to proscribe such groups, but Jamie Bartlett suggested that the threat of proscription could be a useful deterrent:

Having the Sword of Damocles constantly hanging over groups like Hizb-ut-Tahrir has been helpful in forcing them to moderate in many respects.¹⁴⁸

86. Proscription is meant to be subject to ongoing review. However, only one organisation has been de-proscribed since 2000, following a direct request from the organisation concerned; no Minister has taken the decision to de-proscribe an organisation. Our Chair raised, as an example of an organisation which might merit a review, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which is still banned in this country despite no longer appearing to be an active terrorist force in Sri Lanka or elsewhere.¹⁴⁹ In some cases, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, said he had "no doubt at all" that proscription was done at the behest of foreign governments.¹⁵⁰ Given this pressure and the

¹⁴⁵ HM Government, *Contest: The UK's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, 2011, p 47

¹⁴⁶ Home Office press notice, "Terror organisation proscribed", 9 November 2011, www.homeoffice.gov.uk

¹⁴⁷ Q 331

¹⁴⁸ Q 363

¹⁴⁹ Q 326

¹⁵⁰ Q 383

difficulties organisations face in challenging proscription, Mr Anderson has argued that proscription orders should be time-limited.¹⁵¹

87. The Government recently reviewed proscription legislation as part of the review of counter-terrorism powers published in January 2011. We agree with the decision not to strengthen the law on proscription in a way which would allow for the banning of groups which are currently operating within the law, as the evidence suggests that proscription would not be effective and could be counter-productive. However, we are concerned that it is too difficult for groups who no longer pose a terrorist threat to obtain de-proscription, a move which might encourage some groups in their move away from active support for terrorism. We therefore endorse the recommendation of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation that the law be changed to make proscription orders time-limited.

88. Violent radicalisation is clearly a problem within the UK but it takes place within an international context and it is important for the UK authorities to be aware of developments elsewhere and to share information with partners abroad, both in respect of extremist Islamist organisations or movements, and in respect of extreme right-wing groups within Europe and America. However, the strongest forces against radicalisation are the partnerships of mutual respect and shared citizenship within the UK and within local communities in our towns and cities. The evidence given by Muslim organisations was impressive and we were encouraged by the evidence of greater effectiveness of local partnerships, of leadership within individual communities such as the student community, and the evidence of joined up thinking, for instance in preparing for the return of offenders to the community. It is important for the government to demonstrate, by action and words, strong support for these initiatives as well as maintaining the determination to support the work of intelligence agencies and the police in tackling those who choose the route of violence and intervening to protect those they seek to recruit.

Annex A: Conference note

We held a conference at De Montfort University on 13 December 2011 with support from De Montfort University and the Barrow Cadbury Trust. A summary of the key issues raised follows.

Speech (by video link) from James Brokenshire MP, Home Office Minister – The Prevent Review

The Government recognised that Prevent was not working as well as it should and drew the following conclusions:

- putting Prevent within the community cohesion agenda limited its ambition, undermined its effectiveness and led to resentment;
- Prevent funding needed to be more carefully spent and audited and not given to extremists; and
- the Strategy should be more flexible in responding to new threats.

The revised strategy had three clear objectives: responding to ideological challenges; supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation; and working with sectors where there was a risk of radicalisation.

In relation to ideology, programmes were being developed to challenge propaganda online with better use of social media and other technology. The Government looked to members of the public to help identify extremist websites that should be removed.

In relation to vulnerability, the Government would build on the successful Channel programme to protect those who might be preyed upon, complementing existing safeguarding arrangements.

Relevant sectors included education, healthcare providers, charities and the criminal justice system. Some good progress had been made in the university sector and a network of regional coordinators had been put in place to support universities and student unions.

Response from Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Muslim Aid

Sir Iqbal welcomed many aspects of the Minister's presentation—including the recognition of the level of mistrust of the previous Prevent Strategy amongst Muslim communities and that the Strategy needed to apply to other types of violent extremism, including far right extremism.

However, he was concerned that Government statements did not always tally with the contents of the new Strategy—for example the Prime Minister's speech in Munich in which he said that “Islamic terrorism is the greatest threat”. Such statements had a detrimental impact on Muslim communities.

Furthermore, in practice, the Government was not engaging with moderate Muslim voices. Particular individuals, who were not representative, continued to be selected by the Government to act as Muslim spokesmen.

While the new Strategy was an improvement, the impression created by the first document remained the lasting one amongst Muslim communities.

Response from Pete Mercer, National Union of Students

Prevent appeared unhelpfully to conflate violent and non-violent extremism and the Strategy did not adequately define its terms, which was unhelpful for those trying to implement it.

The NUS helped student unions, which are on the whole registered charities, to make decisions about speakers; to identify and mitigate risks. They accepted that the propagation of extremist views could be threatening to some individuals; however it was a challenge to find the right balance. Student unions received no support other than that provided by the NUS. The Government expected organisations to behave in a certain way but did not issue any guidance. For example, there was no guidance as to which speakers should be banned.

The Government sometimes asked student unions to pass on the names of people “at risk of radicalisation”, which put them in a difficult position.

Prevent as a term was tarnished which made some students groups reluctant to engage in the Strategy; however, he believed that at a central level the Government and the NUS had resolved this issue.

Universities were frustrated at being described as “hotbeds of extremism” when they were not.

Responses from the floor

- There was a need for stronger leadership from Muslim communities to tackle radicalisation and less reliance on the Government and other institutions.
- The media perpetuated stereotypes of “Islamic terrorists” and this was a driver of further radicalisation.
- Muslim communities still perceived Prevent to be a means of spying on them and as part of the “war on terror” which extended the guilt of 9/11 to all Muslims.
- Universities would be able to fulfil the role anticipated for them in Prevent more effectively if they had better systems of pastoral care in place.
- The police were not necessarily the best agency to lead Prevent because they were primarily an enforcement agency. Prevent operated in the pre-criminal space and therefore should be led by local authorities, social workers and teachers.
- There was a need for greater clarity about the role of the Department for Communities and Local Government in Prevent.

- A succession of Borough Commanders in Harrow had integrated local authority and police work in this area very effectively. The conclusion was that the key to delivering the Prevent agenda was mainstreaming.
- More funding and emphasis should be devoted to tackling the threat from far right extremism.
- The primary assistance in relation to national security the Government was requesting from Universities UK had moved away from radicalisation to cyber security.
- In terms of prison radicalisation, it needed to be borne in mind that there were only 120 Terrorism Act (TACT) prisoners within an overall prison population of 80,000: the risks were small. Viewing all Muslim prisoners within the prism of security had negative consequences. The alienation felt by Muslim communities in relation to Prevent was reflected in prisons.
- Prisons had hugely increased the numbers of imams they employed and imams were the key to tackling this issue.

Speech from Reverend Jesse Jackson

Reverend Jackson spoke about the positive role that non-violent radicals could play in society and warned against confusing non-violent radicals with terrorists.

He spoke of the dangers of calling people terrorists based on their faith or the colour of their skin and defining a religious faith by way of the actions carried out in its name.

The police and communities needed to be allies rather than adversaries. Democratic Governments should not stoop to tackling these issues through racial profiling via stop and search and questioning people at ports and airports

Workshops

Five workshops were held in relation to: the lessons from Northern Ireland; the threat from far right extremism; challenges faced by the police in delivering Prevent; the role of prisons; and the role of universities. Feedback from the workshops was recorded as oral evidence and is included as such in our Report.

Speech from Dr Dipu Moni, Foreign Minister, Bangladesh

Dr Moni described how radicalisation had existed in different forms in different times and had not been predominantly associated with Muslims.

In Bangladesh they had succeeded in rooting out violent extremists with a groundswell of support from their people but it had proved difficult to completely extinguish.

They dealt with radicalisation as a process—the inculcation of a set of values. Counter-narratives should be delivered via traditional as well as more recent media.

There was a growing proximity between transnational criminals and terrorists.

Annex B: Note of visit to Belmarsh

We met with prisoners and staff at Belmarsh prison on 28 November 2011 to discuss prison radicalisation and measures in place to counter it. A summary of the main issues raised follows.

Meeting with Mr Abu Hamza, originally detained in Belmarsh following conviction for 11 terrorism-related offences but now on remand following US extradition request

Mr Abu Hamza believed the drivers of radicalisation to be grievance, guilt and capability.

Grievances were driven by British foreign policy (relating to Palestine and Afghanistan) and a sense that the Prophet was being mocked. He did not believe that unemployment was a source of grievance, and considered that groups who suggested it was were “blackmailing” the Government for funding.

Guilt was driven by a feeling that you were safe but your brother was not and you could not help him.

Mr Abu Hamza denied that his sermons contributed to radicalisation—he believed it was enough for people to watch the news to be radicalised and in any case he condemned the “wrong kind of violence”, where third parties were injured or killed. He told Muslims to express their grievances and guilt through lobbying, donating money and educating people.

In terms of radicalisation in prisons, Mr Abu Hamza noted that prisons were a good environment for contemplation and that it was usual for prisoners to seek to re-evaluate their lives.

Meeting with Muslim prisoners

In general, Muslim prisoners felt they were treated the same as other prisoners, except that there was a degree of stereotyping because of the media and some officers regarded them as potential terrorists. Prisoners therefore did not feel that they could talk to each other openly about their religion because it might be misconstrued by staff. They wanted to be able to practice their faith and to support each other. They were happy with their imam but had some concerns about the cleanliness of their cells.

The prisoners queried what was meant by the term radical in relation to the Committee inquiry. There were certainly prisoners originating from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe who had strong political views which could be termed radical.

However, they had not come across anyone in prison who had tried to persuade them to become terrorists and they did not think that individuals were more likely to become radicalised in a prison environment than in any other.

They had not encountered anyone espousing far-right ideology in prison and Islamophobia was not really a problem.

The families of Muslim prisoners tended to be unhappy about their offending but supportive of them as individuals while they were in prison.

Meeting with prison staff

Muslim prisoners made up 20% of the Belmarsh population (compared with 12% across the estate).

The Imam (Muslim chaplain) noted that prisoners did give regard to Abu Hamza, but he and his colleagues made it quite clear that Abu Hamza was not an Imam or spiritual leader and instead they should come to them for advice. Abu Hamza was more likely to influence the High Security Unit prisoners than other prisoners, owing to the detention regime. In the same way as for all members of staff, Muslim Chaplains in prisons are required to submit Security Intelligence Reports if they become aware of any issue which could impact on the security of the establishment or public protection. Working for the safety of society is also an Islamic injunction.

The Imam agreed that foreign policy and how Muslims are perceived in the UK were important drivers of radicalisation.

All prison officers were responsible for intelligence gathering and they were advised as to which specific individuals to look out for. They knew of one example of a prisoner requesting a transfer out of his cell because other inmates had tried to radicalise him.

Many moderate religious prisoners were quite solitary, therefore officers noticed when recruiters honed in on them. Such behaviour would form the basis of an intelligence report. Staff attended briefings three times a day in which any issues could be passed on.

Signs they looked out for included open compliance with staff despite there clearly being more going on, and groups dispersing when officers walked past. The counter-terrorism unit in Belmarsh passed them information about what to look for.

The First Night Centre staff saw all prisoners at the beginning of their detention—this involves a full induction as well as health and educational assessments and a series of questions, including about their religion.

Sometimes the family of Muslim prisoners, particularly from Asian communities, might reject them. Five Terrorism Act (TACT) prisoners had been released that year and moved quite far from home into hostels with curfews that make it difficult to see their families. Belmarsh was involved in several projects, including Community Chaplaincy, which supported prisoners in their transition after release.

One of the prison psychologists advised that a risk assessment tool had been developed by NOMS for use with TACT offenders prior to release but there was possibly a gap in assessing non-TACT offenders. They did not currently assess prisoners for extremism when entering prison but there were relevant NOMS interventions that could be used with those at-risk.

There were 17 or 18 extremists in Belmarsh at the time of the visit. Staff did not consider radicalisation to be a significant problem in the prison; the real issue they perceived in

relation to Muslim prisoners was a violent gang using the Muslim label. A number of prisoners would say they had converted to Islam to gain protection from the gang.

Meeting with the Counter-Terrorism Unit

The counter-terrorism unit held a daily intelligence briefing and, if appropriate, information would be fed back to other staff in the prison. Better-trained staff would be briefed more regularly. They had a reasonably accurate picture of what was going on in Belmarsh through the management of relevant intelligence.

The ability for staff to fully understand what a prisoner was thinking was very difficult but there was no evidence to suggest that prisoners arrived, adopted radical views then committed terrorist offences on release.

Around 31 terrorist offenders were being held in Belmarsh at the time of the visit. The current thinking in the prison service was that dispersal of terrorist prisoners around the estate was the best method for containing the spread of terrorist views but some argued that concentration would be more effective. Staff kept a record of who associated with terrorist prisoners but would only intervene with an individual who presented “challenging behaviour”.

All counter-terrorism intelligence was shared with the Metropolitan Police, who were embedded in Belmarsh, to use in the community. However, it would be useful for the prison authorities to receive better feedback as to what happened to prisoners after their release.

Meeting with Governor Phil Wragg

The Governor supported this last point and gave some examples where intelligence had not been shared between the relevant agencies as effectively as it could have been. He also noted that Belmarsh had no links at all with the UK Border Agency.

There were many different systems in place for the sharing of intelligence but what was required was a single portal to share data between agencies about individuals who are a risk, quickly.

He also believed there should be a greater recognition of the prison service as a major player in terms of counter-terrorism intelligence.

Annex C: Note of SOAS meeting

We met with around 15 students from SOAS, including the Student Union officers, on 6 December 2011 to discuss radicalisation at British universities and student responses to the Prevent Strategy. A summary of the main issues raised follows.

Drivers of radicalisation

- Young Muslims were disenfranchised from mainstream culture. Although the UK was less anti-Muslim than most other Western countries, Islamophobia was growing, with David Cameron's speech on multiculturalism in Munich a turning point.
- Individuals did not behave in a vacuum—disenfranchisement was also driven by the closure of youth services and a feeling that Muslims were disproportionately targeted by police during legal protests, for example.
- There was a link between radicalisation and UK foreign policy.
- Radicalisation was linked to individual vulnerabilities, and could be countered through the development of critical analytical skills.
- Radicalisation took place behind closed doors, with the internet playing a large role.

Scale of radicalisation at university

- Universities were not a major forum for radicalisation. Muslim students had not encountered anyone supporting terrorism at Islamic societies or elsewhere at university.
- The statistic that around 30% of terrorist offenders attended university should not be used on its own to imply cause and effect between university attendance and support for terrorism.
- Extremist preachers were a “novelty” for Muslim youth, which had now largely worn off, particularly since people had been killed. Radicalisation had decreased as a result.
- To the extent that there was a problem, it was in London and linked to the fact that universities provided “free space” whose use was difficult to regulate.

Attitudes towards Prevent

- Many students were unhappy with the definitions of radicalisation and extremism and the negative connotation given to the word radical in the Prevent Strategy.
- The perception was that Prevent was clearly targeted at Muslims, which would lead to further radicalisation.
- Universities were places of challenge for extremist ideology and should be defended as such. Community cohesion occurred through discussions between groups with conflicting ideas.

- Students Unions distrusted Prevent because it appeared to deal with the symptoms rather than the causes of radicalisation. It was viewed as a sophisticated intelligence-gathering structure.
- SOAS Student Union had never been approached by Prevent police officers but believed this practice was counter-productive.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. We suspect that violent radicalisation is declining within the Muslim community. There may be growing support for nonviolent extremism, fed by feelings of alienation, and while this may not lead to a specific terrorist threat or be a staging post for violent extremism, it is nevertheless a major challenge for society in general and for the police in particular. There also appears to be a growth in more extreme and violent forms of far-right ideology. Indeed it is clear that individuals from many different backgrounds are vulnerable, with no typical profile or pathway to radicalisation. However, there is a lack of objective data, much of the evidence inevitably being anecdotal. Only 250 people have been convicted in the UK of terrorism-related offences since 11 September 2001. However, there is a wealth of knowledge held by people working with individuals judged to be vulnerable to violent radicalisation at a local level that could better inform our understanding of why some of these individuals do become radicalised and, crucially, why some do not. One of the aims of the increased auditing demands to be placed on Channel providers should be the collection of a wider range of data to contribute to this evidence base. We recommend that the Government publish the methodology whereby this data will be collated and analysed, and make arrangements for suitably de-sensitised data to be made available to the wider research community. (Paragraph 21)
2. One of the few clear conclusions we were able to draw about the drivers of radicalisation is that a sense of grievance is key to the process. Addressing perceptions of Islamophobia, and demonstrating that the British state is not antithetical to Islam, should constitute a main focus of the part of the Prevent Strategy which is designed to counter the ideology feeding violent radicalisation. (Paragraph 22)
3. The Government notes in the Prevent Strategy that individuals “who distrust Parliament” are at particular risk of violent radicalisation. This appeared to be borne out in our inquiry, both in terms of Islamist and extreme far-right- radicalisation. Individuals are frustrated because they feel unable to participate in the political process and feel that mainstream parties do not recognise their concerns. This may not be true and we stress that we are talking about perceptions. Clearly there is much to be done by Parliamentarians and by the political parties to ensure that there is a nonviolent outlet for individuals throughout society, but we also consider that there is an insufficient focus within Prevent on building trust in democratic institutions at all levels. This should be emphasised more strongly, including how work currently being undertaken by the Government Equality Office to implement the 2010 recommendations of the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation feeds into Prevent. (Paragraph 23)
4. As with the scale and drivers of radicalisation, it proved difficult for us to gain a clear understanding of where violent radicalisation takes place. In terms of the four sectors we explored—universities, prisons, religious institutions and the internet—we conclude that religious institutions are not a major cause for concern but that the

internet does play a role in violent radicalisation, although a level of face-to-face interaction is also usually required. The role of prisons and universities was less obvious. Much of the uncertainty relates to the fact that a number of convicted terrorists have attended prisons and universities, but there is seldom concrete evidence to confirm that this is where they were radicalised. The Home Office told us that violent radicalisation is increasingly taking place in private homes, particularly as the authorities clamp down on radicalisation in more public arenas. Given this, we are concerned that too much focus in the Prevent Strategy is placed on public institutions such as universities, and that it may be more accurate, and less inflammatory, to describe them as places where radicalisation “may best be identified”. We consider that the emphasis on the role of universities by government departments is now disproportionate. (Paragraph 38)

5. One further issue that came to our attention was that there may be a particular risk of radicalisation linked to membership of some criminal gangs, of which there is no mention in the Prevent Strategy. Given the fact that elsewhere some terrorist organisations appear to have identified recruitment to gangs within prison as providing an opportunity for radicalisation, we suggest that the authorities should be alert to the potential for a future threat in this area. We recommend that the Government commission a piece of research to explore these issues in more detail. (Paragraph 39)
6. On the whole, witnesses supported the outcome of the Prevent Review. We too welcome many aspects of the new Strategy, which appears to address some of the major criticisms levelled at its predecessors. (Paragraph 41)
7. A view was expressed by some of those giving evidence to us, and those to whom we spoke less formally, that the revised Prevent Strategy only pays lip service to the threat from extreme far-right terrorism. We accept that Prevent resources should be allocated proportionately to the terrorist threat, and that to an extent we must rely upon the intelligence and security services to make this judgement. However, we received persuasive evidence about the potential threat from extreme far-right terrorism. The ease of travel and communications between countries in Europe and the growth of far-right organisations, which appear to have good communications with like-minded groups within Europe, suggest that the current lack of firm evidence should not be a reason for neglecting this area of risk. The Prevent Strategy should outline more clearly the actions to be taken to tackle far right radicalisation as well as explicitly acknowledge the potential interplay between different forms of violent extremism, and the potential for measures directed at far-right extremism to have a consequential effect on Islamist extremism, and vice versa. (Paragraph 46)
8. We accept that some universities may have been complacent about their role, and, while we agree in principle that universities are ideal places to confront extremist ideology, we are not convinced that extremists on campus are always subject to equal and robust challenge. We recommend that the Government issue clearer guidance to universities about their expected role in Prevent, following consultation with university and student representative bodies. We would hope that college authorities and student bodies will recognise that individuals or groups expressing hatred

against any particular race or nationality is simply not acceptable on a British campus, and certainly needs to be challenged immediately. (Paragraph 51)

9. We further recommend that, a designated contact point with relevant expertise within Government is provided to student unions and university administrators to assist them in making difficult decisions about speakers on campus. (Paragraph 52)
10. The Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit does limited but valuable work in challenging internet service providers to remove violent extremist material where it contravenes the law. We suggest that the Government work with internet service providers in the UK to develop a Code of Conduct committing them to removing violent extremist material, as defined for the purposes of section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2006. Many relevant websites are hosted abroad: the Government should also therefore strive towards greater international cooperation to tackle this issue. (Paragraph 59)
11. Given the impossibility of completely ridding the internet of violent extremist material, it is important to support defences against it. We support the Government's approach to empowering civil society groups to counter extremist ideology online. The whole area of communications technology and social networking is complex and extremely fast-moving. A form of interaction that is commonly used by thousands or even millions of people at one point in time may only have been developed a matter of months or even weeks earlier. It follows that legislation and regulation struggle to keep up and can provide a blunt instrument at best. Leaders in fields such as education, the law and Parliament also need to be involved. Evidence taken by this committee in regard to the riots in London last August showed that some police forces have identified social networks as providing both challenges and opportunities, with the message from one chief constable that the police recognised that 'we need to be engaged'. In respect of terrorism, as in respect of organised crime, the Government should seek to build on the partnership approach to prevention that has proved successful in the field of child abuse and child protection. (Paragraph 60)
12. Good aftercare is critical to ensuring that prisoners who may have been vulnerable to violent extremist ideology in prison can make the transition safely into the community, and family involvement is critical to good aftercare. We are concerned that The National Offender Management Service has not paid more attention to ensuring that conditions of release do not unnecessarily restrict family contact and indeed actively encourage positive family support and engagement. Where there is a tendency for a family to reject the offender it can be important for the mosque to encourage the family to provide support and engagement. We are not convinced that the work of the chaplaincy in facilitating the transition from prison to the home community is as effective as it needs to be, although we were impressed with the hopes and aspirations which were described to us by the Imams we met and it is clear that there are serious moves within the Muslim community to create the necessary structures and arrangements.. We recommend that this is always taken into account. We also heard conflicting evidence about the level of support available in the community and recommend that resources are prioritised towards closing any gaps. (Paragraph 65)

13. The National Offender Management Service must be an equal participant in the Prevent strategy, alongside other agencies. We are very concerned that prison authorities are not receiving feedback about prisoners vulnerable to radicalisation after their release. Such information would be critical to improving understanding of prison radicalisation and prison processes for monitoring and dealing with it. We recommend that the Government should a) implement a system whereby this information is fed back into prisons and b) develop a portal that would allow the relevant agencies dealing with prisoner intelligence, including the UK Border Agency, to share data more quickly and easily. (Paragraph 66)
14. We fully agree with the Government that public money should not be used to fund groups who hold views that contradict fundamental British values. However, we are concerned that the parameters for this policy are not sufficiently clear and that the situation could arise whereby risk-averse public authorities discontinue funding for effective groups because of unfounded allegations of “extremism”. The Government should draw up and issue guidelines with clear criteria to potential funders. We also note that several Channel providers have recently lost funding and there is currently a lack of capacity on the ground to deliver the Strategy. This should be rectified urgently. (Paragraph 74)
15. The view came across strongly in our evidence that Prevent is most successful at the local level where it is mainstreamed into local safeguarding procedures, youth services, neighbourhood policing and so forth. We support this approach and encourage the Government to do the same. (Paragraph 75)
16. Despite the Government’s efforts to remedy this perception, there is a lingering suspicion about the Prevent Strategy amongst Muslim communities, many of whom continue to believe that it is essentially a tool for intelligence-gathering or spying. This might be mitigated if these communities felt more ownership of the strategy: the Government should be even more open and transparent about whom it engages with in the UK’s varied Muslim communities and should seek to engage more widely. Only through engagement will the Government be able to get communities on their side and really prevent radicalisation. It would also be assisted by adopting a more pro-active approach to combating negative publicity, particularly in respect of the Channel programme. We saw plenty of evidence during our enquiry both of engagement and of considerable expertise within the Muslim community. This needs to be acknowledged and respected by the authorities in order to strengthen the foundations of the partnership approach, which is proving effective in many places. Finally, we believe there is a strong case for re-naming the Prevent Strategy to reflect a positive approach to collaboration with the Muslim communities of the UK, for example the Engage Strategy. (Paragraph 80)
17. The language used to talk about Prevent, and counter-terrorism more generally, can have a detrimental effect on Muslim communities’ willingness to cooperate with Prevent where it conflates terrorism with the religion of Islam. The Prevent Strategy largely manages to avoid this. However, those engaged in public life must ensure that the language they use reflects the same tone. (Paragraph 81)

18. The Government recently reviewed proscription legislation as part of the review of counter-terrorism powers published in January 2011. We agree with the decision not to strengthen the law on proscription in a way which would allow for the banning of groups which are currently operating within the law, as the evidence suggests that proscription would not be effective and could be counter-productive. However, we are concerned that it is too difficult for groups who no longer pose a terrorist threat to obtain de-proscription, a move which might encourage some groups in their move away from active support for terrorism. We therefore endorse the recommendation of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation that the law be changed to make proscription orders time-limited. (Paragraph 87)
19. Violent radicalisation is clearly a problem within the UK but it takes place within an international context and it is important for the UK authorities to be aware of developments elsewhere and to share information with partners abroad, both in respect of extremist Islamist organisations or movements, and in respect of extreme right-wing groups within Europe and America. However, the strongest forces against radicalisation are the partnerships of mutual respect and shared citizenship within the UK and within local communities in our towns and cities. The evidence given by Muslim organisations was impressive and we were encouraged by the evidence of greater effectiveness of local partnerships, of leadership within individual communities such as the student community, and the evidence of joined up thinking, for instance in preparing for the return of offenders to the community. It is important for the government to demonstrate, by action and words, strong support for these initiatives as well as maintaining the determination to support the work of intelligence agencies and the police in tackling those who choose the route of violence and intervening to protect those they seek to recruit. (Paragraph 88)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 31 January 2012

Members present:

Keith Vaz, in the Chair

James Clappison	Steve McCabe
Michael Ellis	Alun Michael
Lorraine Fullbrook	Mark Reckless
Dr Julian Huppert	Mr David Winnick

Draft Report (*Roots of violent radicalisation*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 88 read and agreed to.

Three Papers were annexed to the Report as Annexes A, B and C.

Resolved, That the Report be the Nineteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 7 February at 10.40 am

Witnesses

Tuesday 13 September 2011

	Page
Congressman Peter King , Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, US House of Representatives	Ev 1

Rashad Ali , Centri, and Maajid Nawaz , Quilliam Foundation	Ev 10
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Tuesday 18 October 2011

Ali Soufan , former FBI agent and founder of the Soufan Group	Ev 20
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Akeela Ahmed , Chief Executive, Muslim Youth Helpline, Alyas Karmani , Co-director, STREET Project, and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh , Averroes Institute	Ev 27
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Tuesday 1 November 2011

Dr Matthew Goodwin , University of Nottingham, and Mike Whine , Community Security Trust	Ev 36
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Sir Norman Bettison , ACPO Lead for Prevent Policing, and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright , ACPO National Prevent Coordinator	Ev 41
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Tuesday 15 November 2011

Professor Geoff Petts , Universities UK, and Nabil Ahmed , President, Federation of Student Islamic Societies	Ev 46
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Tuesday 22 November 2011

Michael Spurr , Chief Executive Officer, Richard Pickering , Head of Security Group, and Ahtsham Ali , Muslim Adviser, National Offender Management Service	Ev 51
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Tuesday 29 November 2011

Charles Farr , Director General, Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, Home Office	Ev 57
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Tuesday 6 December 2011

Jamie Bartlett , Demos, Hannah Stuart , Henry Jackson Society, and Professor Peter Neumann , International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence	Ev 66
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David Anderson, QC , Independent Reviewer of Terrorist Legislation,	Ev 73
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James Brokenshire, MP , Minister for Crime and Security, Home Office	Ev 78
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Tuesday 13 December 2011

Ian Paisley Jr MP, Democratic Unionist Party, Mike Whine, Christian Cullen, Imam Sikander Pathan, Feltham, Young Offenders Institution Dr Richard Hall, De Montfort University

Ev 84

List of printed written evidence

1	Home Office	Ev 88
2	Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Community Security Trust	Ev 94
3	Community Security Trust	Ev 98
4	Federation of Student Islamic Societies	Ev 103
5	The Henry Jackson Society	Ev 106
6	Universities UK	Ev 109: 113
7	Averroes Institute	Ev 114
8	Centri	Ev 117
9	Congressman Peter T. King, Chairman, United States House Committee on Homeland Security	Ev 123

List of additional written evidence

(published in Volume II on the Committee's website www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom)

1	Paul Gregory Simmons BA DipTP MRTPI	Ev w1
2	Committee on the Administration of Justice	Ev w3
3	Association of Colleges	Ev w6
4	Cageprisoners	Ev w10: 11
5	Professor Clive Walker, School of Law, University of Leeds	Ev w14: 20
6	Lord Trimble	Ev w23
7	Internet Services Providers' Association	Ev w23
8	Association of Chief Police Officers	Ev w25
9	National Union of Students	Ev w26

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2010–12

First Report	Immigration Cap	HC 361
Second Report	Policing: Police and Crime Commissioners	HC 511
Third Report	Firearms Control	HC 447
Fourth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency	HC 587
Fifth Report	Police use of Tasers	HC 646
Sixth Report	Police Finances	HC 695
Seventh Report	Student Visas	HC 773
Eighth Report	Forced marriage	HC 880
Ninth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (November 2010–March 2011)	HC 929
Tenth Report	Implications for the Justice and Home Affairs area of the accession of Turkey to the European Union	HC 789
Eleventh Report	Student Visas – follow up	HC 1445
Twelfth Report	Home Office – Work of the Permanent Secretary	HC 928
Thirteenth Report	Unauthorised tapping into or hacking of mobile communications	HC 907
Fourteenth Report	New Landscape of Policing	HC 939
Fifteenth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (April-July 2011)	HC 1497
Sixteenth Report	Policing large scale disorder	HC 1456
Seventeenth Report	UK Border Controls	HC 1647
Eighteenth Report	Rules governing enforced removals from the UK	HC 563

Oral evidence

Taken before the Home Affairs Committee

on Tuesday 13 September 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert
Steve McCabe

Alun Michael
Bridget Phillipson
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Congressman Peter King**, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, US House of Representatives, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Could I call the Committee to order and welcome our first witness for our inquiry into the roots of radicalism. Congressman King, you are most welcome to this session of the Home Affairs Select Committee. I understand this is the first time that the Chairman of Homeland Security has given evidence to a parliamentary committee in the United Kingdom, and I welcome you most warmly and I thank you for coming all this way.

Congressman King: Chairman, thank you.

Chair: This session launches the Committee's series of hearings into the roots of violent extremism and radicalism. We noted, in preparing for these hearings, that your Committee under your chairmanship had already commenced hearings in the United States Congress. Could I start by asking you, looking back at the sessions that you have had so far, what are the main themes that have appeared as a result of your inquiries about the way in which radicalism has developed in the United States?

Congressman King: Chairman, first of all, thank you very much for inviting me to appear before the Committee. It is a great honour to be here and I want to thank all of you, and especially you, Mr Chairman. Yes, we had the first hearing back in March of this year. We had a second hearing in June and another one in July. If I could just say, when I announced the first hearing, there was virtually national furore. It was around the clock television. I was being attacked as a bigot and a racist because I was saying that there was a very real attempt to recruit by Al-Qa'ida in the Muslim American community, and while I always say the overwhelming majority of Muslims are outstanding Americans, nevertheless, there was a reluctance on the part of many to come forward and that there was progress being made by Al-Qa'ida in recruiting and it was an issue that was not being discussed. At the hearings what I think the evidence clearly showed was there is an attempt to recruit in the Muslim American community, that there have been successes, that even though, again, the overwhelming majority of Muslims are good Americans, when there is a problem—for instance, we found young men being recruited to Al-Shabaab or to Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula—family members would go to the

local mosque and go to local leaders and ask for assistance. They were basically told not to go to the police, "Don't tell anyone," and in some cases almost threatened, the course of action taken against them within the community. So that is real; that is there.

Also at the first hearing we had Dr Zuhdi Jasser, who is a prominent Muslim American, testify. He called on the Government to directly confront the Islamist theology, if you will, or the Islamist beliefs, and not be afraid to confront it. He was saying that it is more and more difficult for moderate Muslim leaders to come forward unless the Government takes a more positive role in defining what the terms should be.

The second hearing was on prisoner radicalisation and clearly—I mean, literally—it is a captive audience, and you will find many of the imams in the prisons are extremely radical. In New York, we have had imams with criminal records who have been involved in very questionable activities themselves, and we found a number of men being recruited in the prisons and then coming out of prison and being involved in terrorist activities.

The third hearing was more specific. It was about Al-Shabaab, because the Somali American community is not unique but it is separate from other parts of the Muslim community, in that in many ways it is shunned by other Muslims. They have less money; they have less access to the greater Muslim community, and also there is a war going on in Somalia, so there are extra elements for them to be recruited. We have had at least four dozen Americans, young men, Somali Americans, who have been recruited, gone back to Somalia and have been trained. For a while, American law enforcement and intelligence sources were not that concerned, from our perspective, because it was felt they were going back to Somalia to fight in Somalia. But now there is increasing evidence of them attempting to come back to the US and also linking up with Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, in Yemen, and forming an alliance between Al-Shabaab and AQAP.

Q2 Chair: That is extremely helpful. On Sunday, America marked 10 years of 9/11 and you lost 150 of your own constituents, because you represent New

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

York, in the tragedy that occurred. Do you think that radicalisation is on the increase or on the decrease over the last 10 years? Is it becoming worse or better?

Congressman King: Radicalisation is much worse. This isn't just me—and I am a member of the Republican Party—this is developing into a consensus view. Denis McDonough, who is the President's Deputy National Security Advisor, gave a major speech back in March saying that Al-Qa'ida is definitely recruiting within the Muslim American community, and the reason for that is, all of us working together—and let me give tremendous credit to the British for being such strong allies in this—we have together made it very difficult for Al-Qa'ida to attack us from the outside. A 9/11-type attack would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. The 9/11 attack itself could not happen again because there were so many tripwires that we missed along the way. Al-Qa'ida realises that, and they have now adapted their strategy and their tactics and they are—knowing that it would be very difficult to attack on a large scale from the outside—attempting to recruit from within. We have had a number of serious attempts with people who were recruited in the United States. These are Muslims, beneath the radar screen, living in the US legally, who have been taken back to Afghanistan and Pakistan to be trained in a very sophisticated way to come back to carry out attacks.

Q3 Chair: The Pew Research Center seems to indicate that their research shows that there is a decrease and there is no appetite for radicalism within the Muslim community. What do you say about that, Congressman?

Congressman King: Yes, I don't accept that. I accept the numbers of Pew, but when you actually look within those numbers, you find out that 21% of Muslim Americans say that they are aware of extremist activity in their community; I think it is 16% of Muslims say that they have a favourable or not a particularly unfavourable view of Al-Qa'ida, so considering the large number of Muslims we have in the community, one-sixth is an awful lot. All we needed was 19 on September 11.

So, no, I agree to the extent that the overwhelming majority reject Al-Qa'ida, and they are good Americans, but there is a significant enough minority that is a cause for great concern. You don't need a lot of people. Despite their numbers, I mean for 16% living in the United States to say they don't have an unfavourable view of Al-Qa'ida when they have seen the devastation that was caused. If I could just give one example that first hit me right after September 11. I had a very close relationship with the Muslim community and I used to speak at a local mosque very often. I was involved very much with Bosnia and Kosovo, and I knew these leaders and they were professionals; they were doctors, real estate developers. I was at their homes; I went to their weddings. I had children of theirs interning in my office, and they wore full Muslim headgear and everything, and yet I found these same people, two and three, four weeks after September 11, saying, "Well, it could have been the Jews that attacked Ground Zero. It could have been the FBI. It could

have been the CIA," and these were very educated. One person had an extremely high medical position in our local Government and yet he was saying this. That is when I first started watching, becoming aware of that, and I think since then it has gotten considerably worse.

Q4 Steve McCabe: Good morning, Congressman. Can I ask you, how important do you think theology is to the radicalisation process?

Congressman King: The "what" is—I am sorry?

Steve McCabe: Theological thought; the whole process of theology. How important is that to radicalisation?

Congressman King: I am sorry I am missing on the accent, I think the—

Steve McCabe: It must be this Birmingham accent of mine, Congressman.

Congressman King: I am surprised anyone can understand me.

Steve McCabe: I am working on it. I am asking you about the whole process of religious studies, the theological process.

Congressman King: Yes. First of all, I reject that there is anything in Muslim theology or ideology that allows for violence or wars, but the danger is when you take a cause and you try to wrap it in religion, it gives it a fervour that it doesn't have. Some people have asked me about Timothy McVeigh, who was a brutal mass murderer, but what would separate him and what would keep him more as an individual is he had his own psychopathic views. You can take psychopathic views or murderous views and wrap it in the name of religion, whether it is Christianity or Judaism or Islam, whatever, it just gives it an extra fervour and a greater intensity. I think that allows it to spread, especially among people who, for whatever reason, have been going through a crisis in their own life—you know whatever the reason is. I am not a psychiatrist, but I just think having a religious element, as perverted as that would be, makes the enemy that much more dangerous.

Q5 Michael Ellis: Congressman, I would like to ask you about the background and profile of those Islamists who have become radicalised in the United States. There has been some talk here in the United Kingdom about the background and the evidence has not tended, necessarily, to support the theory that it is those of low achievement status, or low employment or education abilities, that are necessarily the ones radicalised. Do you have any observations about what the position is in the United States?

Congressman King: Yes, I would pretty much share the point that you were making. I know we in the United States were surprised when we saw back in 2005, and especially 2006 with the liquid explosives plot, where many of these were second and third generation Pakistanis who were established in their community, their families were basically middle class, as we would call them. That is similar to what we have seen in the United States. For instance, last year's Times Square bomber was from Pakistan, but he became an American citizen. He had a background in financial services and yet he attempted to carry out

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

the bombing in Times Square. Zazi, who was the subway bomber in New York—attempted subway bomber in 2009—while he wasn't wealthy, he was living in New York. He was a graduate of a local high school. He was a pushcart vendor in lower Manhattan. He wasn't rich, but certainly he was not poor, and yet he was recruited and went to Afghanistan for training. No, I don't find that the lack of job opportunity or economics is that major a factor at all. In fact, I find some of the most zealous Islamists are actually either middle class or people with advanced education. So this is not similar to some of the civil rights disturbances we have had where it does come out of a ghetto or come out of poverty. The Somali American community may be a little different because, as I say, they are more ghettoised by their own community. We have more assimilation in our country, but even among Muslims, as I say, the Somali American community is a little more isolated and, even though they make great contributions, they are almost like the last ones in. So there could be some economic factor or more sense of desperation among Somali Americans.

Q6 Mr Winnick: Congressman King, there has been some surprise in the United States, and also in Britain, that you have a job of looking into and investigating terrorism when your own past quotes about terrorism—and you are obviously anticipating what I am going to ask you—seems to be as an apologist for terrorism. You were quoted as saying the following in 1982, and I quote you, "We must pledge ourselves to support those brave men and women who this very moment are carrying forth the struggle against British imperialism in the streets of Belfast and Derry." Three years later you said, "If civilians are killed in an attack on a military installation, it is certainly regrettable but I won't morally blame the IRA for it." Do you stand by that?

Congressman King: I stand by it in the context of when it was said, and if I could just have a moment to expand on that.

Chair: Of course, please.

Congressman King: If I can just jump ahead. I can just cite you Tony Blair, as recently as March of this year, who put out a long statement defending my record, both in the 1980s and throughout the Irish peace process. I was just out in the hallway and Baroness Kennedy came up to me to thank me for the work I did in the Irish peace process. Paul Murphy came by last evening.

What I was saying—and I stand by it—is that the situation in Northern Ireland, there were loyalist paramilitaries and obviously Republican paramilitaries, and I had gotten to know Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, and I was very confident that, if the Republican movement could get to the table, you would see a peace process. I believed the United States had a very significant role to play as an honest mediator, as an honest broker. I worked very closely with Bill Clinton. I was very much involved in the Good Friday Agreement. I was very involved in getting Gerry Adams a visa, but also involved in getting loyalists into the United States. I felt that when it was on the table, that Adams and McGuinness

would be able to, if you will, control the Republican movement, and I think it's worked. Tony Blair said I made invaluable contribution to peace. Bill Clinton has cited me in his memoirs as a person who was very much involved.

It was never my position, as an Irish-American, whether or not Ireland was united. To me there were injustices in the north. There were good people on both sides. I spent a lot of time meeting with the loyalist community, the unionist community, at the same time, and I came away from that convinced that there was a role for the US to play. What I was saying with those quotes—I was also trying to put it in perspective. All of the quotes were anti-IRA in the United States—no mention ever made of the UVF or the UDA or the Red Hand Commandos or whatever. I was trying to put it in a perspective to show that there were people—that this is not just the terrorist mayhem it was made out to be—that there were significant leaders on the Republican side.

Mr Winnick: I wonder if I could interrupt, Congressman King, because this is not about Northern Ireland. I raised the subject, and I thought we should be aware of it, and you have been praised by quite a number of people in helping the peace process, and the situation in Northern Ireland has changed drastically. Let's hope it remains that way. So we won't go back. I have made the point and you have answered accordingly, even if I strongly disagree with you.

Congressman King: Sure.

Q7 Mr Winnick: There is criticism, Congressman King, of the United States in facing up to the acute terrorist danger, and I was in the United States, as it so happens, on that infamous day on 9/11. I was in that part of Philadelphia that is pretty near New York. Congressman King, the criticism is along these lines that various measures that have been taken by your country, like Guantanamo—have I got it right?

Chair: Guantanamo; Guantanamo Bay.

Mr Winnick: Guantanamo Bay. The tortures that have been carried out, which have been well publicised, and the rest of it. Does that really help in dealing with terrorism and shouldn't the United States learn the lessons from Northern Ireland, where the techniques used by the British—the tortures that were used and have been condemned—often they were saying was a recruiting sergeant for the IRA?

Congressman King: Yes, I would reject your premise as regards torture. First of all, there was one element I will certainly look at, Abu Ghraib. That was wholly indefensible and wrong. That was not part of American policy and that was totally wrong, but if you are talking about Guantanamo, you are talking about a situation where you had suddenly hundreds and hundreds of people captured. Where do you take them? Where do you interrogate them? As far as the torture, you are probably talking about three instances of water boarding that were carried out; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was one of them. Every SEAL was water boarded in training. There was no permanent damage to any of those three, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed or the other two, and we did get invaluable information. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed did provide invaluable

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

information. Water boarding has not been done, I don't think, since 2004 or 2005, and it was focused on those three. There were doctors present; there were legal opinions sought. They were very, very difficult times.

As for Guantanamo, and I know it is a very controversial issue over here, I have been to Guantanamo. It is a model facility. I don't know what you see or hear. There is one medical personnel for every two prisoners. They are taught language, arts. They are out playing soccer, or football as you call it.

Q8 Chair: You visited?

Congressman King: I visited Guantanamo, absolutely, yes.

Chair: On how many occasions?

Congressman King: I have been down there once, and I have—

Q9 Chair: So as far as you are concerned, the treatment is appropriate?

Congressman King: I would say it is better than almost any American prison. It is certainly better than any Army or Marine Corp training facility in the country.

Q10 Mr Winnick: Water boarding 160 times on one prisoner; 160 times. If that is not torture, Congressman King, what on earth is it?

Congressman King: To me, it is enhanced interrogation. I have seen Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in person since then. He is not all the worse for wear for it, I can tell you, and he did provide information. Again, if you are talking about a moral equivalency here, we are talking about a type of interrogation that was extremely uncomfortable, extremely painful—I wouldn't want to go through it—no permanent damage. At the same time, if that led to the saving of 500, 600, 700 people, who did not have to jump from buildings or be burnt to death, it is a price I will pay.

Q11 Chair: Yes. Of course. Let us move on and go back to our topic, if I may, and that is the threat of each of these areas in terms of radicalisation. It may be difficult, but if we just go through them. First of all, the Internet. Is that seen by you and your committee, and in the evidence you received, as being a way in which people are radicalised? I notice that Frances Townsend, the former Homeland Security Advisor to President Bush, specifically talked about social networking sites, the way in which people speak to each other, encourage others to be involved in violence. How serious is this threat from the Internet?

Congressman King: The Internet is a very serious threat, both involving terrorists and prospective terrorists, and those who are just curious, communicating among themselves on the Internet, also the direct recruiting by someone such as al-Awlaki. This is having a real impact in the United States. Al-Awlaki is an American citizen. He understands how Americans think. He is able to appeal to the American Muslim mind; it is written in American idiom. His magazine *Inspire*—and I think

there have been seven editions of it coming out—it definitely has an impact.

Q12 Chair: Would you like to see better controls on the Internet, on the social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter?

Congressman King: Yes I do. We have a First Amendment issue that does not confront you or does not really pertain in Great Britain, so we are trying to find ways of how it can be done without violating the First Amendment involving freedom of speech and communication.

Q13 Chair: You mention mosques and prisons; finally, on universities, how serious is the radicalisation in American universities?

Congressman King: I don't believe radicalisation is a major issue to the extent it appears to be here in Great Britain. I have a lot of differences with universities, but as far as actual radicalisation, I don't see it being carried on. There are some various Muslim extremist groups in the university, but we haven't seen a direct nexus between what happens in universities and what happens in the communities.

Q14 Alun Michael: Can I look at it the other way around? You refer to the motivation that leads to individuals being recruited or becoming radicalised, but on the question of how individuals are recruited, how does the organisation seek people? I will just preface this by saying I went, as part of the British American Parliamentary Group, recently to Los Angeles. We looked at some of the things and we heard from police and those involved with issues there. One of the things that came through for that was that the mosque is no longer seen as a place of recruitment. The place of recruitment is prison, particularly short-term prison, where there is quite a calculated approach of recruiting foot soldiers as distinct from intellectually engaged individuals, and problems particularly with the short-term prison population. Is that something that is particularly general?

Congressman King: I certainly agree as far as the prisons, and before any question of the religious element comes in, that is especially true in the prisons because you may find a person who is not a Muslim, who suddenly realises his life has come undone and he makes a genuine conversion and he converts to Islam. So there is a religious fervour that is involving him trying to straighten out his life, turning his life around, and then slowly the radical element, the extremist and the terrorist element, is injected. So, yes, the prisons can be a major source of recruitment. We have seen definite evidence of it, especially since a number of the imams in the prisons have very radical and extremist beliefs. Unlike other organised religions in our country—priests, ministers, rabbis—there is no set way or certification for a person to be an imam. Almost any person can declare himself to be an imam. We have imams that aren't imams but they—

Q15 Alun Michael: When I was asking about this one person said to me, "Yes, the person you have to

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

worry about is ‘Sheikh Google’.” What he is implying there is that, rather than through structured religion, it is taking some of the trappings. Would you accept that?

Congressman King: Yes, I do. I am always reluctant to comment on another religion but, just from a governmental perspective, it is hard to vet who the imam is going to be. Generally, with Jewish Shabbat, you go to a board of rabbis; Catholic chaplain, you go to the Catholic Church. There are obviously various Protestant denominations. There is a way of categorising who is a minister and who is not; what their education level has been; what their background has been. With an imam, you don’t find that. I wouldn’t rule out the question of mosques, and I can’t speak for Los Angeles but I do know, for instance in New York, that while the mosques are not as open an area for recruitment as they used to be, I think partly because they know that police are keeping an eye on them, but still mosques are nowhere near as co-operative as they should be. I will give you an example. Right where I live there is a mosque and they are very open to the police. The police come in; they give them brotherhood awards, and they have Ramadan events, and so on. It turned out there was a young man from that mosque who joined Al-Qa’ida, went to Afghanistan and was captured. He had actually been planning attacks. He was in Afghanistan but was also planning attacks against the United States. When the police went to the mosque and said, “What is this about?” they said, “Well, he told us that he wanted to do jihad. We told him we don’t do that here.” They said, “Well, couldn’t you have told us? We are always in here. We are in here every few weeks. You sit down with us and we dine with each other,” and they didn’t. So I am using that as example where the mosques are, maybe, not as overt as they used to be but in many cases they are not as co-operative as they should be.

Q16 Dr Huppert: I would like to ask about counter-radicalisation, but before that can I just check that I understood an answer that you gave earlier. Mr Winnick quoted you as saying, “If civilians are killed in an attack on a military installation, it is certainly regrettable but I will not morally blame the IRA for it.” You spoke very eloquently about your role since then in the peace process, but can I just be very clear with that quote. Did you say it? Do you stand by it? Does it apply to other terrorist groups or only the IRA?

Congressman King: It would apply to—for instance, if we are talking about the African National Congress, if we are talking the Ergon in Israel, we are talking about a movement within a country. If all attempts are made not to kill civilians then I would put that in a separate category from a group like Al-Qa’ida, which is intentionally out to kill as many civilians as they can.

Also, what I was saying in Northern Ireland was it was what it was; it has been going on for 800 years, 60 years, 16 years, depending on where you want it to start. To put it in context, I was saying, “This is going to go on for a very, very long time unless an outside force moves in,” and that is what I was

recommending in the US. Once that process started to me it was up to the people in Northern Ireland to resolve.

Chair: Mr Reckless has one supplementary on this and then we must move on from Northern Ireland.

Q17 Mark Reckless: Congressman King, with these terrorists, there is the possibility that they get succour from people overseas that they feel support them. You make a reference to the ANC, but there was no democracy in South Africa. There was a democracy in Northern Ireland. I think one of the issues—and I think there may be a parallel to the Muslims here—is that many of your constituents, with perhaps an Irish heritage, did not have an understanding of Northern Ireland, did not understand there was a democracy. As a Catholic with an Irish mother, with a grandfather who was a Fianna Fáil nationalist Republican in the Dáil, many of us feel that it was statements, such as yours, through the 1980s that gave succour to the IRA and led to that terrorism continuing for many more years than it needed to. Aren’t there lessons for us to learn from that for tackling Muslim extremism now?

Congressman King: I would not equate what Al-Qa’ida is doing in any way with what was done in Northern Ireland. Again, the question of democracy: that is a debate going back 30 years, but the fact is that the Good Friday Agreement showed the necessity of restructuring the entire electoral process in Northern Ireland because, in fact, the Catholics were disenfranchised in many ways. I am reluctant to bring this up at all. I think my friend Ian Paisley is in the audience. I don’t want to ruin my new friendship with him. But the fact is I believe there was discrimination, much of it was institutional, the fact that the struggle had been going on for so many years by good people, I mean, for instance, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were the face of the Republican movement—

Chair: Sorry, Congressman, as briefly as you can so we can move on.

Congressman King: Sure. Yet within several years they were being welcomed to 10 Downing Street, even before the Good Friday Agreement. These were the same people that I was talking about in 1982.

Chair: Thank you, that is very helpful. Let us move on to radicalism.

Q18 Dr Huppert: If I can then move to on counter-radicalisation. Somewhat to my surprise, I understand that, despite the fact that it is now 10 years since the tragedy of 9/11, it is only in the last few weeks that the White House has published a strategy on counter-radicalisation. Firstly, why has it taken so long to actually get somewhere on that?

Congressman King: I think it was a question of just putting it in written form. The fact is there have been counter-radicalisation efforts going on over the years, some at the state level. The Department of Homeland Security has been affirmatively going out into Muslim communities trying to encourage de-radicalisation. This was put in writing. It is a document that I pretty much agree with, but it is basically putting into writing what had been in practice for a number of years now.

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

Q19 Dr Huppert: It particularly warns against creating a backlash against Muslim Americans. How do you try to ensure that everything that you do and your committee does avoids creating that backlash?

Congressman King: By conducting the type of hearings we did, where the witnesses that come in were very positive. Everything they said was backed up factually, and also I don't want to fall into the narrative of saying that there is this anti-Muslim attitude in our country. For instance, there are still eight or nine times as many anti-Semitic incidents every year as there are anti-Muslim. I know the populations are different, but there are as many anti-Christian attacks every year as there are anti-Muslim. Probably the better comparison, though, is between Muslims and Jews because it is roughly the same number in the population and yet there are eight times as many against Jews as there are against Muslims.

Q20 Chair: You mentioned in your opening statement at your hearings the fact that there were no structural organisations to deal with—the Council on American-Islamic Relations had not, you felt, performed the task they ought to have done. We have come across this poster that was put up, which I am sure you have seen before.

Congressman King: Right.

Chair: When communities were asked to help and exchange information they were told not to do so. Is that one of the problems, the lack of structures on a national basis in America where the authorities can go to them and ask them to help achieve a countering of radicalism; something we have here that perhaps you don't have in America?

Congressman King: Certainly, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, I have strong differences with them in many ways. For one thing, it should be noted that they were named as an unindicted co-conspirator in a major terrorist funding case in the United States, and when they attempted to have their name removed the Federal Judge would not, saying there was more than sufficient evidence to keep them listed as an unindicted co-conspirator. The Council on American-Islamic Relations at a time when we are trying to encourage co-operation instead puts up posters, such as the one you showed, basically making the FBI to be the enemy that is coming in. If they have particular grievances with the FBI or the police that is one thing, but to be creating this stigma in the community against law enforcement, who are doing all they can to stop radicalisation and stop terrorist activities, to me it is totally unacceptable. I found them on many occasions to be apologists for extremist policies.

Q21 Chair: Do you think the Government has a role in trying to help communities create these organisations without them being seen to be Government organisations, so that you can deal with them more effectively?

Congressman King: We have to find a way to work with organisations that don't necessarily have views that we agree with particularly but are not extremist and not terrorist supporting. Again, there is always a danger that when the Government gets involved, is

giving money to an ideological group, that it can end up being Government control. So it is tricky. There is any number of Muslim organisations I can think of that I would want the Government to support, but once you get into that then are you going to end up supporting other groups that may not be as acceptable. I am looking more for spontaneous reaction from within the community, so with encouragement from the outside. It could lead to authority control if there is Government money going to particular groups.

Q22 Lorraine Fullbrook: I have a two-part question, Congressman. Can I ask, in answer to some of the questions you were asked earlier about torture, a recent ex-head of MI5, Baroness Manningham-Buller, said that she did not believe that torture was justified in any manner? Do you agree with that? Do you think torture is a justifiable means for information?

Congressman King: First of all, I don't consider what was done at Guantanamo to be torture, but if we are talking about torture I think there certainly could be cases. The ticking time bomb, or the ticking nuclear device, should it used in a case such as that? Yes, I would say, morally, yes, but it is something that should be the rarest, very, very rarest, and certainly not any kind of accepted policy. Other than that rare exception, where there is the nuclear bomb that is going to go off in one or two hours and this person knows where it is, then I would say, "Try everything," to be honest with you. Again, too many good people are going to be killed, burnt to death, destroyed, and if one person has to suffer that—I am not here to defend torture. I am talking about a theoretical situation that as far as I know has not happened. These are the academic debates that I hear from people like Alan Dershowitz.

Q23 Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you, Congressman. Can I ask now about some testimonies that were given to your committee, about the solution of counter-terrorism within the Muslim American community, and 48% of Muslim Americans believe that Muslim leaders within the United States are not doing enough within their own community to counter radicalisation. What are you doing in terms of your strategy on the ground? You said that Homeland Security was working in communities but what exactly does that mean?

Congressman King: The Department of Homeland Security, which my committee has jurisdiction over, do have programmes where they meet with local leaders to encourage local leaders to stop radicalisation; to de-radicalise, if you will.

Q24 Lorraine Fullbrook: Is there a set programme in place?

Congressman King: No, I wouldn't say there is a set programme in place, but it is adapted as it goes along. It is a work-in-progress. Again, as a Government, we are reluctant to be too heavily involved in laying out exactly how something should be done. I think the paper that came out most recently is probably the best example, to be confronting the ideology. To me, from my perspective, it has to be more leaders within the Muslim community. I think we in Government should

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

reach out, which is why I have given some prominence or some coverage to leaders who I think are moderate and are reasonable in the Muslim community—give them the opportunity to make a name for themselves—because, unfortunately, I find the mainstream media relies on CAIR.

For instance, Chairman Vaz mentioned CAIR. I consider that a very radical organisation. Yet, if you read the average news story in America, you will have someone—such as myself, or whoever—making a statement and then the counter to that comes from CAIR, and never mentioning that CAIR is an unindicted co-conspirator in a major terrorist financing case. So I think a lot of it is the role of Government to unofficially find spokesmen in the community, not pay them, not give them paid positions but to encourage them, give them a forum, give them an outlet.

Q25 Lorraine Fullbrook: Is it being successful? Are you finding success through this programme, this non-prescribed programme?

Congressman King: No, I think at best we try to maintain where we are. The situation is getting worse because Al-Qa'ida is actively recruiting in the communities and in the prisons, as we said, and the establishment, if you will the media or academics, pretty much refuse to acknowledge that, and if it is brought out you are branded as anti-Muslim and people back away from it. I think we have done well—if nothing else, the hearings I have been holding I think are changing the dialogue and are getting people to talk about it. They were even refusing to acknowledge earlier this year that there was a problem within the community and then, in March of this year, right before my hearing, the White House actually put out a statement saying, “Yes, this is a real problem,” but it has to be addressed primarily by people in the community and I believe by pressure. In the third hearing we had, the President of the Canadian Somali Congress came to testify. He said that he would not have testified at the first hearing because of all of the criticism that was being made, but he thanked me and the committee for holding the hearings, saying that we had emboldened and empowered moderate leaders in the Muslim community to come forward. He would not have been able to come forward in March of this year, but he was able to come forward in July, and he said it was because of the series of hearings that we had been holding—it was encouraging debate within the Muslim community and had given positions and a certain stature to those who are more moderate.

Q26 Nicola Blackwood: In the UK at the moment, there is a debate about whether there is a role for non-violent extremists to work with the Government, as a sort of link to certain sections of the Muslim community, to counter radicalisation within those sections of the Muslim community. Can I ask whether you received any evidence about this kind of technique in the US and whether you came to any conclusions about that kind of technique?

Congressman King: No, we did not get any evidence at our committee. I am not aware of that being used

or considered by the Administration. I wouldn't rule out any plan or any tactic, but I would be very wary of that, because once you start getting a forum or encouraging an extremist, whether or not he is violent or non-violent, then you are giving credibility to an extremist view and that can be just the next step toward a violent view, whether or not he or she happens to be non-violent themselves. Once you are giving credibility to someone who is an extremist, I think it is a dangerous path to go down. Law enforcement may find ways to use that and there could be certain particular instances, but as a general policy I would be very wary of it.

Q27 Nicola Blackwood: In the UK at the moment, there is a theory of radicalisation that is called the “conveyor belt” theory, on which you assume an individual starts from a grievance, moves through radicalisation and along to violence. Is that the basic theory on which you would be basing your understanding of radicalisation as a committee?

Congressman King: Yes. That would be my concern on that. Even though the person may be non-violent, the fact is that he is an extremist; you are giving credibility to an extremist position. If that is considered acceptable then the next logical step after that could well be a violent reaction. That is why I would be very wary of giving any type of Government seal of approval to someone who is a known extremist.

Q28 Nicola Blackwood: Would your basic response to extremist groups be to ban them entirely?

Congressman King: I am not aware of any organisation that has been banned in the United States. We tried to ban the Communist Party in 1950, but, no, I am not aware of anyone being banned. We can declare a Foreign Terrorist Organization but, as far as an actual group within the country, under our First Amendment it is virtually impossible to ban any organisation.

Q29 Chair: Are there no proscribed organisations as we have in this country?

Congressman King: None, no.

Q30 Chair: They can continue to do whatever they have to do?

Congressman King: Well, they can continue to speak; they can continue to put out information; they continue to have forums.

Q31 Chair: Do you think there ought to be, even though you mentioned the First Amendment? Obviously, the First Amendment came at a time when we didn't have these kinds of problems.

Congressman King: I think if there was not a First Amendment I think there are certain instances and extreme conditions, yes, where organisation should be banned.

Q32 Mark Reckless: What scope would you see for greater collaboration between the United States and the United Kingdom to combat radicalisation, and through that a terrorist threat?

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

Congressman King: That is probably the most difficult question you could ask me today because I don't know where else we can go. The level of co-operation is so high between the United States and Britain at every level—at the federal level, certainly with the FBI and MI5, the CIA and MI6, Homeland Security and all of your counter-terrorism and intelligence agencies. For instance, at the local level, members of the New York Police Department are in Scotland Yard now. We have had someone there full time. I think going back eight or nine years, the position there is full time. Information is shared entirely. So, as far as sharing information, as far as sharing strategies and comparing strategies, I would say the level of co-operation is so high now, with the counter-radicalisation programmes that you are introducing, as you said, and the White House has put out its paper on counter radicalisation. I don't think any of us believes we have the answers to that. We can have answers, as far as law enforcement, as far as intelligence and trying to seek that, but as far as counter-radicalisation is concerned that I think is an area where there can and should be more dialogue, which is also one of the reasons why I have spoken to the Chairman. We are going to try and have as much interchange as we can between our committees, because we realise none of us is a sole source of knowledge in this area. The whole counter-radicalisation really is a work-in-progress.

Q33 Mark Reckless: One area that the Government and this Committee are looking at is where counter-terrorism is placed in the structure of UK policing. You probably have some experience of the structures in the US and the impact that change has. The Government is planning to set up a National Crime Agency. Currently, anti-terrorism for the country as a whole is run by the Metropolitan police in Greater London. While that will remain the case at least through the Olympics, there is an open question of whether we should transfer that responsibility from the London force to a new National Crime Agency. From your experience in the US would you have any advice for us with reference to that decision?

Congressman King: Considering the furore that was caused when Commissioner Bratton was named, I don't want to get involved in telling the British how to run their police. Each country has its own traditions, and we have the FBI that has always had a limited role police-wise but takes the lead in counter-terrorism. For instance, in New York, we have 1,000 police officers, in New York City alone, who are dedicated to counter-terrorism and terrorist intelligence. I am really not in a position to say. We have had this debate in our country whether the FBI should be more like MI5; should we separate the FBI's law enforcement capacity out and set up a separate organisation similar to MI5. We decided not to do that. It is not any reflection on MI5. We don't even work through their knowledge system. That really is something that I think depends on the local situation.

Q34 Mark Reckless: For tasking anti-terrorism, you say you have 1,000 or so officers in the NYPD and

then you have the FBI that has taken the lead on counter-terrorism. How does that work together institutionally? In your role with Homeland Security, how can you ensure they work as closely as they can? **Congressman King:** It usually works well. There are the natural turf battles, unfortunately, but let me make it clear: we are light years ahead of where we were on September 11 at every level. The FBI and the CIA had their firewalls; you had federal bureaucracies not sharing information; the FBI and the NYPD had an historic difference between them. So much of that has broken down with the joint terrorism-taskforces, with fusion centres throughout the country. While it is certainly not perfect, it is light years ahead of where it was and for the most part works very well. There is the occasional case you will read about where the FBI says the NYPD didn't do it right or the NYPD says the FBI didn't, but 95% of the time they are working extremely closely together. I have been at joint terrorism taskforce meetings, and when you go around the table, you can't tell who is FBI and who is NYPD. **Chair:** Whatever the merits of Mr Bratton, only a British citizen can be Chairman of Home Affairs and only an American citizen can be Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Congressman King: Here we go.

Q35 Mr Winnick: Following on from what Mr Reckless asked you, would you say there is an ongoing debate in the United States, as in Britain, over the balance between combating terrorism, trying to protect our citizens from those who are determined to slaughter as many as possible—and of course you know what happened on 7/7; 52 totally innocent people were slaughtered by the terrorists—and the need to maintain our civil liberties? We have had quite a lot of debate in the House of Commons. Would you say that is the same as in the United States?

Congressman King: Yes, I would say it is a constant debate. I think it is healthy. I would be more inclined to the law enforcement side, but there are others who are more inclined to the civil liberty side, and that is a very healthy debate. I think that is friction, if you will.

Mr Winnick: Giving the opposition some say.

Congressman King: Yes, and also the court systems ultimately resolve it. Obviously, we don't want to create a police state in trying to stop terrorism. On the other hand, we did have to make changes; the Patriot Act; certain types of electronic surveillance. For instance, there has been an unwritten rule that houses of worship are out of bounds as far as the police are concerned, but when you find out that the mosque can be used for recruiting, to me you have had more police activity, as far as surveillance on mosques, than you would have had before because we haven't had situations before where houses of worship were being used to foment crime. This is very central debate and it is one that I can assure you is ongoing, and it is not just Democrat versus Republican; you find people from both parties.

Q36 Mr Winnick: I have a second question. Last night in a lecture a former head of MI5—in fact she was the head of MI5 during what occurred on 9/11

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

and 7/7—put a good deal of emphasis on the need to engage if possible with terrorists, to open up dialogue. Of course she quoted inevitably the talks with the IRA, although it may be argued that only happened when the IRA realised they could not succeed in their original aim. Do you feel there is any possibility that this is a policy that should be explored?

Congressman King: No, not in the foreseeable future. Again, without equating the IRA with Al-Qa'ida, the IRA did have a political goal—a specific goal. At least there was something to negotiate if you wanted to go that route. I don't know what Al-Qa'ida's goal is, other than really the destruction of western civilisation. They want to expand their radical form of Islam throughout the world. It is not as if they have a particular grievance. It is not as if you can put something on the table. I couldn't imagine the equivalent of a Good Friday Agreement with Al-Qa'ida, and also I don't see any evidence of any reasonable people coming forward. Almost by its nature, Al-Qa'ida rejects any type of dialogue.

Q37 Chair: But not necessarily Al-Qa'ida. There are reports that the American Government is supporting the creation of a type of embassy for the Taliban in Doha. Have you seen those reports? Do you think that kind of action in terms of foreign policy is helpful?

Congressman King: I do know that overtures are being made to the Taliban, and I would say that there certainly can be elements within the Taliban that could be worked with because in many cases that is a nationalistic movement. All of them may or may not be influenced by a radical form of Islam. In many cases, that is an indigenous movement within Afghanistan. I don't trust the Taliban, but I can see why within an organisation like the Taliban you could find some moderate elements to deal with. In fact, a number of them have been turned already, so that is much more fertile ground than Al-Qa'ida.

Chair: Dr Huppert has a quick supplementary.

Q38 Dr Huppert: You briefly mentioned the designation "Foreign Terrorist Organization". Do you think that has had any effect in trying to prevent radicalisation? How does it really work?

Congressman King: I would say there was more of an impact from a law enforcement perspective, in that it dries up funds; it sends a message to those who care, who are concerned, that this is an organisation—and we have had any number of groups declared terrorist organisations—that the US Government has officially declared this to be an instrument of a foreign enemy or foreign terrorists. It definitely has an impact as far as funding and it has an impact as far as shining a light on these organisations, so it is part, but it is not the final step at all. It is not so much as far as countering radicalisation so much as it is cutting off support for the organisation. Also for those who are interested in our country who care what the Government says, it is in effect our Government officially saying that these people are dangerous and they are allied with a foreign enemy.

Q39 Chair: Following bin Laden's death, we have heard what you said, that you regard the threat to the

security of the United States as being something that is growing. Do you think as an organisation, because of his death, there is going to be a reduction in the influence of Al-Qa'ida?

Congressman King: I would say central Al-Qa'ida has been dramatically weakened by bin Laden's death and also by the killing of so many of the top Al-Qa'ida people. I think it is 18 out of the top 25 have been killed. Al-Qa'ida itself, the central organisation, is on defence. I don't believe it has anywhere near the equivalent power that it had back in 2001. On the other hand, Al-Qa'ida has also morphed and metastasised. Even before bin Laden was killed, we had testimony before our committee from Michael Leiter, who was then the director the National Counterterrorism Center, who felt at that stage—this would have been in January or February of this year—that al-Awlaki with Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula was more of a direct threat to the United States than bin Laden was. So you have Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula; you have al-Shabaab, and then the radicalisation or recruiting attempts going on within the country. I agree with you; I think al-Zawahiri and central Al-Qa'ida is much diminished.

Q40 Chair: Because of the international dimension, it is worth Western Governments possibly propping up Governments in Yemen because they are better than what the alternative might be if they changed. Do you accept that proposition, or do you think that the democratisation of the Arab countries is vital for the progress of trying to make sure that radicalism is brought to an end?

Congressman King: In the short run, I am very concerned about what might happen in Yemen. I would want us to do what we can to maintain a stable Government over the next several years, working with them, so we can take action against al-Awlaki and AQAP.

Q41 Lorraine Fullbrook: Congressman, Ayman al-Zawahiri has become the number one in Al-Qa'ida, and was really the brains behind bin Laden. Would you agree that Al-Qa'ida has really just become a franchise operation now around the world?

Congressman King: To a large extent. I wouldn't say "just," but yes, that is probably the best way to describe it. That is why I said you have AQAP with al-Awlaki. Even though al-Awlaki is not even the top person in Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, and bin Laden wasn't very supportive of him, it is these—if you want to call them—splinter groups or localised forms of Al-Qa'ida that pose the real threat to us now. In some ways, it is better because it means they can't get the level of sophisticated training that Al-Qa'ida had, for instance, on 9/11. So to that extent it is better for us. The bad part about it is, though, that in many cases they are under the radar screen. These are not known actors. We are not sure who they are, so they can have a better ability to infiltrate.

For instance, when we had the last series of attempted attacks in the United States from terrorists who were trained overseas—they were American citizens who were then trained overseas—they did not have the level of sophistication. They got into the country and

13 September 2011 Congressman Peter King

they came very close to carrying out successful attacks, but fortunately, because they were not as sophisticated as they should have been, the attacks didn't work.

Q42 Lorraine Fullbrook: But 9/11 was a low-tech attack. It was done initially with box cutters, so you don't have to be terribly sophisticated to be successful.

Congressman King: The operation itself, to have 19 hijackers; to have that level of co-ordination; to get the flight training; to be able to have it so synchronised timing-wise—

Lorraine Fullbrook: That is organised; it is not high-tech.

Congressman King: I am not saying high-tech. I am saying sophisticated as far as the organisation, the training and the way it was done, precisely; unfortunately, the way it was intended to be done.

Q43 Nicola Blackwood: Given the recent political unrest that we have seen in Northern Africa, and the adjacent humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, what is your assessment of the security situation in Northern Africa at the moment?

Congressman King: We have to be concerned. There I don't think Al-Qa'ida is in a dominant role, but I think you can find Al-Qa'ida supporters who could be in a position to pick up the pieces and take advantage. For instance, I don't see Al-Qa'ida being a major force in bringing about the unrest. However, Al-Qa'ida supporters could be the best co-ordinated on the ground to put it together after the unrest has been created. That is what we have to be on the lookout for, including places like Libya. That is the extent that you would have radical, if not terrorist, elements as part of a future ruling structure in Libya. I don't see it now, but it is certainly something we have to look for, as in Egypt we have to look for the position of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Q44 Nicola Blackwood: What about the situation in Somalia?

Congressman King: I would say Somalia gets worse by the day. There is virtually no viable central Government in Somalia whatsoever. More and more you are seeing a link-up between al-Shabaab, particularly with al-Awlaki and AQAP. Somalia is probably as close to a failed Government as you could envision.

Could I just go back to one thing if I could? You said about the level of sophistication. For instance, I do know that AQAP and others are attempting to recruit scientists; trained scientists. That is something we do have to be on the lookout for as far as levels of sophistication. You did see that we put out an advisory several months ago about bombs inside bodies, which is fairly sophisticated.

Chair: Congressman King, you have flown thousands of miles to come to London in order to help us launch our inquiry into the roots of violent radicalism. We are most grateful to you. We would be very grateful if we could receive any testimony that you and your committee have received which would help our Committee in our work. I think the work that you have done has been extremely valuable in getting this information into the public domain, and we would like to continue our co-operation between our committees in the future, but we know how very busy you are and we are extremely grateful to you for coming here. Thank you.

Congressman King: Thank you, Chairman Vaz. I assure you we will send you everything we have, everything we have done, everything we intend to do. We will stay in close contact with you. I really do appreciate the opportunity to be here today. Again, there are no two countries more closely allied on this issue and to the extent that our committees are the controlling committees on this issue in our Parliament and Congress, we should work together. We will continue to and I really want to thank you. I also thank all the British people for the tremendous support they gave us after 9/11, and also on this 10th commemoration.

Chair: Congressman King, Mr Chairman, thank you very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Rashad Ali, Centri and Maajid Nawaz, Quilliam Foundation, gave evidence.

Q45 Chair: Mr Ali, Mr Nawaz, thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Committee. I won't repeat my introduction. This is the very first session in what will be a series of hearings into the roots of radicalism. We are very grateful that you could be here right at the start. You have obviously had the benefit of hearing from Congressman King, and his testimony covers the kinds of things that the Homeland Security Committee has been doing in the United States.

The Committee will ask you questions. I am sure you have been through this before, especially Mr Nawaz. They will be addressed to both of you so feel free to chip in whenever you think appropriate. Perhaps I can start with you, Mr Ali. What do you think are the main causes, the roots of radicalism?

Rashad Ali: I think there are a number of things that come into mind. First, I think people tend to look at radicalism as one process.

Chair: You may have to speak up a little because of the acoustics.

Rashad Ali: I think a number of people look at radicalisation as a single process, going from A to B or A to Z. From our experience over the last two years, we have defined it as a number of pathways. There tends to be different things that motivate different individuals. We have put it down to four broad strokes. One is the most obvious, which many people speak about, which is theologically radicalised individuals, people who embrace a very specific Salafi-Jihadi theology that justifies acts of terrorism and violence. There are those who we have come

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

across who don't necessarily embrace it on theological grounds, but they have a certain political lens by which they view certain grievances. That shapes their world view and this makes it easier for them to embrace radical/religious protocols.

Q46 Chair: Did that cause you to join Hizb ut-Tahrir when you first joined? We are very interested in personal testimony.

Rashad Ali: Sure.

Chair: Why did you become a member of that organisation?

Rashad Ali: With regard to Hizb ut-Tahrir, their particular brand is a mixture of theology, ideology and a kind of particular world view as well. So it is a mixture of those three factors that I usually mention that actually they have a specific ideological take; a set of ideas regarding belief, regarding secularism, capitalism and criticism of those things.

Chair: Is that why you joined?

Rashad Ali: A mixture of that and also the religious motivation.

Q47 Chair: How old were you when you joined.

Rashad Ali: I was 15 when I came across Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Chair: Mr Nawaz, would you agree with that? Would you agree with the assessment that Mr Ali has made. You yourself were also a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Maajid Nawaz: Yes, I would agree with that. I would summarise it as four bullet points. I went through this process and I think it is essentially a process that involves an individual feeling a sense of grievance, whether real or perceived, and thereby leading to an identity crisis about whether one is, in my case, British or Pakistani or both or Muslim. Those grievances and that identity crisis are capitalised upon by a recruiter, usually a charismatic recruiter. Finally, that recruiter sells to the vulnerable young individual, who in most cases is educated, as we heard previously, an ideology and a narrative, a world view.

Q48 Chair: Is that what happened to you?

Maajid Nawaz: It is absolutely. I had many grievances, including experiencing violent racism on the streets of Essex as a teenager before the age of 16; being stabbed at in the street by Combat 18; being falsely arrested by Essex police authorities. I saw what was happening in Bosnia. That sense of grievance, which ordinarily one would grow out of when one moves beyond their teenage years, was capitalised upon by a young medical student who was also a British-born Bangladeshi Muslim. He sold to me an ideology and a world view that allowed me to frame those grievances as part of the Islam versus West narrative that Islamists, and Al-Qa'ida in particular, are so adept at propagating.

Rashad Ali: I would just like to add that there is some interesting research that has been done that demonstrates that it is not necessarily grievances that are the start point. There are a number of perspectives. One is that grievances themselves exist—the world is full of problems—but it is often a lens or an ideology that makes you feel certain grievances, which exaggerate certain perspectives or even makes you

realise things that you probably wouldn't have in the past.

Q49 Chair: Your prison sentence when you went to prison in Egypt, Mr Nawaz, did that make you more radical or less radical?

Maajid Nawaz: I think, in referring to Congressman King's testimony, I must say that, as somebody who has been arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge and witnessed torture in Egypt's jails, I would like to state for the record that I do think water boarding is torture and I register my objections to anyone attempting to justify torture as an efficient or even morally justifiable means. I note that he didn't define it as torture, but I do define it as torture. For the sake of terminology, I shall say that anybody justifying water boarding is morally on questionable grounds.

In my own case, in Egypt's prisons, I was forced to watch one of my co-detainees electrocuted. I wasn't electrocuted myself. I was then interrogated and we were cross-examined together and my answers were used to further electrocute him before my eyes. That particular individual remains—

Q50 Chair: When you say "electrocuted" do you mean he had electrical shocks put to him?

Maajid Nawaz: On his teeth and genitalia, yes.

Q51 Chair: Did he die as a result of that?

Maajid Nawaz: He is alive still. He is a British citizen and he remains a member of the group that we were accused of belonging to. I think that is a very relevant anecdote for this Committee, because I personally wasn't electrocuted and I spent my time in prison studying from the original sources of Islam and coming to a conclusion that the ideology I had adopted, known as "Islamism", is a modern aberration, a twisted interpretation of Islam. But that particular individual, as in the case with most people who were subjected to torture in prisons, became more extreme.

Q52 Chair: Yes. Mr Ali, do you think there is a typical profile for those who are radicalised?

Rashad Ali: I don't. I don't think there is a typical profile.

Chair: It could be anybody?

Rashad Ali: It actually could be anybody. I know that sounds quite—

Q53 Chair: So the profile they say that it has to be a member of the Muslim community is absolutely wrong?

Rashad Ali: I think it is not completely off the wall to suggest that it is easier to radicalise individuals that already belong to a faith using a specifically religious trajectory. However, there are many individuals that we deal with that are converts. They are people who are from mainstream society that have then taken on board the religion and tend—as converts do—to have a more zealous perspective towards religiosity, without over-generalising, and that allows it to be easier almost to take on a more radical, political perspective.

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

Maajid Nawaz: On the note on profiling—you and I have discussed this before as well—the question is, what does a Muslim look like? Of course, if you are looking for a Muslim. Muslim is not a race. A Muslim can be white, as in Bosnia. A Muslim can be black, as in Nigeria. A Muslim can look like us. So a Muslim doesn't look like anything and therefore there is no effective means of implementing a policy of profiling at, for instance, airports. Also the other point to note is that if you are looking for a devout Muslim and therefore looking for, for example, on a man, facial hair, or on a woman, a headscarf, then let's keep in mind that terrorists—and we can see the 9/11 hijackers as a typical example or specimen of them—do everything possible to not look devout, so they can get through the airports. Of course the Chechen Black Widows, who are women wearing jeans and T-shirts, were successful exactly because nobody expected women wearing jeans and T-shirts, with their hair flowing, to blow themselves up. So I think it can be counterproductive to set a profile and thereby give a warning light to terrorists of exactly who we are looking for, so they can go about recruiting the opposite of that profile.

Chair: Very helpful.

Q54 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would just like to pick up on Mr Ali's point. You started off by saying to the Chairman that there were four pathways that you had identified as the root causes of radicalisation. You gave us two, one being theology and one being through a political lens. What were the other two?

Rashad Ali: The other two typically, of the individuals that we have dealt with in the last few years, have been those who either have had personal grievances. These are individuals who are either from Pakistan, Afghanistan or Iraq who are now living within the UK. They have had family members who have suffered indirectly or directly as a result of actions that are taking place in those countries. They have very particular emotional grievances and they don't require a particularly political ideology or even religion to be able to then radicalise them. They have certain emotions that are driving them.

The other side of that is actually individuals who have, particularly, mental health problems. It is easier for those individuals to be then targeted, focused and separated from their communities, their families and the environments around them. We have seen that both in certain instances where individuals have tried to undertake violent acts and also in individuals who we have come across in our work, in terms of de-radicalisation activities that we do.

Q55 Bridget Phillipson: On the profile of those who may be radicalised, Mr Nawaz, you touched on what I wanted to ask you. Are we talking more that it tends to be men as opposed to women? Is there a gender split that has been identified there? It sometimes taken as an unwritten assumption that we are talking about men here, but I appreciate that it may be more complex.

Maajid Nawaz: It is more complex. There have been many cases of female suicide bombers, but more numerous are female extremists who don't necessarily

go on to become terrorists. There is absolutely no gender imbalance there whatsoever. In fact, in Indonesia the particular group that both Rashad and I used to belong to has more female members than male members. So I think the case of the Chechen Black Widows does demonstrate it is perfectly possible for women. In one case, there has been a grandmother in Iraq who has been arrested attempting to blow herself up. So I think the danger of profiling is we are telling terrorists exactly what we are looking for, so that they can subvert that criteria and look for somebody else. I mean they use donkeys if they need to.

Rashad Ali: I would probably add two things. One is that, statistically speaking, when looking at the convictions for individuals who have either undertaken terrorist acts or under the terrorism legislation of the UK, it is probably about 95% to 5% in terms of women and men, but having said that we know that Al-Qa'ida is specifically launching and targeting women for violent acts of radicalisation. So we know that Al-Qa'ida specifically decided that one of the things they are going to focus on is getting women involved.

Q56 Bridget Phillipson: In terms of the UK, understanding the profile—I appreciate the difficulties of what that can lead to—and if we are talking about predominantly men who may be involved, not so much in the groups but in violent activity, is that part of the way to address the problem by working with those communities, understanding the kinds of pull that those people we are talking about, perhaps, particularly young men, may feel towards certain groups or radicalisation?

Maajid Nawaz: From the work that we are doing and the experience that we have, I think that any policy must be fluid; it must address the concerns of the day as they are. So as my colleague mentioned, the majority of convicted terrorists are men but it must also recognise that is very easy to change, so any CT policy, or counter-terrorism policy, must be coupled with a counter-extremism strategy that works to subvert the future radicalisation of potential recruits, and in that strategy it should address men and women because of course there is no gender imbalance in the number of women who join extremist organisations.

Rashad Ali: The only thing I would add is probably that if you want to prioritise resources, then statistical data is important in that regard. If you are prioritising resources to where you are going to allocate them then, yes, you are looking at men; you are looking at between the ages of 25 and 38; you are looking at those 75% who have been from an east or subcontinent background, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and so on. From that perspective, prioritisation of resources, I think the stats demonstrate there is this type of profiling as such, in terms of where the majority have come from, but it is certainly not restricted to only addressing those people.

Q57 Mr Winnick: Would it be right to say that the process of radicalisation starts with trying to persuade young people, teenagers, that Muslims are being persecuted, one way or another, particularly in many parts of the world, that it is the Western powers—

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

United States, Britain, France—who are doing their utmost to campaign and to defeat Islam? Is that the way in which the process works in the beginning?

Maajid Nawaz: That is certainly a crucial component of the beginning stages of radicalisation, to convince the young, angry person, male or female, that there is a war against Islam going on in the world and to incorrectly present the West as a homogenous entity. We have heard just in this testimony that there are even differences between America and Britain on many of these crucial issues. The West is not a homogenous entity, just as Muslims are not a homogenous entity, but that simplistic narrative is certainly a crucial element in the primary stages of radicalisation.

Q58 Mr Winnick: When it comes to the main split, as with Christianity divided into basically two, as I understand it, main factions—Catholics and Protestants—so with the Islam world as it is, Shias and Sunnis. How is it explained away that Islam, as a religion, is so divided and has been almost from the very beginning, or isn't that touched on?

Maajid Nawaz: It is touched upon. I am sure Rashad would also like to add here something on this subject, but I—

Mr Winnick: If you could speak up a bit.

Maajid Nawaz: It is certainly touched upon. One of the important elements to keep in mind here is that Islamism—the ideology briefly defined as the desire to impose one interpretation of Islam as state law—crosses across the Sunni/Shia divide. So when we see Hezbollah, a religiously Shia organisation, co-operating with Hamas, a religiously Sunni organisation, they share Islamism as their political ideology. We also see Iran as an Islamist state, perhaps one of the only examples of one, propagating its ideology and co-operating in many cases with Sunni-based organisations.

I think there are many ways to override those sectarian differences and they generally tend to revolve around the political debate, and that is how they can find common ground.

Q59 Alun Michael: I want to turn it around, in the sense that you talked about the approaches that make people vulnerable to being radicalised and the attraction of a religious profile, and so on. You have both referred to recruiters, and one imagines over a time they would develop methodology in the way that recruiters in any other field would do so. Can you say what you see as the methodology that is being used? For instance, is there a focus on approaching people who are subject to short prison sentences? It may well be that mental health issues arise in that sort of area. Can you give us a feel for the methods and the targets that are approached by—

Rashad Ali: I think there are a number of things that we have seen happen. As an example, in the north-west, we have seen targeting specifically of individuals who have a drugs culture. These are vulnerable individuals. We have seen individuals who have been targeted that, as I mentioned, have mental health problems. We also see within prisons a very specific type of culture, because the prison dynamic is

very unique in that it is mainly focused around gangs, and therefore the embracement of particular Muslim gangs has been one of the strong ways in which radicalisation recruitment has taken place. It is not quite the same as violent extremism in the terrorist sense, but it is often criminality that is justified on religious grounds. There are probably different factors looking at it in that way.

In terms of recruitment techniques, I think the recruitment techniques are probably divided, in the sense that they are often around theological backgrounds of a specific organisation that we are talking about. So groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, the process that Maajid outlined in terms of looking at grievances, identity, radicalisation, in terms of political viewpoint, and then filling in the theology to justify it. That is the set kind of pattern of process that groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir use.

Again, looking at Salafi-Jihadi organisations, it is much more strictly theological. So if you look at the internet-based websites, their process is one very simplistic grievance in political outlook and then a very heavy emphasis on this puritanical theology, and this is the religious justification.

Chair: Mr Nawaz?

Maajid Nawaz: I agree with what Mr Ali said.

Q60 Alun Michael: Could I take it on from that in terms of the reference to gang culture. How important is that? It is an interesting one because we found in a recent visit that in Los Angeles this was an avenue that was being used to recruit foot soldiers. Is that important in your experience in the UK, too?

Rashad Ali: I think what we found with prisons is that it is a very specific social reality. In order to survive within a prison framework, you have to belong to a particular gang to give you that, so this is some of the problems. On top of that, there are structural deficiencies, which are normal and to be expected. We have a situation now where we have hundreds of individuals that have been convicted for terrorism-related offences, and we have a prison guard that is completely not capable of dealing with this, and they shouldn't be expected to be capable of dealing with this, because they are very unique in reality. They are unaware, in terms of the lack of training and awareness of how to differentiate between religious conversions and convictions that happen within a prison framework, the social dynamics of joining gangs and differentiating that and between radical extremist political preachers who are also placed within prisons.

Q61 Steve McCabe: You said at the beginning that some of the groups provide an ideology and framework for people to make sense of the grievances and the injustices, and so it develops. How much do you think foreign powers like Iran are deliberately building and creating that sense?

Maajid Nawaz: I think there are certainly cases of two particular Governments that are funding the growth of two very different types of Muslim-based extremism in the world. The Salafi-Jihadi brand is being funded by one particular Government and Islamism—the political form of this ideology—is being supported by

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

the other. That has a significant impact on the growth of these organisations around the world, and even where they are not funding organisations, it has a significant impact on the mood music or the environment that is created from which these organisations stem. That is particularly pertinent to the Home Affairs Committee here because by comparison we have a completely, I suppose, incomparable level of non-funding going to the alternative counter-message. That is a serious problem because there is no real investment, whether from the third sector or from Governments, that I am aware of at least—and I run one of the main organisations in this field—going to organisations that are attempting to promote the counter-message.

Q62 Chair: That includes yours?

Maajid Nawaz: It does indeed.

Q63 Chair: Do you get funding from the Government?

Maajid Nawaz: No, we don't at the moment, and we are struggling.

Q64 Chair: Did you get funding in the past?

Maajid Nawaz: We did until last December. Austerity measures and many other matters that come to the—

Q65 Chair: Why did they stop your funding?

Maajid Nawaz: December 2010.

Chair: Yes, why did they stop your funding?

Maajid Nawaz: Oh, why? What we were told is a combination of austerity measures and priorities in the Government's CT strategy. Now, what I would be very interested in, again stating for the record, is the revised Prevent Strategy that the Prime Minister has devised, one of the key questions I have is, that is all well on paper, but where is its implementation? That is something I would urge the Select Committee to look at very closely.¹

Chair: We will.

Rashad Ali: Can I just come back to the question regarding Iran for a moment?

Chair: Yes. Very quickly.

Rashad Ali: There are organisations that are operating within the UK. One specifically is the so-called Islamic Human Rights Commission. This is an organisation that is funded primarily through Iranian sources. It acts both to deflect attention away from activities that are happening in Iran and downplay them, but also politically to agitate so as to try and further this narrative of: West versus Islam; the UK has an anti-Muslim agenda. Even given the ironic name, they have articles as to why human rights aren't universal. That is just one example of organisations that are furthering the extreme narrative.

¹ Note by the witness: The comments on funding were made with regards to government grants from the Prevent strand of funding. Quilliam did not receive any Prevent funds from the Home Office or Foreign Office, and these are the funds that were terminated last December. Quilliam have received one grant from the Department for Education to fund a series of linked projects investigating schools' experiences of extremism and how they are responding to the challenges created by those experiences.

Maajid Nawaz: Very briefly, sorry, may I add that Pakistan is a country, in particular, that suffers from this geopolitical struggle with two Governments in particular using Pakistan as a playground?

Q66 Chair: Which Governments?

Maajid Nawaz: If I may name them I would say Saudi Arabia and Iran, using Pakistan as a playground for sectarian warfare on the streets of Pakistan.

Q67 Dr Huppert: Both of you sat back and became de-radicalised. Can you tell us a bit more about what were the critical steps in that happening for you, and hence what we can learn to try to encourage other people to take the same steps?

Rashad Ali: I think for myself it was a number of things that I think are important. First, there was a kind of moral realisation that with regards groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, and all extreme Islamist groups, they are built on an amoral framework, which is to take away your natural sensibilities of right and wrong, good and bad, and replace them with a very extreme theology, which is, "There is no such thing as good and bad; it is only what God says." So if God says, "This is good," then this is good. If God says, "This is bad," this is bad. That, coupled with a political point of view, you realise is quite ludicrous and unrealistic, so the idea that we should establish a global supreme leadership for a caliph to run the whole world at his disposal, according to his religious proclivities, it is not easy to convince somebody of that idea unless it is religiously grounded, so unless it is absolutely grounded on religion. The third thing is, as you can probably imagine, it is only tenuously linked to religion. When you can break the link to the religious proclivities to say, "Hold on a second, you can be a Muslim, you can maintain your religious convictions, even conservative religious values, in terms of mores and ethics. This has nothing to do with the idea that you need to impose your brand over the whole world through a political system. It is ahistorical." So, once you realise that it is ahistorical—it wasn't even the case in Muslim empires, which were more kind of communalist in their outlook; they had different religious trajectories, different religions, even had their own courts and so on—that actually this is something that is a modern hybrid of politics and mediaeval theology.

Chair: Mr Nawaz?

Maajid Nawaz: Nothing to add to that.

Q68 Dr Huppert: If I may, Chair, I am just very interested because, in the answer you have just given, there was a very intellectual analysis. I am not sure it gives me a comfort that I would know how to take what you have just said and use it to persuade other people. Could you perhaps say a little bit more about how one could persuade other people emotionally?

Chair: Basically translate that into street language.

Rashad Ali: I think in the submission I gave I tried to break it down. It does depend on the individual. Just to give one example to elaborate. I had one individual who we were working with who had again this kind of political narrative and a religious justification for it. So the first part of our engagement was not talking

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

about theology; it was talking about the politics, making him realise that, "Hold on a second, fine, you are against the Iraq war. Half of Parliament, more or less, was against the Iraq war. There was a final speech that Tony Blair gave and then this swung the Parliament. Actually, millions of people in Britain marched against the Iraq war. So when you are looking at it, it is not simplistically that all the people are against, it is just the West who are against the Muslims. Similarly, Tony Blair and the Government went to war in Serbia against the Serbian Christian Orthodox people on behalf of the Kosovans, who were Muslims."

Over a gradual process you start to break down the political narrative, and if life is a bit more nuanced, it is then easier to say and your religion is a bit more nuanced, too. Your religion also differentiates between those people who are anti-Muslim, anti-Islam, those who are anti-Muslim and violent, those who just have this ideological point of view and how do you engage accordingly. Over a period of time, you can then build in the theology to start addressing all the details.

Although the presentation I gave you is just to encapsulate, these are the key things, I think when you break it down on an individual level it really depends on the individual, but it can be broken down accordingly.

Q69 Lorraine Fullbrook: I have two completely unrelated questions. Has your safety, each of you, been in jeopardy since you left Hizb ut-Tahrir?

Maajid Nawaz: I do a lot of work in Pakistan on the grassroots. In fact, we founded a grassroots social movement in Pakistan called Khudi. Its aim is to challenge extremism and promote the democratic culture through civic engagement. In that country, we are very worried about not just my safety but the safety of everybody who challenges extremism. There have been assassinations and kidnappings of very high-profile individuals who have had the audacity to speak out against discrimination of the minorities in Pakistan, for example. In that country there is a serious concern, but I must emphasise, not just of myself, anybody who speaks out is in danger.

Q70 Lorraine Fullbrook: Have you had that in the UK?

Maajid Nawaz: Yes, we have had threats, but I think that, again, I would underplay the seriousness with which threats coming from Hizb ut-Tahrir supporters should be taken because Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a terrorist organisation; it is an extremist organisation. The real danger would come from those on the peripheries who support their view. We have had bomb threats; we have had physical intimidation. I have been attacked; I have been punched, but again I want to take the focus away from myself, because I think that many others have suffered far worse.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Mr Ali?

Rashad Ali: Yes, the same.

Q71 Lorraine Fullbrook: My question follows on from Dr Huppert's question. Can you explain exactly what each of your organisations do to facilitate

counter-radicalisation and what are the successful components of that?

Maajid Nawaz: I will try and be as brief as possible because we do quite a lot.

Chair: We have your brief of what you do, but if you could summarise for Mrs Fullbrook that would be great.

Maajid Nawaz: Sure. In essence, we believe that the model that was initiated in America after 9/11, known as neo-conservatism, is upside down. What I mean by that is rather than bringing in a supply for democracy, by going in with force, into Muslim majority countries, what needs to be done is a demand for democratic culture needs to be built on the grassroots where the people themselves demand change. The Arab uprisings are an early indicator of that, although it is yet to be seen how that turns out.

On the supply side, i.e. policy, we mirror that with policy advice given from Quilliam as a think tank. So we have two organisations working, one addressing the demand on the grassroots on the ground with youth in Pakistan called Khudi, and Quilliam addressing Government policy across the West. We are trying to tweak both the supply, i.e. policy, and the demand for democratic culture on the ground. That is a one paragraph summary of what we do; there is much more.

Q72 Chair: Mr Ali, a one paragraph summary of yours.

Rashad Ali: Sure.

Lorraine Fullbrook: What have you found that has worked for you as well?

Rashad Ali: In terms of the work we do, we do a number of different things, but basically one of the key areas of our work is de-radicalisation efforts with prisons, probations, police, community-based organisations, and through channel referrals. This involves working with individuals who are either very close to terrorist organisations, people who have been caught up with individuals who have been monitored, and therefore we seek to remove them from them and engage with them and de-radicalise them, and also work with those who are convicted of offences.

The other areas of work include research, which looks at theological writing primarily and theological rebutts towards extremist ideology. We also do a number of other activities that fall under that kind of remit.

Q73 Michael Ellis: What are your views—if you can expand on these—as to the theory that the solution to countering radicalisation lies within the Muslim community itself, as opposed to Governments and organisations? For example, do you think there is a role for non-violent extremists in working with the Government and the Muslim community to counter radicalisation? What do you think would be the most effective methods of countering radicalisation?

Maajid Nawaz: In terms of radicalisation, if we recognise that it is caused by more than just Muslims, meaning policy affects radicalisation, whether it is foreign or domestic. Wars affect radicalisation, although may not be the only cause or perhaps even the main cause, but there are factors more than just policy, more than just ideology, more than just

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

Muslims and more than just theology—then our solution must also be as holistic as the causes are. In that sense, it is dangerous to just look at Muslims, though we must look at Muslims as part of the overall strategy. I think that historically, with the UK strategy, and the UK is far ahead of many other Governments in this regard, that the reaction of Muslims has been not looked at well enough, so of course there does need to be more focus there.

With regard to the second part of your question on non-violent extremists and their role, I think we need a more nuanced approach to this. I think it is dangerous for Ministers and for Government to legitimise those who say, for example, that homosexuals should be killed, although they don't take action themselves; in their Utopian state homosexuals should be killed or that Jews are an inferior race or that women can't be heads of state or that adulterers or those who have sexual intimacy before marriage should be stoned to death. If they aspire to these aims and they are physically recruiting people from the armies of Muslim majority countries to initiate coup d'état, so they can bring these aims into power, that is not strictly terrorism but it is certainly extremism.

Q74 Michael Ellis: You think those people with those views should be treated as pariahs?

Maajid Nawaz: No, absolutely not.

Michael Ellis: You don't think so?

Maajid Nawaz: Coming back to the beginning of that sentence: nuance. What I would suggest is we need to distinguish between counter-terrorism, disengagement, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation and integration and, if I may, what I mean is CT is clear. Counter-terrorism is clear for everyone, what that means. It is the actual law enforcement operations to stop the next bomb going off. Disengagement is to convince serving terrorists that they should put their arms down. Now it is a very narrow and limited objective that occurs in, for example, cases of terrorists who are serving in prison, to convince them simply of a ceasefire. In that context, in a very low-profile way, it may be okay to use extremists. I say "may", we have to be very careful as to who is used and we have to be very careful as to how they are used and what level of public legitimacy they are given.

De-radicalisation, the third element, is to convince them to disavow the theory of violence, not just to put down their arms—

Q75 Michael Ellis: How do we convince them of that?

Maajid Nawaz: Again, those who are well-versed with the extremist narrative could be utilised in this process. They have been in Egypt; they have been in Libya. Where I was serving time in prison in Egypt, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, the largest terrorist organisation in that country, went through a process of de-radicalisation. It is shocking to this day that their literature and the literature that came from Libya in this regard still has not been translated into English and distributed in our prisons.

Chair: Thank you.

Rashad Ali: Can just comment on that?

Chair: Yes.

Rashad Ali: I think the differentiation of violent and non-violent is somewhat arbitrary. As an example, we describe groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, commonly they are described as "non-violent radicals", which is just completely false.

Q76 Chair: Is that the Muslim Brotherhood here or in Egypt?

Rashad Ali: The idea is differentiating the organisations and separating them as where they are.

Q77 Michael Ellis: Do you see them as one?

Rashad Ali: They are one. As an example, Hamas in its charter describes itself as a part of the Muslim Brotherhood. So effectively what they have done is they separated out which activities which organs of the same body do. We are seeing this alignment taking place now within Egypt, with Hamas and so forth, and some of the problems that are accruing. Similarly, we see individuals who will be supportive of Hamas violence in the UK. Just to give an example, Azzam Tamimi who will quite openly speak about why he supports suicide bombing, why he supports the actions of Hamas, which are terrorist actions. We are talking about killing children, women, and targeted actions against hospitals, and so forth. Essentially, it is not a non-violent organisation; it is an organisation that does not believe in domestic violence. If you like, "We want to talk about people who don't particularly want to kill us, but Jews in Israel; perfectly fine. Americans in Iraq is an example; perfectly fine," and I don't just mean American soldiers, these people talk about—

Q78 Michael Ellis: So it is impossible to do business with those people?

Rashad Ali: I think it conflicts with our laws and statutes that dictate where terrorism is illegal abroad and at home; it conflicts with our objectives in context, which state very clearly we are not just talking about domestic terrorism; we are talking about terrorism across the world. I think on a moral basis it is fundamentally flawed. On a strategic perspective, I can't see how moving somebody from not undertaking violence here to only undertaking violence abroad; okay, from a tactical point of view, it may lower the risk element for domestic violence and it may contain them but it is not de-radicalisation. They have the same radical point of view, which leads to violence in—

Q79 Michael Ellis: Just to go back to the initial premise of the question. What do you think is the solution?

Rashad Ali: I think what we have seen in our experience is that, first of all, you have to analyse specifically on individual cases what are the motivating factors, what are the cognitive factors, what are the environmental issues. On the individual case-by-case basis, you can then develop, alongside the administering authorities, how to engage with those individuals, groups or organisations. That is on the kind of grand level of de-radicalisation.

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

On a societal level, we just have to define what it means and then stick to what it means as to how we view individuals. If we turn this around and we look at a right wing organisation with far right, because this is another area we work with, we would never send in somebody like Nick Griffin or somebody from the BNP to go and convince them that, “You know something, these blacks, Pakistanis, Muslims, they are really bad, but maybe undertaking some violence against them is not a great idea. We should take power and then once we take power we can deal with them.” I mean that is probably not the best de-radicalisation strategy, but, ironically, this is what is suggested.

To give one final example, when looking at some of the literature of some of the Salafist organisations, you have them quoting scholars, like Shaikh Uthaymin, who say, “Britain, France and America are too strong for us to launch Jihad against. So once we’re strong enough, and the leadership declares jihad, then we can.” That is not a de-radicalisation message. That, at best, is a containment message, but you still have a massive risk that you are containing there.

Maajid Nawaz: May I add very quickly we simply don’t have the capacity? One of the bigger problems to implement this is we don’t have the capacity on the ground, or enough people that are working in this field, for a national grassroots strategy implementing what Mr Ali has just said, and that is one of the key issues that this Committee should look at. Secondly, I think another point is, as well as a lack of strategy, in the new Prevent document there appears to be no criteria for engagement as to who should be engaged in this agenda, and this is an area that requires some serious thinking.

Chair: We are coming on to that.

Q80 Nicola Blackwood: I was interested that you said, Mr Ali, that there are four pathways to radicalisation; theology, politics, personal grievance and mental health issues. I believe the Communities and Local Government Committee were of the opinion that the previous Prevent Strategy placed too much emphasis on theology as a pathway. I wonder if that is your opinion. I was also interested, Mr Nawaz, that you said that it was a particular study of the Qur'an that de-radicalised you personally. I wonder if your opinion is that there should be more emphasis on other pathways for de-radicalisation and whether the emphasis in the new Prevent Strategy is correct in this.

Maajid Nawaz: I think there are some dangers exploring theology as Government policy. One of them is that we are in danger of subsidising sectarian conflict within Muslim communities by supporting one religious sector over another, and we need to be aware of that. I think also, again, there is simply no capacity in Government to understand the theology. It simply does not exist on a capacity level.

I think that there is a way around that to avoid both of those dangers, and that is not to address theology insomuch as to address a pluralism within theology. One does not need to be a qualified theologian to be trained by those who have that knowledge to say, “Look, what you are insisting is the only way to interpret texts. I have it as a matter of record it isn’t

correct because here are 10 other ways to interpret texts that are in these books that you also respect and that are grounded in historical study from traditional scholarly sources.” So it is simply displaying the level of pluralism that does exist within theological contest. But that does require training and it is not a theological discussion. I suppose that is simply a science of interpretation that needs to be explored.

Q81 Nicola Blackwood: Yes, but I suppose my question is more, do you think there is too much emphasis on a theological cause of radicalisation rather than other causes of radicalisation within Prevent in the new strategy?

Maajid Nawaz: I am in danger of disagreeing with my colleague. I am not sure if he would agree, but let’s see. I think there is too much emphasis. I think that it was correct to shift away from theology and focus more on political narratives, which of course use theology to justify themselves, but I think the key thing is the ideology and the narratives as distinct from religious theology.

Q82 Nicola Blackwood: Do you think that the new strategy has a better balance and is getting the emphasis right, or do you think we are still not getting the analysis right?

Maajid Nawaz: There is room for improvement, but it is good to move away from theology and look towards ideology and political narratives, of course. But there is much room for improvement in the current strategy.²

Nicola Blackwood: What do you think, Mr Ali?

Rashad Ali: No, I agree. In the submission I have given, there are a number of cases where theology is primal and there are many cases where theology acts as a reinforcement for the political narrative. So the political narrative comes first and then the strands of theological justification have come to rebuild on that. They are the two things that I think.

Similarly, I think in the de-radicalisation process, often it can be just merely demonstrating—as Nawaz has mentioned—that a number of alternatives, just to demonstrate, so you don’t have to embrace this narrow point of view, but you have to motivate someone to abandon that narrow point of view first, which often is the political de-radicalisation after the ideological aspect has been moved away.

Where there is theology, though, you can’t replace it with something else. So where it is the case if someone has embraced a Salafi-Jihadi theology, you have to tackle that theological strand. Should Government be doing that? Obviously not; Government is not in a position to be able to do so, which is why I think in the past what Government has done is started to embrace a certain theology as a countermeasure. For example, the previous Governments—the Home Office at least, if not the Government—had taken on board a very distinct brand of Saudi Salafism as a means of de-radicalising Salafi-Jihadism without realising that is one half of the theological framework of Salafi-Jihadists.

² Note by the witness: For the sake of clarity, I was praising the new prevent strategy's shift away from theology and criticising the old strategy's emphasis on this aspect.”

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

Q83 Mark Reckless: Could you explain to us what role, if any, you believe there is for the policy of proscription of particular organisations?

Maajid Nawaz: Yes. I have been quoted by the previous Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, in Parliament when this question was asked of him by the then Leader of the Opposition, Cameron—who had promised to proscribe Hizb ut-Tahrir and has since not done so—about proscribing Hizb ut-Tahrir. But I am glad the current PM has—

Q84 Chair: Would you remind us of the quote, because some of us may not have been there.

Maajid Nawaz: He was asked why the Government has not fulfilled Tony Blair's promise to proscribe Hizb ut-Tahrir and he responded, Mr Brown, as Prime Minister—who was asked by David Cameron—so Mr Brown, as Prime Minister, responded and said, "We have taken stock of the views of people like Maajid Nawaz, who have advised that it is counterproductive to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, and therefore we will not do so." I am pleased to say the current PM has come to this view, or seems to have come to this view, himself and has not gone through with proscribing Hizb ut-Tahrir in this country. I would agree that Hizb ut-Tahrir should not be proscribed.

Q85 Chair: Sorry, has he come to this view? When did he come to this view because, the last time he was asked in the Commons, he said he was still of the view. He is communicating with you?

Maajid Nawaz: I think, yes, he has.

Chair: He has?

Maajid Nawaz: Yes.

Chair: Oh right, when did he tell you this news?

Maajid Nawaz: I think that I probably quoted something that is not on official records, at least—

Chair: That is all right; it is now. The Prime Minister has now come to the view that Hizb ut-Tahrir should not be banned?

Maajid Nawaz: May I retreat somewhat and say that he is veering towards this view and is—

Chair: Veering?

Maajid Nawaz: And is inclined not to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, may I say as caveated as possible?

Chair: Don't worry.

Maajid Nawaz: I am sorry?

Chair: Don't worry; we will write to him and ask him.

Maajid Nawaz: Yes, please do, but I have to add that I support the ban on Hizb ut-Tahrir in Pakistan, and the reason I make the difference is that in Pakistan they are actively seeking to recruit Army officers to overthrow the democratic regime. It is illegal to overthrow a democratic regime via a military coup by Pakistani law as well as international law. The organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir inside Pakistan makes it clear that it is their objective to instigate a military coup, so I think there they should be proscribed.

Q86 Mark Reckless: Just to clarify briefly, please, what is it that makes you think it is a bad thing to proscribe this organisation?

Maajid Nawaz: Right, so I think legally and practically it is not workable. So legally, if we were

to proscribe organisations that operate in this country with no direct provable involvement in illegal activities abroad, then we would have to also look at banning the BNP just for their extremism, because Hizb ut-Tahrir's form of extremism, though slightly incomparable to that of the BNP, would fit within that category of extremism that does not directly advocate the use of violence within Britain. So it would cause us legal problems, but also I think practically the level of support that this organisation has had in the UK has been on the decline. In the early 1990s, they were able to muster somewhere around 12,000 supporters for a conference. This year, at their annual conference, they struggled to gather 3,000, so they have been in decline in this country.

Chair: Yes, Mr Ali.

Rashad Ali: If I could just add, first of all, in terms of proscription, obviously with groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, there isn't a legal basis to do so. It has been looked at exhaustively by various other people.

Q87 Chair: But moving away from Hizb ut-Tahrir to the whole issue of proscription, do you think this makes people more radical when they are proscribed or less radical?

Rashad Ali: Well, this is the point I was going to make. I think the proscription practice we have has been, for want of a better word, ineffective. So for example, we had Al-Ghurabaa banned initially. Al-Ghurabaa was the group which was part of al-Muhajiroun. Al-Muhajiroun was not banned and then it was banned.

Chair: Sorry, could you repeat the name of the group?

Rashad Ali: It is Al-Ghurabaa. Then we had al-Muhajiroun banned. Al-Muhajiroun then reformed as Islam4UK and then Islam4UK was banned. They have now reformed as Muslims Against Crusades and there is nothing there to ban them again.

Q88 Chair: So we need to look at the proscription issue and see why they are banned and in what form.

Rashad Ali: I think, despite the promises of the Home Office and the Government in the past to make sure that they will ban them, irrelevant of the change of name, that has not been done. The second thing is what is probably more effective is prosecuting individuals for violating laws. As opposed to just merely putting a ban out, which then allows them to reform, reshape, what we should have done is prosecute individuals who have violated laws and have the law be effective.

Chair: Mr Winnick and Miss Blackwood have a quick supplementary.

Q89 Mr Winnick: Yes, on radicalisation, which I asked you previously, but because of time, the Chair was rather understandably keen to press on, but just one question. Is anti-Semitism an essential element of radicalisation—the Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, Jews dominate and control America? Is that absolutely essential with trying to indoctrinate people?

Maajid Nawaz: It is a key part in what I call the narrative. The world view that is propagated is a war between the West and Islam, and the West is defined in most cases as being controlled by the Jews. It is a

13 September 2011 Rashad Ali and Maajid Nawaz

key part of that narrative and then Israel is put at the pinnacle of that conspiracy. Even the Sunni/Shia divide, by the way, is blamed on the Jews.

Q90 Nicola Blackwood: It was interesting to hear the evidence of Congressman King that in the United States they do not proscribe any extremist groups. I wonder if any analysis has been done, by either of your organisations, to look at the impact which that has on counter-terrorism or any of the extremist activity in the US and whether we could look at a comparative study between the UK and the US?

Rashad Ali: I think the only conversations I have had is with American researchers, and from their perspective, it is just something that culturally is so unfathomable for them to even consider banning an organisation.

Q91 Nicola Blackwood: But does it cause more problems for law enforcement that they cannot proscribe organisations, because we proscribe these organisations, but it obviously doesn't quite work if they reform and reform, so is it an effective means of enforcement in the UK?

Rashad Ali: I think what they do is they will mention organisations which they wish to proscribe, but not on the basis of banning their ideas, but those who are taking part in funding or organising terrorist activities. So in the past, they have prosecuted organisations like the Holy Land Foundation group for funding Hamas, and what they will do is they will take legal measures, stop their funding, disrupt their activities, and so forth.

Q92 Chair: Very quickly, 30-second answers to this question. Who funds you now if the Government no longer funds you, Mr Nawaz?

Maajid Nawaz: Quilliam is struggling. It is funded by one or two non-third-sector foundations. We have had to lay off 80% of our staff and reduce 80% of our costs, and are currently, I must admit, inefficient.

Chair: Mr Ali?

Rashad Ali: We have private donations of individuals who wish to support us in what we do. We also engage in research alongside academic institutions.

Q93 Chair: In terms of radicalisation, very quickly, is it on the increase or decrease, Mr Nawaz?

Maajid Nawaz: I think non-violent extremism is on the increase, ie the ideology of Islamism, and in many cases it is in danger of trying to hijack the Arab spring in some of those countries. I think the appeal of Al Qa'ida is on the decline, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it has been defeated.

Chair: Mr Ali?

Rashad Ali: I think it is on the increase, and it is not that Al Qa'ida is on the increase, because I think as an organisation we have fairly come to the conclusion it is less influential, but we are having a growth in lone terrorism and also further radicalisation.

Chair: A brief, very quick final question from Lorraine Fullbrook.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you, Chairman, but you asked my question about funding anyway.

Chair: Okay, excellent. Mr Nawaz, Mr Ali, thank you very much for coming in to give evidence to help us begin this very important inquiry. We will be in touch with you again, and if you have any other areas you think we should look at, please do let us know. Thank you.

Tuesday 18 October 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Mr James Clappison
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert

Steve McCabe
Alun Michael
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witness

Witness: Ali Soufan, former FBI agent and founder of the Soufan Group, gave evidence.

Q94 Chair: This is the Committee's second session on our inquiry into the roots of radicalism. We are delighted to have as our witness, Mr Ali Soufan. Thank you very much, Mr Soufan, for coming to give evidence to this Committee.

Ali Soufan: Thank you for having me. It is a great honour.

Chair: Mr Soufan, I understand you have just published your book, *The Black Banners: The Inside Story of 9/11 and the War Against Al-Qaeda*. We have just had the anniversary. Looking back to the events of 9/11, do you think the atrocities and the tragedy could have been prevented by the Government or the security services in the United States?

Ali Soufan: I think we definitely failed to stop Al-Qaeda carrying out the 9/11 attack. We had a systematic failure in information sharing. I saw that first hand, and I think the result of that failing caused the tragic events that took place on Tuesday 11 September 2001 and resulted in the death of 2,977 innocent souls. It also changed the world in so many different ways. I believe that the findings of the 9/11 Commission report, the presidential commission on 9/11 and the CIA's own Inspector General's report came to the same conclusion that systematic failure in our institutions resulted in information not being shared among the entities that were responsible in keeping us safe in the United States.

Q95 Chair: When the *New Yorker* described you as being the closest person to stopping 9/11, is that because of the systemic issues, or was it to do more with the extent of radicalisation that had caused the people to do the terrible deeds that they had done?

Ali Soufan: I think it is a combination of both, but there is a direct connection between the team that was investigating the USS Cole attacks in Yemen and between the team that—*[Interruption.]*

Chair: Sorry. Order: could I ask that all mobile phones be switched off, please? Thank you. Sorry, Mr Soufan.

Ali Soufan: Yes, the team that was investigating the USS Cole in Yemen and the information that we generated through that investigation that could have stopped 9/11. Just for the sake of background, we were interrogating a person who was directly involved in the attack on the USS Cole. He said that he went to south-east Asia a month before the attack in the company of one of the suicide bombers of the Cole and delivered some money to some Qaeda operatives

over there. We asked for this information to be shared. We shared it with the intelligence community. We asked if they were aware of anything that probably took place in south-east Asia. The answer was no, and on 12 September we were given information that the two people who they met with in south-east Asia were on board flight 77 that crashed into the Pentagon.

Q96 Chair: So it was the connection between Walid bin Attash, who was involved in the USS Cole bombing, and Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi; is that right?

Ali Soufan: Yes, sir.

Q97 Chair: If that information had been able to be more forthcoming or been able to be shared—

Ali Soufan: Right, and this is also the finding. One of the main findings of the 9/11 Commission said that if the Central Intelligence Agency had shared this information with the FBI team investigating the USS Cole we could have intercepted the operation that caused 9/11 at a very early stage. That was also the CIA Inspector General's own conclusions.

Q98 Chair: Indeed. Moving on to the present situation, in the organisation that you now lead, do you think that radicalisation is on the increase or decrease in the United States? We received evidence from Congressman King and a number of other witnesses in our first session that suggested that it was on the increase, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. What is your assessment?

Ali Soufan: No, I don't see it on the increase when it comes to communities. I see very minimal support for violent extremism in the United States; it hardly even exists. What is happening, however, is that we have the home-grown terrorism, and that is not community-related, it is more individuals who spend a lot of time in their mother's basement checking websites, checking internet chatrooms, listening to sermons by the people like Anwar al-Awlaki and others, and they decide to do something, they decide to conduct a terrorist attack, do a plot. They join a group that they never met anyone from, they never go to the training camps in Afghanistan, like used to happen a long time before, and never get any training. It is like a lone gunman, as we call them. Yes, we found an increase in that specific form of terrorism, but I think we have to be very careful in separating that from communities

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

who are being increasingly radicalised. I don't see that—

Q99 Chair: But are there parallels between the United States and the United Kingdom? Is it home-grown terrorists in America as well as the United Kingdom, or is it different?

Ali Soufan: No, I think there are some parallels. It is also different, but there are some parallels and the Muslim community in the United States is extremely diverse, so you don't have one specific element of the community coming from one specific country. We don't have one specific sect that dominates the Muslim community. You have a little bit coming from everywhere, which makes the whole situation very different in America.

In the United Kingdom you have a different situation. Most of the Muslim community come from a specific region of the world, and with that region now we have a lot of problems. There are a few wars going on over there, which has an impact. Somebody is channelling grievances that have taken place among different people in the community and trying to recruit them for these causes. We start seeing a little bit of that in the United States. For example, the Times Square bomber comes from a specific region, in this instance Pakistan, that is having problems with the United States. The same thing with Zazi, the person who wanted to do subway attacks in America, 11 September 2010, about a year ago. He comes from Afghanistan. If you look at the age group of these two individuals, they were born and lived in an America that was very different from the America I was part of, that I grew up under. They were teenagers when 9/11 happened, so they felt that they are living under a cloud of suspicion. There are a lot of grievances.

Chair: We will explore some of that.

Q100 Dr Huppert: I want to ask about where this radicalisation happens, but first, we have concentrated so far largely on Islamist radicalisation, but to what extent do you think that is the only or the main thing we should look at, and to what extent are there other forms of radicalisation we should be looking at?

Ali Soufan: I think we have to focus on where the problem is, and for the last decade we have had a significant number of problems that come from ideologically motivated religious extremists. My personal opinion as a Muslim and as an FBI agent and a counterterrorism operative, is that these extremists hijacked Islam before they hijacked the planes that hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But I think there are other issues that we also have to focus on, and we are starting to see that not only in Europe but also in the United States, with white extremists groups on the rise. You have to look at what happened in Norway, for heaven's sake, just recently, and we have very similar experiences in our history in the United States with these groups. The economic situation in the world today, the lack of jobs, the lack of opportunity, the harsh issues that some people and some groups are trying to promote on immigration, that will cause more people to be disenfranchised in organisations, entities, communities or social groups that we haven't been focused on. That is what

happened in Norway. They were not looking at that specific threat and the threat or the attack came from a group, an entity, that they were not even expecting.

Q101 Dr Huppert: How important are different venues for radicalisation? Mosques or other groups, universities, prisons, the internet, how important is each of those, and where should we be concentrating our resources on counter-radicalisation?

Ali Soufan: Let's talk about Al-Qaeda in general, because most of the radicalisation stems from the ideology that Al-Qaeda is promoting. The Al-Qaeda that hit us on 9/11 does not exist any more. We have a different Al-Qaeda. It moved from being chief operator to being chief motivator. They start using the internet, they start using chatrooms, inspirational videos by their media arm, As-Sahab, to create the environment that is causing some threats in the United Kingdom, in the United States, in the West in general. We talked a little bit about that earlier.

That makes the internet an extremely important place to focus on. It is very difficult to monitor the internet, but you can spend about 10 minutes online and you can get any manual on how to make bombs, how to create chaos, how to meet other terrorists. So the recruitment place today is not cafes, is not in the back alleys behind mosques, it is in chatrooms, and that makes it very difficult to monitor. The other place that we find breeds extremism and terrorism is prisons. Many of the extremists or many of the leaders of terrorist groups are today in jail, and we find every now and then that they still have the ability to communicate with followers and issue what they call fatwas to their people.

Q102 Chair: While in jail?

Ali Soufan: While in jail.

Q103 Chair: In America or in this country?

Ali Soufan: I think it is both. I think when we were talking about—

Q104 Chair: How do they communicate?

Ali Soufan: I think sometimes some lawyers do not have the same ethical standards as other lawyers, so they send messages through lawyers. We had the case, for example, in the United States with the blind sheikh, Omar Abdel-Rahman, who was issuing fatwas from jail and giving it to his 65, 70-year-old Jewish lawyer, for heaven's sake, and she was sending the fatwas to his followers to carry on his work. That happened, that is an FBI case that has been declassified and we can talk about it, and I can guarantee you that the same thing is happening here in the UK.

Chair: Thank you, we will come on to some of that.

Q105 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would just like to ask a supplementary to your answer to Dr Huppert. Do you think Al-Qaeda has done its job and been successful? They have franchised the operation around the world in different countries, so they are not really of any significance any more; it is the franchise operators that are significant.

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

Ali Soufan: I don't think they were successful, but I think they were able to adapt to the security environment. We damaged their central command in Afghanistan, we deprived them of a territorial sanctuary, so they moved into a different kind of Al-Qaeda. So now with franchising Al-Qaeda, the threat is totally different from the threat that it used to be before.

We start seeing regional threats emerging rather than the global jihad that was promoted by Osama bin Laden in 1996 and continued to be the slogan of Al-Qaeda until 9/11. Now, for example, you look into Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is actually a result of the successes the Saudi security services had on Al-Qaeda in the kingdom. Many Al-Qaeda operatives escaped Saudi Arabia and went to Yemen and joined the Al-Qaeda branch in Yemen that is the closest to bin Laden's version of Al-Qaeda, and they put together Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. But if you look at Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula they have been totally focused on regional issues, on problems in Saudi Arabia, trying to assassinate Prince Mohammed bin Nai, trying to take cities down south, trying to basically present themselves as part of the wider Yemen opposition in order to hijack that opposition for their own sake, something they did successfully in Iraq in the Sunni triangle, and that they continue to do successfully in the tribal areas in Pakistan.

If you look at Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb it is a totally different organisation. You join Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb for totally different reasons than Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. You have remnants of Islamic extremists in Algeria that were able to escape from Algeria down south, and they operate on the border area with some tribal elements in Niger, in Mauritania, in Mali, and even the way they fund themselves is very different from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. They don't have a lot of donations; they take hostages in order to get money. So the reasons are very different. If you look at Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Al-Qaeda in Iraq is trying to cause Sunni-Shia chaos and civil war in order to find money, in order to have people in the Gulf region support them. They are trying to present themselves as an entity that is fighting for Sunni Islam and to protect the Gulf from Iranian influence in Iraq.

So there are many different Al-Qaedas. That makes it very difficult in so many ways to have one strategy to combat Al-Qaeda. That makes us now try to focus that we need to have regional strategies because each area has its own incubators that create terrorism, own economic incubators, social, political, tribal and so forth. It is a little bit harder to combat terrorism now, but at the same time, on the positive side, the focus is regional, the focus is not global in nature. The idea of a global jihad now has started to lose a lot of its appeal, especially in the light of the Arab Spring.

Q106 Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you very much, Mr Soufan, for the answer to my supplementary. I would like to ask you a bit about your organisation that conducted a study of the de-radicalisation and the rehabilitation of terrorists. You carried this out in a number of countries, including the United Kingdom.

One of your report's conclusions is that, "The state's own actions, inactions and reactions might be fuelling rather than mitigating militant sentiments." Can you explain why you drew this conclusion, including in particular the UK?

Ali Soufan: For every action there is a reaction, and if you have a problem, let's say in the United Kingdom, with the issue of radicalism, and we don't create a venue for many people who can be basically recruited by organisations, if we don't find a way for these grievances to be managed, for these grievances to be expressed, to open channels between the community and between the security services and the Government in general, that might cause different individuals who come over and recruit these people to do terrorist plots down the road. So this is where inaction can be a problem, and it is vice versa if you have a bridge with the community—in the United States I think more than 40% to 50% of the disrupted plots that we have is because of the community's relationship with the law enforcement and intelligence agencies, where they go there and say, "Hey, you know what, we have a couple of guys who are missing. We believe they went to Afghanistan or to Pakistan. Can you find something about them?" That helped in stopping terrorist plots.

Q107 Lorraine Fullbrook: So what have you particularly found in terms of examples in the UK?

Ali Soufan: Another phase of the study was about disengagement, terrorism disengagement, and we studied it from a cross-cultural perspective. We looked into events in south-east Asia, what the Governments are doing or not doing in Europe and the United States and so forth. In the UK when we did this study there was a Prevent programme and even the Prevent programme probably needed some tweaking but I think it is one of the best that we saw. It was a role model for many countries in Europe. I know it is a role model for Sweden.

Q108 Chair: The old Prevent programme, the one that was stopped?

Ali Soufan: Yes, the old Prevent programme. We are trying to still look into the effect of removing the funding, for example, or the grievances management, and how it will affect it down the road. It is still early, but that is something that we have to keep monitoring and see how it will affect the overall programme.

Q109 Lorraine Fullbrook: Mr Soufan, you were critical of the US policy of waterboarding and you have argued against waterboarding in the past. Do you still hold to that, given that information was acquired from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed?

Ali Soufan: I disagree with you, ma'am. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed never gave any information that saved lives because of waterboarding. It is not only me who is saying that. I know you hear politicians talking about waterboarding and they link their political careers to these techniques. Unfortunately, they are wrong. I am not a politician; I am a counterterrorism expert who had first-hand knowledge of a lot of these kind of things. Every example that we were given about the success of waterboarding

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

was wrong. I said this in the book and in my statement to the US Senate, which, by the way, is the only statement under oath until today on that issue—everybody talks but when someone asks you to raise your right hand and talk, a lot of people escape, they are not there any more. But that is normal, as you guys are probably aware in your Committee.

Chair: Well, we never tried it before.

Ali Soufan: So Khalid Sheikh Mohammed did not give any information. The CIA's own Inspector General conducted an investigation in 2004, because many CIA officers and employees complained to their agencies about the EITs. The result of the investigation was outstanding. It said that not one single imminent threat was stopped because of enhanced interrogation techniques and waterboarding—not one single imminent threat.

I was asked before about Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and the information that he gave that supposedly stopped the plot, the Heathrow plot here in the United Kingdom. That document from the CIA has been declassified and you can get it on Google. It is said immediately upon his arrest—not after 183 sessions of waterboarding—he provided information regarding the Heathrow plot, because he thought another Al-Qaeda operative, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, had already provided the information. So that information did not come because of waterboarding, and this has been declassified.

Chair: Thank you, that is very helpful.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you.

Q110 Chair: A quick answer to this question, and it is a guess, I know, or maybe you have information that perhaps I think you don't have: how long do you think the Americans knew that Osama bin Laden was in Pakistan before they attacked his hideaway?

Ali Soufan: I think, from what I have been gathering, a few months. I think they knew about it maybe in the spring or the summer before that.

Q111 Chair: How long did the Pakistani Government know that he was there?

Ali Soufan: I don't have any direct information about that, but my own personal opinion is it is almost impossible for bin Laden to be hiding in the area where he was hiding, just yards away from the West Point of Pakistan, and some entities in Pakistan at least don't know about it. I think it is kind of impossible.

Q112 Mr Winnick: As far as the killing of bin Laden is concerned, how do you feel that will have any effect, arising from some of the questions that Mrs Fullbrook asked you, over the terrorist network? Will it have any real effect?

Ali Soufan: Yes, I think the death of bin Laden was a mortal blow to Al-Qaeda, and Al-Qaeda was becoming increasingly irrelevant even before bin Laden's death, especially in the light of the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring made people realise that they can change their own destiny without blowing up embassies or taking hostages or killing innocent people, and when they do that the West will also support them, regardless of whether we view them as

radicals or not radicals—this is not an issue. Look at Libya, for example, and some of the elements that we supported in Libya, mostly former Libyan fighting group members. That was a very strong message. Also another thing, sir, is Al-Qaeda itself after bin Laden is not going to be the same as before bin Laden. Bin Laden was Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda was bin Laden.

Q113 Mr Winnick: So it will have quite an effect?

Ali Soufan: Absolutely. Ayman al-Zawahiri is a very dedicated individual, but I don't believe he has the charisma nor the story, nor the nationality, to be honest with you. As an Egyptian, he is not going to be able to unify the Arabian Peninsula members of Al-Qaeda under him. Something that a lot of people did not pay attention to, when the statement came out from Al-Qaeda announcing that Ayman al-Zawahiri is amir of the group, the person in charge of the group, is that it came from "Al-Qaeda General Command". That is something we never saw before. That reminds me of Palestinian groups when they used to splinter and have "general command" assigned to a name, which gives you an idea about where Al-Qaeda is today.

Q114 Mr Winnick: Successive British Governments repeatedly say that they do not approve of and do not condone torture, and no one has suggested that British Governments have in any way authorised torture by British security agents. That has never been the allegation. The allegation has been where British security agents have been party to the extent of torture carried out by a foreign Government, be it the United States or otherwise, trying to extract the information regarding possible terrorist attacks and so on and so forth. As far as waterboarding is concerned, which the United States does not deny in any way, shape or form, would you consider that to be torture?

Ali Soufan: In general, if you just tell me waterboarding, without the way it is conducted, the rules and all the different elements to it, yes. It is not only me who would consider waterboarding as a technique of torture, it is the United States who consider it a torture. We prosecuted Japanese officers, military officers, for waterboarding US troops in World War II, and they were executed for doing that. US courts found it to be a crime of war, or a war crime, the technique itself. But I think the devil sometimes is in the detail, and that is why I believe enhanced interrogation techniques are wrong. Also I believe they are wrong, as you probably gathered from my writings or from what I said today, because of the efficacy of the programme. I don't make a moral argument here.

Q115 Mr Winnick: The President of the United States made a promise before his election that Guantanamo—and I am glad I managed to get the word out correctly this time—would be closed. Do you consider Guantanamo to be a stain on the United States, the manner in which prisoners are held without being tried in any way, a sort of concentration camp, in effect? Apart from that, would that be helping the

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

terrorists in their propaganda in trying to establish that they are in the right?

Ali Soufan: The terrorists are going to use anything they can use for their own propaganda, so I think we have to be careful in what we do not to give them ammunition, but at the same time I think we have to do what we need to do to make our countries secure. I think at the beginning Guantanamo Bay was very much needed. You have a lot of people that you are gathering in a war that is very different in nature, and you need to basically go through the process of seeing who are they, are they involved, do they have blood on their hands, are they terrorists, did we get them by mistake, and so forth. I think Guantanamo Bay was needed as an intelligence collection place and to do rehabilitation. Unfortunately, I think we mismanaged Guantanamo horribly.

Q116 Mr Winnick: Should it now be closed down?

Ali Soufan: Well, you know what, it is easier said than done. I would like Guantanamo to be closed, but as the President himself realised, it is going to be extremely impossible to do it.

Chair: Thank you. We accept that answer. Thank you so much.

Q117 Michael Ellis: Mr Soufan, your report found that some countries obviously focused their counter-radicalisation efforts on rehabilitation, so they are dealing with after-the-fact situations in terms of terrorist prisoners. Here in the United Kingdom there is a focus on those at risk of becoming offenders, so it is before the fact. Do you have a view as to which of those approaches is more effective?

Ali Soufan: I think rehabilitation can be before or after. Singapore, for example, has a good programme, where they have an extremely strong relationship with the community and if they find individuals who are susceptible or involved in the JI or other terrorist groups over there they try to rehabilitate them before they conduct any terrorist attack. However, they have something in Singapore that we cannot have here in the West in general, which is that they can do detention without a crime.

Q118 Michael Ellis: They have enhanced democracy in Singapore, don't they?

Ali Soufan: I think you are dealing with a culture, with a society, where culturally speaking the population is ready to sacrifice for the sake of the whole community—the few are ready to sacrifice. In the West we have a different view about that. But I think their way of life is working for them, and I think rehabilitation can be before and after. I would like to believe that we need to do this before. We have to be preventive, not after the fact. I think if a terrorist attack, God forbid, takes places it complicates matters. It complicates matters even in building bridges with communities, it creates a lot of other issues that we have to deal with. I think what we find more successful is to be preventive, to do it before the fact.

Q119 Michael Ellis: So you approve of the British Government's approach in dealing with those at risk of becoming offenders?

Ali Soufan: Absolutely. This is extremely needed.

Q120 Michael Ellis: What about if and when individuals find themselves incarcerated as terrorist offenders, so they are in prison? What do you think is the most effective way of de-radicalising people who are in prison when they are in the constraints of detention?

Ali Soufan: Well, this is probably one of the most difficult things that a lot of people are dealing with, especially in the West, because of the freedom of religion that we have. You cannot tell anyone that your version of religion is wrong and my version is right. So this creates a lot of problems, and that is the reason we find radicalisation is extremely difficult to combat and is on the rise in jails. We find that not only in the United States, not only in the United Kingdom, but in Indonesia, for example. As part of the QIASS study—the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, which did this—we went to Indonesia and we spoke to prisoners who were in jail and they basically told us, “Look, when we were in jail we were given books on how to be suicide bombers.” These books were given to them by other radicals and they were widely available to anyone who wants to read them. The terrorists were able to create a network where they even find wives for individuals if they found de-radicalisation or disengagement is working on them, so they can suck them back in. It is very complicated.

Q121 Michael Ellis: It is complicated, but have you seen or heard of any techniques that you think work in terms of de-radicalising people when they are in prison?

Ali Soufan: Yes, I think having their families involved works, having the community involved, not making it just as law enforcement, Government-sponsored, especially in that culture. Most of the people from that specific culture are more family oriented, more community oriented. When we saw these kind of things in different areas around the world, like from the Singaporean programme, to Indonesia, to different case studies that we found, I think family is extremely important and community is extremely important to have them involved in this.

Q122 Nicola Blackwood: You have mentioned the problems associated with the sensitivities of different versions of religion and not saying that one version of religion is acceptable. In the UK there is a debate at the moment about whether or not there is a role for non-violent extremists working with the Government to counter radicalisation. I just wondered what your views were, whether you think there is a worthwhile distinction between violent and non-violent extremism.

Ali Soufan: It is an excellent question, and I don't like the term “non-violent extremists”. I look at the term and I try to basically tell myself, “What do we mean by that? Do we mean that we are dealing with just religious people, conservative religious people, or are they really non-violent radicals?” I think we are trying to make terms that don't exist. I see the world like this: I see you have violent extremists, which

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

means extremists so radical that they are willing to commit violent acts to prove a point; then you have religious individuals who we say are radicals because—let's talk about Islam here, my own religion—they have beards, they go to the mosque, and they are very conservative, but I don't look at them as radicals but as just deeply religious individuals. I think we should not isolate these people, because they have a lot of credibility in the community, and when you isolate people who have credibility with the community you are marginalising a very good asset for yourself and then we are putting everyone in one pot, which down the road will backfire.

So I don't like radicals, period. I don't believe there are violent and non-violent radicals. I believe that there are individuals who are willing to do bad things and there are people who are just deeply religious and apolitical. Now, from these conservative people, conservative religious people, there are people who probably don't agree with the British foreign policy in the Middle East, but that is fine. There are a lot of British people also that don't agree with that. You know, you don't isolate those individuals.

Q123 Nicola Blackwood: But in that case if you are trying to prevent radicalisation in prisons, how do you go about that without trampling on freedom of religion?

Ali Soufan: I think you have to do a couple of things. I think you have to realise that people like Abu Qatada al-Filistini, for example, or Abu Hamza al-Masri—those leaders—need to be isolated from others. We have that system in the United States, which is more difficult for you to do in the UK, to isolate the terrorist radicals in the jails that are causing these problems but at the same time dealing with people who you can bring back. There are some people you can never bring back, so I think there is an assessment here that some individuals you cannot reach. They are so far that you have to kind of be at peace that these guys you are not going to change, but there are other people that you can change, so you have to limit their interaction with the radicals and also bring some positive elements from the community, from religious people in the community, their families, in order to help the security service and the prisons to bring them back to reality.

Q124 Nicola Blackwood: Do you think that there is a role for former terrorists to be used to dissuade potential recruits from getting involved, or do you think that there are potential dangers in that?

Ali Soufan: No, no, absolutely. We found through the QIASS study when we went around—and we are doing now a counter-narrative part of the study that will be announced next year—that the role ex-prisoners play is extremely important, especially when you have an individual saying, "Look, you know what, it is not greener on the other side, believe me, I was there. They lie to you, they do this, they do that." But this needs to be also in very close co-ordination, I believe, with the security services and with the Government. You know, you can't just trust a guy and say, "Okay, we're going to give you whatever you

need, go and do it." It needs to be a controlled environment, but I truly believe that nobody will reach out to these individuals more than a person who did it when they walk that road, talk the talk, walk the walk, and then come back and say, "Believe me, you don't want to go down there."

Q125 Mark Reckless: In your experience from the United States, what impact has the designation of international terrorist organisation had, if any, in mitigating or limiting radicalisation?

Ali Soufan: I don't think it has had, to be honest with you, from my personal opinion, an impact on the issue of radicalisation itself. It has probably had an impact on community relations but not on the issue of creating more radicalisation in America or among Muslim communities in the United States.

Q126 Mark Reckless: Would you have any advice for us? I understand at the moment we have 47 organisations that have been proscribed, around half of which relate to Islamic extremism in one way or another. Do you think that is something we can build on, or is it just the wrong approach?

Ali Soufan: No, absolutely, it is something that we can build upon. If you have organisations that the security services, the Government, are telling you are actively trying to raise funds to radicalise, to recruit, you cannot just have them operate. I think that is an important tool to have.

Q127 Steve McCabe: Just on that point, why does it make sense then to proscribe an organisation like the NCRI, which is opposed to the radicalisation in Iran? Doesn't that actually favour the proliferation of radicalisation if you proscribe groups who are opposed to it?

Ali Soufan: The NCRI in Iran, you mean, Mujahedin-e Khalq? That is the group you are talking about?

Steve McCabe: Yes.

Ali Soufan: I think from the United States when you look at the list, we have a lot of people that probably we are sympathetic to their causes on there. A lot of people think that only Islamic terrorist groups are listed on that list. No, we don't discriminate; we have Jewish terrorist groups, we have Iranian terrorist groups. I think in the United States we look at an entity and we look how they carry out their operations and if they kill civilians in order to promote their cause, even if we are sympathetic to the cause, we believe that they are terrorist organisations. I think that is the right thing to do. We will support you to do whatever needs to be done to promote your cause but don't start blowing up buses and killing innocent people that have nothing to do with anything just to promote an idea. I think there is a line that we draw.

Q128 Chair: Do you think that Hizb ut-Tahrir should be banned?

Ali Soufan: I think Hizb ut-Tahrir have been involved in a lot of radical propaganda but I don't see them involved in terrorist attacks yet. I think it is an entity that need to be at least monitored and in the West, I think in many countries probably around the Middle East will be—

18 October 2011 Ali Soufan

Q129 Chair: So was that a yes or no? I am not sure.
Ali Soufan: I think it is no. No, I don't think we should ban it now because of what I mentioned. You can say it is freedom of speech, they haven't been carrying out stuff, but it needs to be monitored and we need to be very careful on some of the ideologies that they are trying to promote.

Q130 Chair: Can I just ask you some very quick final questions with, if possible, brief answers? There is a resolution going through the UN today, sponsored by William Hague and the British Government, about Yemen, asking for President Saleh to stand down. Both you and I have met the President. What effect will his going have on the issue of radicalisation? Al-Awlaki, of course, is dead now as a result of American action. Is there any fear that the destabilisation of Yemen is going to result in more radicalisation and more terrorism?

Ali Soufan: The destabilisation of Yemen will definitely result in more radicalisation. As I mentioned earlier, Al-Qaeda is trying to take advantage of the situation down south and they are even trying to rebrand themselves now. They are working under the term Ansar al-Sharia, talking about that they are an NGO and doing the same game plan that they did in the Sunni triangle in Iraq, hijacking the concerns of the wider community and trying to appear that they are real. So that definitely—

Q131 Chair: So should he stay, in fact, because he—
Ali Soufan: President Saleh?

Chair: Yes, because he provides that stability in an unstable Government.

Ali Soufan: I don't think that President Saleh staying provides stability either. He has been in power for a long time and look at Yemen today. I think what we have today in Yemen is a rebellion up north with the Houthi, we have a rebellion down south based on very legitimate concerns for the south Yemeni people, and you also have a division in the political establishment that helped Saleh to rule for the last 33 years.

Q132 Chair: Very helpful.

On structures, you talked about 9/11 and you said that the structures were not there. I know you have not had a chance to read our report, because obviously your book has been launched. This Committee has suggested that counterterrorism should be placed within a national framework in the new National Crime Agency, which of course is the case in the United States. Do you have any views on that?

Ali Soufan: I think it is important. When you develop a counterterrorism strategy that strategy should be holistic. You can't just deal with one specific issue and not deal with the bigger policy and strategic implications of dealing with that specific threat. So, yes, I believe it should be co-ordinated on a national level.

Q133 Chair: I am sure you have visited the centre outside Washington where we now have all the desks of all the agencies in one room. Presumably you are pleased, that is a tremendous improvement since 9/11?

Ali Soufan: That is a tremendous improvement, but even before 9/11 we had that in the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the other things that were going on. I would like to see these institutions—a building like that, let's call it an institution—shaping the different institutions that exist. You can put them all in the same room, but you need them to talk to each other and share information.

Q134 Chair: Finally, on the Olympics, we are going to have 500 FBI agents here next year, we understand. You gave an interview to the *Evening Standard* last night about the Olympics. Do you have any concerns or fears about what might happen? Are we ready to deal with this major international event?

Ali Soufan: Absolutely. I think the United Kingdom have the utmost professional security services and law enforcement, and I think you will be very happy with the professionalism of the 500 FBI agents.

Chair: Mr Soufan, thank you very much for coming. It has been extraordinarily interesting hearing your evidence, and we may write to you again if there are other issues that we need to explore with you.

Ali Soufan: It is a great honour to have been here. Thank you, sir.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Akeela Ahmed**, Chief Executive, Muslim Youth Helpline, **Alyas Karmani**, Co-director, STREET Project, and **Murtaza Hassan Shaikh**, Averroes Institute, gave evidence.

Q135 Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, a number of our questions will be to all of you. Members of the Committee will obviously want to ask each of you questions, and it may be the same question. Please feel free to answer them, but if you feel your colleague may have answered them satisfactorily you can just say so.

Can I start about the level of radicalism within the communities, the Muslim community in particular, in this country? Do you feel that it is on the increase, or do you think that it has stabilised and is coming down? Mr Karmani.

Alyas Karmani: Young Muslims are angry and more frustrated than I have ever known. I think we have to look at the context of the last 10 years from 2001 up until now—the war on terror. We have had a very polarising decade and one of repeated things that we look for when we are working with vulnerable individuals and with individuals that we work with who are TACT offenders and referrals is the way that they look at the world in terms of us and them, that polarisation between what they see as their world view and other people's world view. Certainly that has increased and we have had a very polarising decade. For a lot of young people, their formative years have been under increased social exclusion, a perception of greater grievance in terms of the world, greater Islamophobia as well, and many of our young also have what I call one-square-mile thinking. They have a very limited world view. They are not worldly at all, and that accentuates this sense of grievance and sense of dislocation and disengagement.

While they are angry and frustrated, I don't think it is manifesting itself in terms of violent extremism, but I think it is important agencies like ourselves have a role in terms of channelling that.

Q136 Chair: Sure, we will come on to that a little later. But is the answer yes, it is on the increase but it is not channelled into violence?

Alyas Karmani: Yes. I would say certainly the influences, the risk factors, are very much there.

Akeela Ahmed: I work with the community and with young people who are in emotional distress at the Muslim Youth Helpline. We deal with around 4,000 calls a year, and there are a significant number of calls that we are not able to deal with as well—we miss them. Over the last year we have probably had two calls from people who were talking about violent extremism, so that gives the context from which I work and what I see. In the general community there is not an increase in terms of violent extremism and support for that. I would say that there is a minority there, and that is evidenced, but I would agree with my colleague in that there are risk factors, there are vulnerabilities that need to be dealt with, and there are grievances that need to be heard and dealt with as well.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: There is not much to add to that, except to say that we don't really know about the manifestations of this violent extremism until they happen. That is quite a simple thing to realise, but the

grievances and the resentment that we all consider to be facilitating factors to in the end being violently extreme have definitely increased, and that has come through different perceptions of injustice, rule of law, human rights abuses, that seem or appear to be targeting Muslims or Islam in general. Just one final point, on the community level in mosques and in community organisations there is a general sentiment that Muslims don't see the problem themselves in their communities. So when they see in the news or when they see the issue of violent extremism being raised at the political level or national level they wonder where it actually is. It is not to say it does not exist, but the examples are so few that people develop a sense of paranoia and many conspiracy theories because they themselves are not exposed to these ideas in their own community.

Q137 Lorraine Fullbrook: I wonder if we could ask all three of you, when you come in contact with the minority of youths who may have grievances and you decide they may be becoming radicalised, how do you deal with them? Do you deal with them yourself, or if you think they are going to be violent do you pass that over to the police, if they are in danger of harming themselves or other people?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Well, our work doesn't deal with people who are like that. We are more concerned with the general community at large and how the Prevent policy has an effect on their perceptions of how they have been dealt with. It is clear from second-hand studying of people who have been radicalised that they have the grievances that we are trying to minimise through advising what Government policy should be, but we haven't come into actual contact with people who are violent extremists.

Akeela Ahmed: I was just going to say that we take a multi-agency approach, in that if we were dealing with somebody who was suicidal and they called the helpline and were saying that they were going to kill themselves, we would refer them to statutory services. We would take the same approach if somebody called the helpline and said that they were thinking about committing an act of terror or a violent extremist act. We would refer them to statutory services and also to specialist groups who deal with de-radicalisation.

Alyas Karmani: We deal with them directly ourselves. With many of the individuals that we come into contact with, the assessment process is quite critical. We are talking about individuals who are generally not hardened ideologues, and they are not imminently going to commit acts of violence. We are talking about highly idealistic individuals, often very vulnerable, very confused. Through our mentoring process we provide quite comprehensive mentoring and try to manage that issue ourselves, and for the vast majority of the individuals that we deal with there isn't a need to pursue. Our Prevent intervention works quite effectively. However, we are very clear in terms of our community and the constituency that we work with that if someone is going to commit an act of violence, a criminal act, then we have no choice but

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

to go to the authorities, to go to the police and co-operate with them in that particular matter. But obviously that eventuality is very rare.

Q138 Nicola Blackwood: I wonder what you feel like your working relationship is with the police. Do you feel confident going to the police? Do you feel that is something you can do safely, that you are not betraying the people who are in your trust as well?

Alyas Karmani: I think we are fortunate at STREET. We had a very good relationship with the Muslim Contact Unit and that was really important for us, I think, after 9/11: that we had that relationship, that we had a line of communication, because on a lot of the at risk issues that we work with, our young people have no confidence in police and a range of statutory agencies, so there is a need for an intermediate structure. There is a need for an agency that you can go to where you can have a very safe space for discussion without being labelled, without being identified as involved in criminality, and for us the Muslim Contact Unit provided that framework. Certainly for me, I was very concerned after 9/11, who do I talk to about these issues, and the Muslim Contact Unit provided that kind of framework.

Through that we were able to develop a more effective working relationship with the police where we are seen as equal partners in that process and we are assertive in terms of challenging their ideas, their analysis, and they respect and value our point of view. So it has to be on that basis, that you are equal partners at the table and your views are valued and respected. Too often I have seen people who, when they engage with the police, lack that confidence to really assert their position, so they will become almost appeasing or supporting a particular perspective and that then alienates them from the community. I think what is unique about STREET and our approach is that we have always been very assertive in advocating for issues but at the same time recognising that we have to protect the public.

Q139 Steve McCabe: Are you all familiar with the views of Rashad Ali? Yes? I ask that because he told us in evidence to this Committee that there were four potential pathways or strands to radicalisation, and he identified those as theological, political, personal grievance, and possibly mental health problems. I think this is to all of you: I wondered if you would agree with that analysis and, if you differed from it, if you could say why.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: If I could answer that question first. I think in principle we agree. In our written submission you will see that we have quite a simple thesis and that is, first of all, the grievance and, second of all, a violent ideology that purports to couch itself in Islamic principles, but the difference in principle would be that we believe that the grievances may stem from foreign policy, or even domestic policy, as an enabling factor. Without that initial enabling factor the violent ideology cannot hold—it is redundant. A subsidiary factor to that is the perception that there is a conflation between Islam as a religion and indicators for violent extremism. In that sense, from my experience, we have found that it is actually

the most devout Muslims, the ones who are more couched in scholarly knowledge, who are least likely to commit these acts. So that was the basic thesis. In principle, there is some overlap but there is some clarification.

However, in practice—I think we will come to this later—we have to come to terms with what we mean by grievance and what responses we have for that. Secondly, when it comes to the political ideology, or the violent ideology, what exactly is that and do we believe that to be the same thing as what Mr Ali was referring to?

Alyas Karmani: I think there are lots of frameworks out there, and I think there is generally an agreement that there are social emotional factors, there is a sense of social exclusion and belonging, there are grievances, but there are also external factors. I think foreign policy is one of the critical ones. There has to be a catalyst or external factors that then feed the radicalisation—the ideology actually requires that as its fuel. So when we have these, what I would call, critical incidents and defining events, such as the killing of Anwar al-Awlaki recently, then the ideology uses that to kind of fuel radicalisation—you build on disaffection and kind of reinforce the ideology.

Another one of the frameworks that we use is to identify individuals in terms of where they are in terms of theological understanding and civic responsibilities, whether they are at a foundation, youthful, adult or mature phase. Most individuals, interestingly, are at that youthful stage. Their Islamic understanding could be equated to a primary school level. It is also abstract—they don't really have concrete concepts, they have an abstract idealistic understanding. As we move up, people start having much more of an applied, pragmatic and much more conscious understanding of how to apply Islam within a British context. That is the journey you have to take individuals on, from that abstract idealistic notion to having a much more concrete and applied response.

Q140 Nicola Blackwood: I wonder what role you think reporting of these incidents in the media is having as an impact, and perhaps irresponsible reporting and perhaps Islamophobic reporting might be a problem in fuelling radicalisation?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I think you have touched on a very important issue. Islamophobia, whether it is manifested in what certain people in the media say or what the newspapers says, even what politicians say, definitely feeds into this mass of resentment. I think resentment and grievance has always been framed as if it were against the foreign policy, and that definitely is a factor, but the common denominator is not the foreign policy but the perception, whether it is perceived or real, that there is an attack or a targeting or a singling out or a discriminatory attitude towards Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia definitely feeds into that. I think we will probably come to this question later, but also we have to link this with the rise of the far right and that sort of extremism.

Chair: We are coming on to that.

Alyas Karmani: Sorry, can I just add to that as well? The end result is that people access alternative media, so they become completely disillusioned with

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

mainstream and they go to layers underneath that. A lot of people are getting a different narrative and a different presentation of the media as a result of their complete lack of faith or confidence in mainstream media.

Q141 Steve McCabe: I wanted to ask about the situation where there seems to be a link to perhaps mental health or even emotional distress. I wondered what is the best way to deal with that, in terms of at one level we are talking about a counter-radicalisation policy, while at the other level we are talking about health policy and counselling and treatment. How do you determine what is the best way?

Alyas Karmani: My background is as a psychologist, and I have about 20 years of counselling experience. In my work, you are absolutely right, emotional and psychological factors are critical, and it is the assessment process. If we are always thinking about extremist ideology, then we are just reinforcing a particular kind of assessment and analysis of the situation, where we are talking about emotionally damaged individuals who have had trauma in their lives, abuse in their lives, they are suffering from psychosis, they are suffering from poor family relationships, all manner of social and emotional damage. You have to realise, ideological groups are very sophisticated at targeting vulnerable individuals; they know what buttons to press and how to engage those particular individuals, and obviously someone who has emotional distortion, that creates a cognitive opening where the ideology feeds that. You are giving people certainty, significance, importance, and for someone who lacks profound self-esteem and wants group belonging, that is often the factor.

We have often found that ideology is the last factor, and the least prominent factor, where what we really have is social exclusion, perceived grievance and emotional damage, and those are what we need to work with. So when I engage with practitioners, yes, there is a lot in their toolkit, you could say, that they are able to work on in terms of that emotional support. Where it is deemed that ideology is a factor, then we bring in the appropriate practitioner to deal with that. In the assessment process, you need multiple perspectives from people who understand and live reality on the street, from people who understand it from an emotional social point of view, a theological point of view, as well as from a more environmental contextual point of view.

Akeela Ahmed: Can I just add to that? At the Muslim Youth Helpline, we deal with young British Muslims who are dealing with a whole host of emotional and psychological difficulties, which stem from social exclusion, trauma and abuse. I think what we find very effective is that we are dealing with the root causes of issues, before somebody gets to a point where they have been completely isolated and their only option is to be preyed upon by an extremist. So we are dealing with the risk at a much lower level than waiting until somebody is at a completely disenfranchised, isolated point and their only option is to be preyed on by an extremist.

Q142 Alun Michael: You talked about vulnerable individuals being targeted. We saw some evidence of this in the United States when we visited to look at combating of radicalisation in the States. There is a targeting of young short-term prisoners, and very often there is a problem, sometimes by them being brought back into their community, back into the family. Is this a specific issue as far as your experience goes?

Alyas Karmani: Absolutely. We work in prisons, and it is always there. If I give you one example: an individual who went into Belmarsh on remand was three cells away from Abdullah al-Faisal when he was there. Within three days, Abdullah al-Faisal had convinced him to undertake a martyrdom mission. He left prison—he was acquitted of his offence—went straight to Yemen, desperately looking for jihad, desperately seeking a training camp. Fortunately, the handlers there in Yemen channelled him into an appropriate kind of madrassa, an Islamic school there, who taught him the correct understanding and sent him back to us, and then we worked quite intensively with the individual. Prison most definitely is a place where this happens. We identified that link back in the 1990s, where individuals were converting to Islam within prison, not necessarily that they were becoming violent extremists, but certainly the Dar al-Harb ideology was being inculcated in there, with people coming out of prison, joining violent gangs and then using that ideology to legitimate their criminality, rather than violent extremism. My co-director, Abdul Haqq, based his PhD on the case study of Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, and it was the first to come out and talk about that particular link. Again, it went through that particular pathway.

Q143 Alun Michael: This is not the only problem, of course, for short-term prisoners, but is it a pathway you think is properly understood by the prison authorities and—

Alyas Karmani: I think it varies. Each prison has its own regime, and I think some are very open. We work with one young offenders institute at the moment where we have a very good working relationship with the governor, we frequently visit, we have lots of sessions with the inmates there. Other prisons, the doors are completely closed, with a lack of awareness. There is a different regime, which is much more controlling and less engaging in terms of the prisoners and there is less of an awareness among prison officers as well. I remember one prison officer, talking about some of the work of individuals, of inmates in Belmarsh, saying that the regime in itself was polarising and radicalising. You would have white inmates in a cell who would be taking drugs and no one would do anything, but as soon as two Muslims were there praying and performing their obligation of congregational prayer, you would have a whole number of prison officers coming and stopping them. The experience within prison itself can be radicalising. If you know there are ideologues active in prison, then that compounds the issue.

Q144 Alun Michael: That is helpful. In terms of return to the community, do you think that the need

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

for taking people back, rehabilitation, is well enough understood within the communities?

Alyas Karmani: First, coverage is poor, so for agencies like STREET, there isn't national coverage in terms of those issues. We work with probation and we work with individuals pre-release and post-release intensively, so they have a resettlement plan. You have to provide what I call a legitimate holistic alternative, otherwise the pull factors back to gangs, back to old associations, back to familiar groups, is going to be much stronger. Unless you provide the alternative, you are not able to do that.

Alun Michael: Sorry, my question was whether that is sufficiently understood by the wider community.

Alyas Karmani: I don't think it is. Yes, I don't think it is.

Q145 Alun Michael: I wanted to take you back to the issue of grievances for a moment, because you have already dealt with the fact that there is a difference between actual grievances and perceived grievances, and any teenagers have anger about some things so we understand the context of that. Do you think enough is being done to deal with real, as distinct from perceived, grievances? Are there things that we ought to be doing more about?

Akeela Ahmed: I think, first of all, it is important to look at the wider picture of youth, the experience of being a young person in the UK at the moment. We saw the riots over the summer and we saw that young people clearly felt that they weren't being heard. Obviously there was a lot of criminality that went on, but there was something around people not feeling like, firstly, they were heard, and secondly, having the tools to express their grievances in the right way and in a positive way, and thirdly, the sense of disempowerment and not being able to effect change or influence what is going on in their lives and what is affecting them. When we are dealing with young British Muslims, we have to look at them within that wider context.

Now, for the grievances that young British Muslims feel, I think there are very real grievances around lack of employment, poor access to services, and living in overcrowded housing. There is a sense of not having the same opportunities as other people and being socially excluded. It is well documented that part of the Muslim communities is socially excluded in the UK. But I think what happens, though, is when you don't have the structures to deal with the real grievances and the real issues and challenges that are facing young people and young British Muslims, that feeds into this perceived idea that, "It's us against them."

Q146 Alun Michael: I understood that, because you already made that point, and I think it is a very valid one. I was trying to focus on the real grievance aspect for a moment.

Akeela Ahmed: Okay.

Alun Michael: Anything to add?

Alyas Karmani: Well, I think civil liberties, I think there has been a disproportionate impact in terms of anti-terror laws on the Muslim community. It becomes accentuated because of this insularity. It becomes

more concentrated when young men or young Muslims sit down together and they talk about their different experiences they have had of stop and search, of schedule 7, of having to give DNA and so on. If there is no counter to that, it just concentrates those views. Then there is also the view that the way Islamic extremism and the far right and other forms of extremism are treated is different in society, and we shouldn't be treating Muslims differently or accentuating that difference. For example, Muslims have been charged under the Terrorism Act 2006, whereas far-right individuals have been charged under other legislation, although they have had great capability to commit violent acts as well under the Firearms or Explosives Acts rather than the 2006 Terrorism Act. So, again, that leads into a view that there is a disproportionate treatment of Muslims compared to other groups.

Q147 Chair: Can I just say that it is always difficult when you have three witnesses on the panel, and we are running a bit behind time, so can we limit our answers?

Alyas Karmani: Yes, I will keep it short.

Chair: When you agree with your colleague, you just have to say you agree and we can accept that.

Q148 Mr Winnick: I have one or two questions on the domestic situation, but first of all you made reference to foreign policy and the view that obviously the wider community also has differences on matters like the Iraq war and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The question that I want to ask you on that aspect is simply is it ever pointed out, for example, that in the Iranian-Iraq war, it is estimated that some 750,000 Muslims—obviously Sunnis and Shias—were killed, which demonstrates that it is not just Western powers as such, but Muslims fighting Muslims as a result of two dictatorships?

Alyas Karmani: I think the fact that Muslim on Muslim violence probably results in much more Muslim deaths than otherwise is conveniently overlooked, but it is also this very limited concept around foreign policy. It is not a broader analysis that individuals have. It is still within that idealistic abstract. It is not complex. Even on the Palestine issue, people don't really have a knowledge of that issue beyond 10 years, so if you ask them about Sabra and Shatila in 1982, people don't know, or beyond that as well.

Q149 Mr Winnick: Do you consider it part of your job to do so?

Alyas Karmani: Well, it is about making people more worldly, and also having a more complex understanding. It is not just a black and white issue. There are many shades of grey in between. I think it is important that people have a detailed understanding of history.

Q150 Michael Ellis: You mentioned Sabra and Shatila but I was wondering if you also try and educate people you come into contact with on both sides of the account, so that they are given a full picture of what both sides believe, even if—

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

Alyas Karmani: Yes, I think so. Absolutely.

Mr Winnick: Of the—

Chair: Order, Mr Winnick. If we can have a brief answer to that question, and then we will go on to Mr Winnick.

Alyas Karmani: I think intercultural dialogue, inter-faith dialogue is very critical, that people have a broad perspective and a broader world view.

Q151 Mr Winnick: My colleagues are intervening, and why not? Can I ask you this question? How far do the authorities look upon the three organisations as being helpful, or are you seen simply as a way of trying to prevent, as far as is possible, Muslim youngsters getting engaged in any form of terrorism? Is the attitude by the authorities helpful and positive?

Alyas Karmani: Personally, I think we have a very good working relationship with our statutory agencies, prison, probation, the police as well, the Youth Offending Service. In policy terms, with the new Government, I think there has been a bit of a disconnection between the credibility and the effectiveness of what we do and how they perceive it.

Chair: Thank you. We need to move on now.

Q152 Michael Ellis: You have referred to it once or twice already in your answers, but I want to move on to the far right. We have had, as a Committee, some submissions obviously from various Muslim organisations, but also from the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The Board of Deputies reported a personal threat felt by some Jews about the activities of the far right in this country, but none of the Muslim organisations that we had submissions from apparently mentioned a feeling of personal threat from the far right. That doesn't mean to say it doesn't exist, but we have not had it reported to us, as far as I am aware. What do you have to say about that? Do your clients report threats from the far right?

Akeela Ahmed: If I could go first. As a helpline, we have seen an increasing number of prank calls from the far right.

Michael Ellis: Prank?

Akeela Ahmed: Prank calls. We always receive a number of prank calls, people pranking the helpline, but these have been people being Islamophobic, being very racist, asking inappropriate questions about Muslims and Islam in the UK, asking, "Do you want to overtake No. 10?"—that sort of thing. We do have reports from our callers of people experiencing racism from far right groups.

Q153 Michael Ellis: So you have had that reported to you?

Akeela Ahmed: Yes.

Q154 Michael Ellis: More to do with the far-right organisation as opposed to racism per se?

Akeela Ahmed: Yes.

Q155 Michael Ellis: Do you think that the authorities are paying adequate attention to the threat from the far right?

Akeela Ahmed: I think there needs to be more attention given to the far right, but I think again it

needs to be approached in the way that you would deal with violent extremism. You need to have a holistic approach, and to look at the root causes of the increase of far right extremism and the economic predisposing environment on a global level. I think all of that needs to be looked at, the access and opportunities that young people on the far right have, their emotional wellbeing and employment, what have you. All those things need to be looked at and dealt with in the appropriate way. But I don't think that it should be underplayed. I think that there should be more importance given to it.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I think until recently it wasn't being given appropriate attention, but that has changed. Islamophobia is definitely on the rise, with reports from people on housing estates, people on public transport, people in all sorts of areas of public life where they are feeling threatened or people are abusing them or making comments related to their ethnic origin or their religion. But I think recently, especially when the events in Norway happened, there was a realisation that these equally extreme ideas can manifest themselves into horrendous acts of violence. Just to give you two examples of things that have come from the far right, which are frightening and astonishing that they can be aired in a public forum that could never have been entertained from a Muslim individual. The first would be a gentleman named Guramit Singh, who is a Sikh member of the EDL. He gave a speech, which I recommend all of you to go and listen to on YouTube. He made the most offensive and most crude comments towards Muslims and Islam in general, nothing to do with extremism or violent radicalism, and he wasn't charged. So maybe the law is to blame, or the gaps in it.

The second one is when Tommy Robinson, I think his name is, the head of the EDL, was on Newsnight, and at the end of his interview with Jeremy Paxman, he said, "It is only a matter of time before something like what happened in Norway is going to happen here in relation to Muslims if Islam isn't dealt with as a problem." It is very frightening for Muslims en masse to watch things like this and to hear things like this and see nothing done about it, when—

Q156 Chair: What would you like to see being done?

Michael Ellis: Well, the Prevent strategy does note the danger from the far right, doesn't it? The Prevent strategy does note the danger posed by the far right, doesn't it?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Yes, of course, it does deal with it. Like I said, we have to see how the revised strategy is implemented. The key is implementation and how it is received by the community. I think the old Prevent strategy, even though in principle it was supposed to deal with right wing ideas, it didn't, because of this lack of faith that it will be actualised. It was like they were just ideas, they won't be actualised. Not only was Tommy Robinson indirectly threatening something similar happening but, as we all know, there were links established between the far right in this country and what happened in Norway with Anders Behring Breivik.

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

Q157 Chair: What would you have liked to have seen done to Mr Robinson?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I think there is a definite issue with the law at present when it comes to incitement to religious hatred or religious violence, and just to look at the EDL or to look at the DMP—

Q158 Chair: So you would like to see the law take its course, be enforced?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Yes. I think if the discrimination, the incitement to religious hatred or religious violence should be given a similar status to incitement to racial hatred or religious—

Q159 Alun Michael: Is the question one of consistent enforcement then?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Yes, of course. I think it is consistent enforcement, but also I think there is a lack of acknowledgement or realisation of the intersectionality of religion and race. We give race such a high status, but the thing is if you look at what is happening to Muslims when it comes to Islamophobia and different statements made in public, the essence is the same, that people who are different, for whatever reason, are having bigoted statements and violent statements directed at them.

Q160 Mr Clappison: I think I once a long time ago moved an amendment to put religious incitement or religious aggravation on the same base as racial aggravation, and I am sure you are right in what you say about the danger presented by the far right. We have to be vigilant, because it might only be a very small number, even just one person, who poses a problem. But do you as representatives of the community, draw assurance from the fact that the far right, with its political parties, gets such a very small amount of votes in this country and is so generally despised? That must be something that gives you some assurance.

Akeela Ahmed: I think that is reassuring, but I think the media does play a part in providing a platform for speakers like Tommy Robinson and Anjem Choudary. The wider community may not be aware that the far right are only receiving a small number of votes or only have a small support base, because what they see in the media is something that is a lot louder and kind of exacerbated and giving it a really big platform.

Alyas Karmani: Just to reinforce that point. The perception, however, is not the case. The perception is that the far right is bigger than it is, that the mainstream in British society holds similar views or has sympathy for those particular views. I live in Bradford, in inner-city Bradford, and again, our young people are profoundly unworldly and don't have interaction. A young person from a Pakistani background will grow up and not really have any meaningful friendship with a white counterpart, and likewise in the outer rim. So for those reasons, there isn't the opportunity to have interaction, exchange and challenge.

Q161 Mr Clappison: How would you go about tackling that sense of separation, which has been

identified in a number of places in the United Kingdom? What more could be done?

Alyas Karmani: Well, I think good quality youth work. I was in Sheffield yesterday with a project, Football Unites Racism Divides, where they are exactly doing that. They are bringing white communities and minority ethnic communities together through the medium of sport. But with cuts and youth work being decimated across the country, then one of the most important vehicles for doing that, which is the education system and the youth services system, the opportunities are less and less then.

Q162 Steve McCabe: You raised this point earlier about young people having a rather narrow experience, and you mentioned Bradford. Do you think this holds for young Muslims across Britain, or is it much stronger in certain parts of the country than in other parts?

Alyas Karmani: I think it is across Britain, like in South London, in Brixton, where STREET is based, because I work in between West Yorkshire and London. Likewise, you have estates where you have postcode issues, where you have that same kind of narrow-minded and insular approach. So no, I think it is across cities. Some are obviously better than others. I think where we have more mixed areas, then generally that creates natural interaction opportunities, but I would say in working class, deprived areas generally there tends to be more localisation.

Q163 Steve McCabe: The white working class youth might well be the mirror image of that?

Alyas Karmani: Absolutely. I think it is the same reality.

Akeela Ahmed: Sorry, I just want to add that I would say education is linked to that. It depends on how educated and how equipped young people are. Yes, you do get areas where there are high rates of social deprivation and isolation, but you have individuals who are very educated and had the right sort of cultural upbringing.

Q164 Nicola Blackwood: I know that your organisation, STREET, carries out a number of activities related to training, to education, employment. I just wondered to what extent you carry those out as an end in themselves, or to what extent you see those as part of efforts to discourage young people to end up radicalised? Do you separate that out in your mind? Do you see yourselves as an organisation specifically to deliver those kinds of services?

Alyas Karmani: No, I think we go further. We use anything in our toolkit that enables us to connect and hook up with young people. For example, we're doing a lot of work around sexual violence at the moment, the reason being that our sexual relationship education workshops were the most popular with young people, and it provided a safe space environment for them to talk about issues where they didn't have any other opportunity. That is a hook for us. In the same way, sport, football, boxing is a hook for us to engage young people, to connect with them, build

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

relationships with them and engage them in more complex and challenging issues.

Q165 Nicola Blackwood: But would you consider your primary purpose to discourage the recruitment of young people into violent extremist causes?

Alyas Karmani: I think that has been a core strand of what we do, but I think fundamentally we see ourselves as channelling people into positive citizenship and into the role of being good Muslims in British society.

Q166 Nicola Blackwood: This is to everybody. Do you think that there is a link between unemployment, social exclusion and violent extremism? Have you noticed this in your research, in your incoming calls?

Akeela Ahmed: Yes, I would say that there are many different factors that make an individual vulnerable or predisposes them to sympathising with violent extremism ideology. Social exclusion, unemployment, lack of education, living in overcrowded housing, all of these things are drivers for mental health issues, and I think they can be drivers for somebody who goes towards violent extremism ideology. You can't discount the multiplicity of factors out there, including mental health, and you have to deal with all of them.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I would just like to add a caveat to all this discussion. We can talk about these social factors, unemployability, mental health, let's call them vulnerable people or aspects that make people vulnerable, but we are dealing with the issue of susceptibility to violent extremism, and these other elements of vulnerability could lead to any sort of criminality. When people are in this situation, they could do anything. A mental person is susceptible to anyone, not just someone who is trying to get him to do something that is an act of violent extremism. It is important to focus on what makes the one who carries out acts of violent extremism unique from other people. Of course these are facilitating factors. You have to focus on the two elements that we highlight in our written submission, which, first of all, is the grievance they feel about their identity or their religion being under siege, and the second is the actual ideology or the preachers or the people who espouse the ideology, which legitimises the targeting of innocent civilians.

Akeela Ahmed: Could I add to that that if you focus too narrowly, you will always be dealing with the symptoms rather than the root causes from a psychological perspective? We deal with the root causes of issues and then with the symptoms that are presented to us. You need both approaches, basically, for a holistic approach to deal with violent extremism.

Q167 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to ask a quick supplementary back to the far right before I ask my main question. It is something that Ms Ahmed said, and I am trying to understand what you meant by it. You said that the community at large doesn't understand that the far right doesn't have a large political or electoral following. You are no different from other communities, are you, Hindu or Chinese or any other community, and is that not a case of the community really having to inform itself, like any

other community, be they white Christians or whoever? Is that not the case?

Akeela Ahmed: I think there is an element of that. I think the community does need to inform itself. I think having the capacity to do that is also lacking somewhat among Muslim communities. I think also it is without doubt that the Muslim communities are concentrated upon in the media more than other communities, than the Hindu community or the Chinese community, and they are concentrated upon it in a negative way. Again, it leads back to what my colleague said: that the perception is bigger, that it is perceived as being a lot bigger than what it is among the community, because of that focus on the Muslim community. There are two things. There is one about being able to equip themselves with the right knowledge and the tools to understand what is going on politically and have those critical thinking tools, and then there is also how it is just spoken about so much more in the media and in political debates and what have you, so people think, "Maybe this is bigger than we are told it is."

Q168 Lorraine Fullbrook: My constituency is in the north-west, and we take the view very much that the more you talk about them the more oxygen you give to these people, so we generally don't talk about them.

Akeela Ahmed: I think things need to be spoken about, but in the right way, without inflaming things. It needs to be spoken about in the right way, the appropriate way, that doesn't make something out to be bigger than what it is and deals with it appropriately.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: If I may just add. I was going to answer this to your question earlier, but you have asked a similar question. To the question, "Does it reassure the Muslim community that the far right doesn't have that much political support?" the answer is not at all. It doesn't matter if they don't have widespread political support, and I think it is well known—at least in the circles that I move in—that they don't have political support. The problem is that a very small number of people can cause a lot of damage, and that is what the EDL do, and it is in their actions that they cause damage, going on rampages through towns and different things that they do. The second thing—

Q169 Lorraine Fullbrook: But I think that is true of any community, though. There are always individuals who can cause damage.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Exactly, but the fear is not from them getting political support, the fear is from what they are able to do in groups of people in certain areas at certain times, through the marches and so on. The other element is that it might be small but it appears to be, to all of us, increasing. The third point is that the activities of the EDL and other groups in the media have lifted the lid on political correctness. It may be that individuals and the media and different people already had these views, but before there was some sort of taboo about it. When you see groups operating on such an extreme agenda, then it doesn't seem such a big deal to say something against

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

Muslims. People can say, which “They can do it, well, it can’t be that big a deal.”

Chair: Can I just bring in Mr Clappison, because he just wanted to come back on something?

Q170 Mr Clappison: I hope I made it sufficiently clear I am in agreement with what you said, because these people can be very dangerous, even though there is a small number of them. It might only just be one person, and they can do a tremendous amount of damage, as we have seen. But my point was really about the wider society, the rest of society isn’t like that, has shown that it is not like that, and there isn’t a sense that the Muslim community is under siege from the wider society, although there is a problem with these dangerous extreme individuals in small groups.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: On that point, there is a fear that it is increasing, it is increasing exponentially perhaps, because of the incidents that happen to people on a daily basis. That is the fear, but in general when Muslims look at this, in general, yes, there is acknowledgement of the fact that things may be deteriorating at a small pace here, but if you compare it to other places in Europe, and even the US, then we are probably the best off. It is clearly the case that the wider society doesn’t hold these views.

Q171 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to move on to another subject, if I may. I would like to ask each of you how serious you think the threat is from the internet, mosques, prisons, universities, in providing a forum for radicalisation.

Chair: It is a big question, but a brief answer would be appreciated.

Alyas Karmani: I think the mosques are the least risk. I think sometimes there is a focus on the mosque. I think mosques are completely disconnected from young at risk Muslims. I would say internet is certainly the most, and prison obviously at the moment, most of the prisons—

Q172 Chair: Sorry, what is your hierarchy?

Alyas Karmani: My hierarchy, internet most, then prisons, then university—prison and university similar—and mosques least. I don’t think mosques even come on the radar.

Q173 Chair: And the madrassas, the schools?

Alyas Karmani: Even with madrassas, I think most madrassas are really Koranic schools. I think the biggest risk there is just poor teaching. Most people abandoned the madrassa and the teachings of a madrassa because, again, they don’t connect to the world.

Q174 Chair: Can I hold it there for one second and put Mrs Fullbrook’s question to both of you? Do you agree with the list of four in that order, internet, prisons, universities, mosques?

Akeela Ahmed: Yes.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: No.

Chair: No? What is your list?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I would agree with internet at the top and then I would put prisons and then I

would have mosques and universities as the least risk, but I would add for mosques and universities we have to be very careful because if you place those high up on the list then you are going to add to the resentment, and you might add to the radicalisation process, especially with universities. For mosques, as we made clear in our submission, a mosque is not only the least likely because of the devout religiosity of the place, not only is it the least likely for radicalisation to occur, but there is also the fear they have of being watched and how they are performing.

Q175 Chair: Before Mrs Fullbrook comes back, Ms Ahmed, do you agree with that list, or do you have a different list?

Akeela Ahmed: I would agree with the list, but I would obviously give a caveat that you have to take each institution on a case-by-case basis.

Q176 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would just like to be clear, this isn’t our, as in the Committee’s, list. It was me asking you, are you, as a community, fearful of threats from any of these entities, the internet, universities, mosques and so on, and you said that we need to be careful about lists. This isn’t our list; it was asking you what your categories would be. You may have other categories that are more important to you than the ones I have suggested, and that is what we are trying to find out.

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: In the formulation of policy and when it comes to the implementation of Prevent itself, to what extent do we focus on mosques and universities? It could be counterproductive if we are focusing our energies in the place that is the least likely.

Q177 Lorraine Fullbrook: Okay, so you would discount mosques and universities, but internet and prisons would be the same?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I wouldn’t discount them. I would say I wouldn’t prioritise them as much.

Q178 Lorraine Fullbrook: Are there any other entities or organisations or institutions that you would put on a list that would make you fearful of a threat to radicalise young people?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: I think the internet is the only place where there is space to operate.

Q179 Lorraine Fullbrook: There are not other institutions you would like to add?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: If it operates anywhere else, it has to operate undercover, but on the internet—

Q180 Chair: Would you favour the blocking of some sites by Government?

Murtaza Hassan Shaikh: Yes, but the criteria for blocking them has to be clear. Yes, definitely there should be censorship of the internet. If you can proscribe groups why would you allow their websites to exist?

Q181 Lorraine Fullbrook: Mr Karmani, can I ask you the same question? Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven’t talked about?

18 October 2011 Akeela Ahmed, Alyas Karmani and Murtaza Hassan Shaikh

Alyas Karmani: Yes. Certainly I think in the urban context, gangs are another critical group. You have significant numbers of converts in gangs and the Dar al-Harb ideology is obviously prevalent within those kind of groups. So certainly we have identified that, not just in London, but across the UK as well.

If you are thinking about banning the internet, you have just got to provide a counter-narrative. That is what we do at STREET, so what we do is we identify their narrative and then you have to put an equally effective counter-narrative, because if you ban one site, 10 others emerge, and the sophistication of various ideologues in terms of promoting on the internet and through social media is highly proficient. I saw one recent link of an Awlaki video where there were about 50 or 60 download sites—okay, it is off YouTube, but about 50 or 60, so censoring or controlling the internet is very difficult. You have to provide a counter-narrative, and one of the ways we have tried to do that is to set up a counter-narrative hub that proactively identifies those and provides a counter-narrative when one emerges. We have been doing that with a whole range of Awlaki videos as well as other ideologues.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you. It is interesting that you have put gangs in, if you like, the list that you would be fearful of radicalisation.

Chair: Thank you. This is the start of our journey. We have had one session; this is the second session.

You have given us very clear and very eloquent testimony. The question for the Committee over the next few weeks is why do mild mannered people, for example in a place like Leeds, who work in the mainstream, strap bombs to themselves, end up in Luton, then in central London and blow up British citizens, some of whom are Muslims? I think that is the journey that we want to take, and we want to find out what the causes are. We have a conference in Leicester on 13 December, where we are exploring the issues of universities and other institutions, but if you think of anything else that is going to be helpful to this Committee, and we like thinking outside the box, please write to us. Please come to the conference in Leicester, but also please write to us with your ideas.

We want to get to the bottom of this issue, and the Committee is keen to have a thorough analysis of what is going on, and at the same time, we want to engage with the communities. I represent 10,000 Muslims in my constituency. I have 37 mosques in Leicester East, and I can't go to every one of them, so through yourselves and the networks you have, please tell them of the Committee's work. We want to be fair and open and transparent and we want to produce a report that people can read that is going to be of value to the country. Thank you all very much for coming today.

Tuesday 1 November 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Mr James Clappison
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook

Steve McCabe
Alun Michael
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Matthew Goodwin, University of Nottingham, and Mike Whine, Community Security Trust, gave evidence.

Q182 Chair: This is the fourth session of the Committee's inquiry into the roots of radicalism. Could I refer all those present to the Register of Members' Interests so the interests of all members of this Committee are noted.

Good morning, Mr Whine and Dr Goodwin. Can I start with a question to both of you about the extent of far right extremism. Do you think it is on the increase?

Dr Goodwin: Thank you, Mr Chairman, thank you to the Committee for inviting me along. I think when we talk about far right extremism we need to acknowledge that there are quite different types. At broad level we can identify three types. We can talk about the organised far right political parties, for example the British National party. They contest elections; they are registered with the Electoral Commission. We can talk about a second type of non-electoral forms of mobilisation such as the English Defence League, which does not contest elections. Then we can talk about the ultra far right, which is more prone to violence; groups, for example, like the Aryan Strike Force that do not contest elections, have very small memberships and pursue direct action tactics.

When you look collectively at this movement, then we have seen a growth in membership particularly over the last 10 years—parties like the BNP recruiting approximately 12,000 to 14,000 members, the second and third types having markedly smaller memberships. So we have certainly seen a growth in membership. We have also seen a growth in terms of public support at elections, so when seen as a whole I think this movement is becoming far more significant in British politics, but it is also becoming far more diversified. Ten years ago the majority of far right groups focused explicitly on elections. Today we now have a varied far right with groups actively avoiding elections and pursuing more confrontational and provocative tactics. I think that is something as well to be noted.

Q183 Chair: Do you think that there is an organised threat from the far right or are these individuals acting alone?

Mike Whine: Can I just add a comment to what Dr Goodwin said, which is that there is a shift away from formally constituted organisations like the National Front or the BNP to social networks—those that use cyberspace to organise. So that is another aspect to be considered. There is certainly a shift towards violence

that is only coming from a small number of people, but it is a very severe threat and it is not just in the UK. It is Europe-wide and European police forces and their security services are reporting on this on an annual basis. So the threat is coming from organisations and also from individuals, who may not be connected to organisations in a formal sense.

Q184 Chair: Is this a terrorist threat?

Mike Whine: Yes, there is indeed a terrorist threat. As you may have read in the latest Prevent report, Britain currently holds 17 far right activists in prison for terrorist offences, and in some of those cases, the plots—of course they were all foiled—were very serious. In one case the chap was preparing a ricin bomb, which is advanced technology. In another case, the chap who was convicted had access to an enormous, in fact one of the largest, collections of firearms and explosives ever found. One should not belittle the far right's capacity to engage in really serious terrorism and, if you look within Europe generally, then there have been even more serious cases. You may want to talk about Breivik later on.

Chair: Yes, we will be coming on to that.

Mike Whine: In 2005 there was a plot to blow up the Swedish Parliament and kill Swedish youth, which was foiled by the police. Another plot in Munich would have decapitated the German Government.

Q185 Michael Ellis: Good morning, Mr Whine and Dr Goodwin. Further to those answers, do you feel that far right extremism should be treated as a terrorist matter or do you feel that it could be treated as a criminal matter—a public order type situation—and do you think that distinction makes any difference when one is discussing preventative strategies?

Dr Goodwin: I think I would go back to my first point that within this very broad, diverse movement there are very different types. Terrorist activity is terrorist activity, and we could not consider an organisation like the British National party or an organisation like the English Defence League necessarily terrorist organisations, even though individuals who have been associated with both of those movements have been imprisoned and associated with violence. So I think we need to take account of the varied nature of this movement, but also the fact that these different types of far right extremism that we now have in Britain are pursuing very different strategies.

1 November 2011 Dr Matthew Goodwin and Mike Whine

The EDL at the moment is primarily seen as a public order issue, primarily because of its march and grow strategy. What is less studied at the moment, I think, is the political challenge that the English Defence League is attempting to mobilise; that it is mobilising support on anti-Islam, anti-Muslim platforms. By simply branding, in this case the EDL, as a public order issue, it might be that we are missing the political dynamic to this. At the moment I don't feel that we are getting to grips with the grievances on which the EDL explicitly are mobilising. The BNP, on the other hand, is a formal political party that contests elections and is losing support, both in elections and among its own members, and can really only be treated as an elected party.

Q186 Michael Ellis: So do you think the scale of the threat is sufficient from far right extremism to justify a special radicalisation strategy, a specific strategy?

Mike Whine: The issues that they are complaining about are not necessarily the same as those that concern other extremist groups, so they have to be treated each as a separate case, I think. The EDL is a public order issue at the moment. Electoral support for the BNP and the National Front has declined enormously in the last couple of years. But the threat of terrorism is something that has to be treated as a terrorist threat and therefore policing has to be proportionate and focused on those different types of threat. So to characterise it all as a terror threat or a public order threat I think is not necessarily accurate.

Dr Goodwin: If I could just quickly come in there. The issue, particularly over the last 10 years, is that we have focused greatly on Al-Qaeda or AQ-inspired terrorism and the Prevent agenda, and attempts to counter radicalisation have focused mainly on Muslim communities and this openly violent form of extremism. I think that has left a noticeable gap and something that needs to be addressed far more sufficiently than it is at present, the simple reason being that we have seen, not only in Norway but also in the cases that Mike has just mentioned, the potential for violence within the far right. I think even though far right parties and movements like the EDL are not overtly violent in their ambitions to the same extent that AQ-inspired groups are, I would make a case that this movement contains the potential for violence. It gives its followers a specific set of narratives that under certain conditions validate the use of violence.

Mike Whine: If I can just add, I think you could see the far right as, if you like, a recruitment pool from which terrorism might emerge in much the same way that extremist Islamist groups provide that reservoir and provide the conveyor belt process that may lead to terrorism if somebody is not diverted in one way or another.

Q187 Steve McCabe: Dr Goodwin, you have described supporters of the far right as being largely less educated, working class men living in the north and Midlands towns. Do far right extremists share the same characteristics as those people you have described as supporters of far right political groups?

Dr Goodwin: What we have done over the last five years at the universities of Manchester and Nottingham is run a series of surveys of far right voters, for example, people who vote for the British National party or the National Front. You have picked up on some of the key findings, which include the ageing base of support for these traditional far right parties. The base of support for the BNP, for example, is much older than the base of support for the National Front in the 1970s. However those traditional parties are quite different from what we might loosely term the new far right movement, with the English Defence League. We now know that that is drawing on a very young, predominantly working class demographic, which would suggest that it has more potential over the longer term than the British National party, which is struggling to recruit support.

However, when you look across those supporters, they are united through a heavy preoccupation with immigration, profound levels of concern over the effects of immigration on British society, high levels of dissatisfaction with all of the mainstream parties and anxiety over the role of Islam and British Muslims in wider society. So there are a set of motivations that unite those supporters even if their demographics are quite different.

In terms of far right extremists—the guys on the real ultra end of the spectrum—not enough systematic, longitudinal research has been done to paint an accurate picture of who they are, how they come to be radicalised, to what extent those pathways compare to radicalisation into AQ-inspired groups, and to what extent their social profile is similar to those who become recruited into AQ groups. There simply is not enough research in that area, either in Britain or elsewhere in Europe.

Q188 Steve McCabe: Would that be the same in terms of trying to understand what motivates these people? Is there insufficient research to know the motivation? Some of the interests are the same, as you have said, but the motivations of extremist groups may be different from far right, quasi political groups. Is that fair?

Dr Goodwin: Yes. I would warn against attempting to create a model or explanation that encompasses both AQ-inspired terrorism and far right extremism. I would warn against that for the simple reason that comparing members of two very different organisations who seem to have recruited quite different types of supporters, in terms of their demographics and attitudes, would lead us up an unproductive path.

Q189 Alun Michael: You referred a moment ago to unaddressed grievances in the radicalisation programme. That is something that has been referred to in relation to Islam-related terrorism and you referred to it in terms of right-wing radicalisation. Could you explain that a little further?

Dr Goodwin: In terms of the unresolved grievances?

Alun Michael: Yes.

Dr Goodwin: In terms of the supporters that we have looked at, at least, they are primarily concerned about immigration, rising ethnic and cultural diversity in

1 November 2011 Dr Matthew Goodwin and Mike Whine

British society and in particular the role of Islam and the presence of Muslims in British society. Clearly, a lot of legislative action has been taken on those issues and a lot of work has been done in Westminster on those issues. I think the problem is that the vast majority of far right supporters are so dissatisfied with mainstream parties, and so distrustful of the political system generally that they either refuse to believe anything is being done or they simply take the view that what is being done is insufficient.

The reason why that is potentially significant over the longer term is that, when we look through the accounts of individuals like Anders Breivik, for example, or when we interview far-right extremists, having done so over the course of about five years, you get a sense from a lot of these supporters that when they perceive that mainstream parties are not doing enough on these specific issues they start to search for alternative actions and strategies. In Breivik's case it was a sense that the radical right wing Norwegian Progress party was not making sufficient progress on immigration and the presence of Islam in Norwegian society. Also in the British case we can similarly see very high levels of dissatisfaction among far right supporters. So it is not the case that these grievances are unresolved. It is also a sense that they just don't have enough faith in extreme politicians and parties.

Q190 Alun Michael: I am sorry, perhaps I was not clear enough. I thought you were referring to grievances. There are three separate things, aren't there? There are grievances that may relate to something genuine—poverty, social exclusion, for instance. There is what I would describe as opinion not shared, if the majority view in the country does not share the opinion. The third thing is ideology. Could you separate out the extent to which each of those is important in the categories that you refer to?

Dr Goodwin: Sure, yes. Mike wants to come in as well. It is very difficult because I would also add into that mix perceived grievances, that the supporters of the far right may not necessarily—

Alun Michael: I thought that came into the second category, an opinion that is not shared.

Dr Goodwin: Right. It is not a typology that is familiar to me. It is not something that I would like to try and pigeonhole some of my research into, but the thing I would focus on is that, for supporters of the far right, it is not only direct grievances that are motivating their commitment to this movement, it is also perceived grievances. They might not be shared by sections of the mainstream, if we want to call it the mainstream, but these perceived grievances, particularly around the perceived threat from immigration and the perceived threat from Islam, are consistently emerging as the most powerful predictors of who supports this movement.

Q191 Alun Michael: Yes, I am sorry, but what I am trying to get at is that, if somebody is poor or unemployed or whatever there are specific measurements that can indicate whether there is a problem. If there is a perception of things, which might not be shared by wider—it is not pigeonholing,

it is trying to get to some sort of definition of what you are saying. Those are both different things to ideology, aren't they?

Mike Whine: They are, but I am not sure that the factors you mentioned such as poverty are really important within these two sets—far right extremism and—

Q192 Alun Michael: If I may, I was picking up the word "grievance" that was used by both of you and trying to ask what was behind that.

Mike Whine: Well, certainly both sets promote a grievance strand very strongly and, as you have heard, the grievance within the far right, and particularly among these populist, extremist parties like the EDL, is that Government is failing by allowing mass immigration and so on. That is a different sort of grievance from that promoted by Islamists and by Jihadi terrorists, which is that Muslims are oppressed, that the West or Christians or Jews are out to defeat Islam. In this way they oblige and legitimise violence, but the grievance strand is really quite strong there and possibly even stronger. I would suggest, although it is just a feeling rather than having direct evidence, that it is possibly even a stronger element within their radicalisation than it is within the far right.

Q193 Nicola Blackwood: You mentioned, Dr Goodwin, that there has not been sufficient research to identify exactly who is being radicalised within the far right. Mr Whine, you recognise that perhaps there is a move towards social media as a location for recruitment. In our evidence so far there has been a suggestion that the prime fora for Islamist recruitment are the internet and prisons, with perhaps universities also being a location. So I wonder if you have found any specific fora that are locations for radicalisation in the far right.

Mike Whine: Facebook is one, but there are any number of far right sites that tend to be trans-European rather than just UK, associated with Blood & Honour and groups like that, through which events are organised and people exchange ideas. So, yes, there are specific ones pertaining to the far right just as there are to Jihadi terrorists.

Dr Goodwin: I would also add that the internet is absolutely key but not the complete story. Referring back to those different types of far right extremism, I would, again, warn against trying to describe this movement as a movement. It is very varied, but parties like the BNP would focus heavily around physical meetings. Groups like the English Defence League would focus heavily around demonstrations and rallies and also online activity, in particular where you have their supporters going only to a small number of websites for their news and information, so-called narrow casting, and not having any other sources of news and information to dilute that. But then with the ultra extreme right wing and the smaller groups that I mentioned, you might put more emphasis on, for example, music concerts, across Europe with the pan-European skinhead music scene. So, different fora across different movements.

1 November 2011 Dr Matthew Goodwin and Mike Whine

Q194 Nicola Blackwood: Are you of the view that attempts to control online radicalisation would be realistic, given the nature of the networks that are available?

Mike Whine: No, it is totally unrealistic. The internet is just too big. What you can do, of course, is monitor it and issue takedown notices if material is broadcast that contravenes legislation or incites hatred, and that happens and it happens regularly. It can be monitored and there are Government agencies and police units that deal with this so that they can use it for intelligence gathering. But to control it, no, the internet is just too big to control.

Q195 Nicola Blackwood: What about specific institutions? You have mentioned the music scene, but with our evidence on Islamism we have had specific comments about universities, mosques and prisons being particular locations for recruitment. Are there equivalent institutions for the far right?

Dr Goodwin: Again, there is not really enough research that has been done in Britain or elsewhere in Europe. Having done the vast majority of research on individual recruitment to the far right myself, I am painfully aware of the inadequacy of that literature and that evidence base.

It is also quite difficult to compare these two types of movements. On the university campus, for example, Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism among some sections, a small section of a particular population within a university, may be seen as more legitimate than far right extremism that, on the whole, particularly in its white supremacist forms, is heavily stigmatised in wider society and is not really seen as something that is necessarily latched on to a legitimate grievance.

I would warn against trying to find a location where radicalisation takes place on the far right. What I would focus on is the extent to which, unlike in previous years, far right organisations are more actively attempting to connect with citizens, whether online or offline. Compared to in the 1990s and 1980s, they are now far more active. They have a far more developed internet presence than many mainstream political parties. So that supply side is something that deserves greater attention.

Mike Whine: If I could add, there is lots of evidence that Schengen, which has allowed free movement within Europe, and the internet combined have facilitated co-operation and liaison across Europe by far right small extremist groups. They meet continuously and some of the rock concerts are a venue for them to meet and plan, and there are reports by European Security Services that talk very specifically about these venues being used to exchange ideas and to plan activity. So you have seen events organised by small far right groups in Europe that have transferred from one country to another because of that facility.

In terms of Islamist recruitment, then certainly the internet is very important, and universities are important. Prisons, well, certainly there is evidence of radicalisation in prisons, but when you move on to terrorism you have to have human intervention. There is perhaps one case, that of Roshanara Choudhry, someone who was completely radicalised on the

internet, and there doesn't appear to have been human intervention. In all other cases, somebody intervened to say, "You've been radicalised, now let's take you on and this is how you make a bomb" or "This is your target". Normally you need human intervention as well.

Q196 Nicola Blackwood: You are not aware of far right radicalisation within prisons specifically.

Mike Whine: I'm not aware of it, no.

Dr Goodwin: I wouldn't be surprised if it takes place but I wouldn't identify it as a major arena of radicalisation.

Q197 Nicola Blackwood: Is it just that we haven't been looking into it?

Dr Goodwin: Possibly.

Q198 Chair: Your league table would be No. 1, the internet; No. 2, events, rock concerts; No. 3—

Dr Goodwin: For the far right, yes.

Chair: Yes. No. 3 would be universities. Is that No. 3?

Dr Goodwin: Not the universities for the far right, no.

Mike Whine: It's meetings, international meetings.

Q199 Chair: If we were to go on to try and find some of these websites, what key words would you type in to find them?

Dr Goodwin: If I was doing some research on exploring links and things I would be looking at—would you like specific websites?

Chair: Yes.

Dr Goodwin: I would be looking at forums like Stormfront. I would be looking, if I was interested in the European scene, at Gates of Vienna. I might be looking at the Brussels Journal. These were both visited by Anders Breivik, for example. I might be looking at Four Freedoms.

Mike Whine: There was, a few weeks ago, an international far right rock concert to which people were going from all over Europe and that had a website. It was passed on to the police because it was thought that people from Britain might be going to that. Whether they did or not, I don't know, that is not my area. But certainly that was a website that advertised those and I can pass it on to the Committee in due course. I have not brought it with me.

Q200 Chair: Yes, that would be very helpful. But this sounds a little esoteric. You need to know somebody who knows that these websites exist, but if I was typing in a keyword and I had just started to get involved in this area, what would the words be?

Mike Whine: No, I think you wouldn't get very far. Some of these are passworded sites as well. So just googling rock concert would not get you very far.

Chair: Is not enough.

Mike Whine: As you heard, Stormfront and similar far right internet websites might provide an introduction, but often this goes on a much narrower basis, one-to-one or one-to-several passage of information.

1 November 2011 Dr Matthew Goodwin and Mike Whine

Q201 Lorraine Fullbrook: Can I ask, have you done any research into the gang culture in the far right recruitment process and how much that plays a part in it?

Mike Whine: Something that is common to both types of extremism and terrorism is what the American academic, Marc Sageman, called the “bunch of guys” paradigm, which is the socialisation process within a small group that can produce terrorism. In other words, a small group of people sort of egg each other on and it is not really gang culture, it is social interaction within a small arena.

Dr Goodwin: But those arenas can be incredibly varied. I can remember interviewing some of the most active supporters of the far right who were heavily involved in their residents’ association. This is by no means something that is anchored in youth gangs; perhaps more so maybe in the United States, where that is more of an issue, and particularly among sections of the militia right, where that perhaps is more at play. But in Britain of all the people I have interviewed over the years I have not met one who was open about being a member of a gang or made a reference to being a gang member.

Q202 Mr Winnick: Mass murders were carried out in Norway. There have been reports that far right extremists in Britain had links with the mass murderer. Can you give us any information whether such links existed?

Mike Whine: The links seem to have been mostly in Breivik’s head rather than in any other way. He was a Facebook friend of EDL, it is believed. He said he had come to Britain to an EDL demonstration, but there is no hard evidence.

Mr Winnick: He had come to Britain?

Mike Whine: Yes, but there is no hard evidence he actually did. Others may have it but I have not seen it. Breivik was shunned by Norwegian and Swedish far right groups because they thought the things he was saying were going too far. He was very much a one-off, a lone wolf, if you like.

Q203 Mr Winnick: Do you consider that there could be in other European countries, including our own, almost a repeat of extreme right wing elements like him?

Mike Whine: Absolutely, much more so. I mentioned earlier that Breivik’s case was a copycat of a plot in Sweden, where a small group of Nazis planned to bomb the Swedish Parliament and kill young people. Their plot was foiled by the Swedish police. A German plot to blow up the re-opening of the Munich synagogue, which was attended by Johannes Rau, the Federal President, and half the German Cabinet, would have decapitated the German Government. The European Security Services’ annual reports and the Europol annual report, which looks at terrorism, report all of these on an annual basis. There are any number of plots that are far more serious than we have seen in this country.

Q204 Mr Winnick: You have already referred to the 17 people in prison for far right activities, who clearly were a great danger to the country.

Q205 Dr Goodwin: If I could add just two quick points. Prior to Norway, both the London Metropolitan Police and also the Department for Homeland Security had warned of an increasingly violent turn within their respective far right cultures. If we go back to the Copeland bombings in London or if we think about Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma, the far right has consistently demonstrated an ability to enact mass violence. But one point I would like to add is the need to take more seriously the potential for a spiral of violence between different forms of extremism. What I mean by that is something that we have not seen since Northern Ireland, which is the potential for far right extremisms to enact violence or confrontation against, for example, an AQ-inspired group, to bomb a mosque or something of that nature and then for that action to be retaliated. It wouldn’t really take too long for a spiral of violence to emerge. Before Norway I think that would have been dismissed as alarmist and speculative, but having seen a noticeable shift in far right blogs over the last five years, a shift towards more confrontation, more provocation and the cases that Mike mentioned of individuals who have been arrested planning acts of terrorism, I think these all point towards the conclusion that the far right is becoming far more confrontational and willing to engage in violence.

Q206 Mr Winnick: Mr Whine, I wonder if I could ask you this question in light of your involvement over many years, including at present, with the Jewish community. When one passes synagogues and Jewish schools and the rest, it is quite obvious that security measures are taken—there are guards and the rest—which I wouldn’t have thought would have occurred from, say, 1945 to the 1960s or the early 1970s, though I could be wrong. Do you believe there is a particular danger to the Jewish community and from where?

Mike Whine: It is not me, it is Governments who know that there is a particular danger to Jewish communities and their institutions. I published a book recently on terrorism against Jewish communities around the world and we were able to find 427 cases of terrorist plots against Jewish communities, many of which had been foiled, but a lot of which had not been. The threat comes from different directions and—

Mr Winnick: That is what I mean, not just from one.

Mike Whine: It is not just from one. Probably the greatest threat is from the global Jihad movement, that is AQ and its followers and affiliates, and a number of plots have been foiled in Europe in the last 12 months by Al-Qaeda against synagogues, and also in America. That is the biggest threat, and they have bombed synagogues in Tunisia and in Morocco and carried out any number of successful terrorist attacks around the world against Jewish institutions. That is the first area of threat.

The second is from Iran and its surrogates, and again a number of successful terrorist attacks against synagogues and Jewish institutions by Hezbollah, several by Iran itself—by the Government, who have a history of carrying out acts of terrorism against their perceived enemies. The third is from the far right. In

1 November 2011 Dr Matthew Goodwin and Mike Whine

the 1960s and 1970s there were also attacks from the far left. One thinks of Action Directe in France and the fighting communist cells in Belgium. They attacked synagogues.

Q207 Steve McCabe: I wondered, if we go back to that for a second, in the case of attacks by Jihadists or Hezbollah, how much are those attacks really directed at the State of Israel and Jewish synagogues or whatever used as a proxy, whereas in the case of the far right it must be a different type of attack? Is that fair?

Mike Whine: No, it is not. Let me explain. In the minds of certainly the Islamist groups and Iran, there is no difference between Israel and its institutions and Jews and their institutions. There are any number of quotes I could give, which are published in this book, from leading Al-Qaeda ideologues where they talk specifically about attacking Jewish institutions and Jews. It is not for them an attack against Israel, it is an attack against Jews and their institutions.

The far right is much less subtle. It is against Jews or Muslims or, in the case of some recent cases of far right terrorism, it is against the State and the institutions of the State. But certainly the threat is very real from these different directions against Jewish communities and it is understood by Governments and that is why Governments encourage security against synagogues and indeed assist Jewish communities to organise that security.

Q208 Mr Clappison: The attacks can come out of the blue and they are indiscriminate against Jewish individuals, Jewish groups, Jewish communities.

Mike Whine: Indeed, and in fact I would add something else, which is that when there is tension in the Middle East, either between Israel and its neighbours or tension generally, you see the overspill against Jewish communities, and that is measurable. When, for example, Israel went into Gaza a couple of years ago there was a spike in anti-Semitic incidents in the UK.

Q209 Mr Clappison: Yes, and there was an attack as well, a few years ago now, against a Jewish community centre in Argentina. Is that not right?

Mike Whine: It was a devastating attack against the AMIA building in Buenos Aires, which killed 95 people. That came directly from the Iranian Government, but they used local surrogates.

Chair: Dr Goodwin, Mr Whine, thank you very much for coming to give evidence to us. Obviously our inquiry is ongoing. We have a major conference in Leicester on 13 December.

Mike Whine: We are aware, yes.

Chair: If you are able to come along and join us that would be wonderful, but also if you have other information that is going to be helpful to the Committee that we haven't raised today with you, please do let us have it and your books would be gratefully received. Thank you very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Sir Norman Bettison, ACPO Lead for Prevent Policing, and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright, ACPO National Prevent Coordinator, gave evidence.

Q210 Chair: Sir Norman and Mr Wright, first of all my apologies for keeping you waiting to give evidence. Can I start, Sir Norman, with the deep condolences of this Committee to the family of Mark Goodlad, and indeed to your police force, for the tragedy that occurred on 24 October. For this young police officer to die on the hard shoulder in Wakefield must have been a terrible tragedy and it shows the huge amount of work and sacrifice that our police officers do on a daily basis on behalf of the people of this country.

Sir Norman Bettison: I appreciate that. It shows the dangers, not just in dealing with criminality and terrorism but also in providing general support to the public and keeping them safe.

Chair: Indeed. Please pass on our condolences to his family.

Sir Norman Bettison: Thank you very much indeed.

Q211 Chair: There is probably no other policeman in the country who has as much experience on these matters as you have. I think that when you last spoke about the threat of Al-Qaeda you said that the big bad wolf was still Al-Qaeda but that the police were knocking over right wing extremists quite regularly. If you were to weigh up where the threat is coming from at the moment, what would the balance be?

Sir Norman Bettison: The truthful answer is that the threat can arise from either end of the spectrum. I will speak in shorthand about issues that the previous witnesses have much more experience than me to comment on, but it seems to me that the right wing terrorist—if I can focus on that person rather than the EDL affiliate or BNP supporter—still operates as a lone wolf and beneath the radar, to some extent, whereas the Al-Qaeda-inspired threat usually has, but does not exclusively have, some third-party intervention in terms of encouragement or a supply line of material or know-how. As I said, not exclusively because we remember Nicky Reilly and Andrew Ibrahim, who were pretty much self-starters. The reason why I talk about it in those terms is that to apportion the threat is a fool's errand because today or tomorrow it could be from either end of the spectrum and then that end of the spectrum, would seem to have some ascendancy. Actually the threat is there at both ends of the spectrum, but they are different in structural terms and in terms of their connectivity to a wider cause.

Q212 Chair: In February 2010 you said that the Government's plan to tackle violent extremism would take 20 years to bear fruit. I think your words were these, "I think it is a generation of treatment to prevent the infection spreading and I think that it will take us

1 November 2011 Sir Norman Bettison and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright

20 years". That is a very long time. Why is it going to take so long?

Sir Norman Bettison: I still believe that. I see it as not a threat from an organisation. At international conferences, there are other states under other jurisdictions who believe that the assassination of Osama bin Laden and al-Awlaki is the way of defeating the threat that we face. My belief is that the Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism has created an atmosphere. If I follow the sort of infection theme through, it has created a set of germs that spread and that morph into other things and infect the minds and the culture. What is required is not a new law enforcement effort to defeat those who represent the current threat but a sort of all-Government approach, including education, local authority, and youth outreach workers, to challenge the prevailing messages of hatred that might infect people for many more years to come.

What I was trying to do was call to arms a whole-Government approach to deal with someone who might be a terrorist 10 years from now by challenging views, challenging attitudes, challenging ideas at a school level. I have to say that is not a job for the police. What I am not proposing is that the police ought to go around policing ideology, but somebody ought to be challenging inappropriate attitudes and behaviour.

Q213 Chair: Three of the 7/7 London bombers came from West Yorkshire.

Sir Norman Bettison: All four were born there and three still lived there.

Q214 Chair: You obviously looked at the reports and you have considered what happened and presumably the mistakes that were made in not preventing them from doing what they were doing. Do you think that we now know what action to take in order to prevent such activity? Have we learnt the mistakes?

Sir Norman Bettison: I think we have learned good practice. That is not the same as could it ever happen again, could the person go beneath the radar or go unchallenged in the way that the four 7/7 bombers were. I think that could still happen, but we have learned good practice. Let me just take one of those, Hasib Hussain, an 18-year-old who blew up the number 30 bus that we all remember the graphic images of. There were questions about poverty and deprivation being at the root of radicalisation. He came from a very successful family. He was third generation, British born, his brothers were very successful in business. He was very integrated, played sport to a high standard with multi-race and multi-faith teams, he was a model pupil at his secondary school and had no previous convictions, so nothing really for the police to get a handle on—

Chair: But he had been writing in his exercise books that—

Sir Norman Bettison: I was just coming to that point. He'd been writing in his exercise books for a number of years about the glory of Al-Qaeda. What we have learned since that time is that if there is a challenge, if there is an intervention—and in a formal sense that is done through the work of the Channel scheme, but

intervention has informal manifestations as well as formal ones—if people are challenged, if the school, if parents, if other interveners are employed and go to work, the challenge can cause people to step back from the edge of extremism that might become violent extremism that might become terrorism.

Q215 Michael Ellis: Good afternoon, Sir Norman and Mr Wright. We have heard of some conflicting evidence about the impact of Prevent policing on relations between the police and the Muslim communities, so I would like to ask your view on the impact of policing on the relations between the police and Muslim communities.

Sir Norman Bettison: My view is it has been more positive than harmful. The person I would lean on to make that case in a more objective way than I could is Professor Martin Innes of Cardiff university, who was commissioned by the Government in 2010 to revisit a piece of work that he did immediately after the 7/7 bombings. He looked at the level of community engagement, the sense of belonging that Muslim communities felt and the impact that the 7/7 bombings had had on the relationship between police and communities and Government and communities. He returned to that work in 2010–2011 and I was just looking for one of the quotes from that. He said: "Compared to the first study, new research found that Prevent policing has matured and evolved in terms of processes and practices. A greater awareness of risks and vulnerabilities and increased capacity and capability to respond proactively, reactively to the risks, threats and vulnerabilities and the community reactions to Prevent policing are much more complex and much more positive than much media and political rhetoric would suggest."

Q216 Michael Ellis: So you are generally happy with the situation as far as the Prevent policing strategy is concerned?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes.

Q217 Michael Ellis: Thank you. Have you employed any lessons learned from British experience in Northern Ireland to inform Prevent policing strategies?

Sir Norman Bettison: We are working with our colleagues in PSNI on the development of the Prevent agenda because they have a great deal of experience of community engagement and community intervention. I will give one example of an informal link. Before I do that I ought to say, in direct answer to your question, that while we have compared notes neither side believes that there is much to learn about the nature and the manifestation of the problems that we face. They are different in nature.

Q218 Michael Ellis: Are you referring to the sectarianism?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes. What we did very locally is that when EDL were due to visit Bradford, which had the potential of being inflammatory and possibly leading to disorder, we had two lines of preparation. One was to prepare for the event and the consequences that might flow from it; the other was

1 November 2011 Sir Norman Bettison and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright

to prepare the community. We went to our colleagues in Northern Ireland to learn about the work that they have done in the marching season, in terms of working with the community and giving information and reassurance. We employed some of the tactics that we brought back from Northern Ireland. So there are specific opportunities, but generically they don't mesh.

Q219 Michael Ellis: Just briefly, there has been a decision to discontinue some funding, in light of the economic situation, of counter-terrorism intelligence officers from the Prevent budget. What do you have to say about that? Do you support the Government in that?

Sir Norman Bettison: What I have always said is that we will be successful in Prevent policing only when it is mainstreamed. Currently 258 specific posts are funded around the police forces of England and Wales, compared to 132,000, so it is not significant.

Michael Ellis: No.

Sir Norman Bettison: Counter-terrorism intelligence was a specific label that we gave to a type of work. Actually the label got in the way because it sounded as though counter-terrorism intelligence officers, who wore a uniform and worked in the community, were somehow spying. So we dropped the term and morphed and merged the activity. But does Prevent policing rely on those 258 funded posts? I don't think it does. It is a handy pump-priming, but we have to mainstream the business of prevention.

Chair: Thank you. Mr Wright, please feel free to chip in. I know you may feel that the questions are not being directed towards you but if you want to add anything please feel free to do so.

Q220 Mr Clappison: Do you have any contact with the EDL themselves about these marches? How do they respond to concerns that people naturally have about the inflammatory nature of their matches and the police time that is wasted as a result of them?

Sir Norman Bettison: That is their purpose. I believe their purpose is to be provocative. So, yes, we are in touch. It has absolutely no effect in terms of ameliorating their behaviour.

Q221 Alun Michael: On the Prevent element, you talked about mainstreaming and you said that the work—you have referred to Professor Innes' work in showing its effectiveness—needs to be mainstreamed. Can I just be clear, is it being mainstreamed?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes, it is.

Q222 Alun Michael: Are you satisfied that the police forces that are involved with this activity are well in place with that mainstreaming?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes, for my part. I am in the fourth largest police force in the country, but what goes on in my police force is replicated elsewhere. Prevent policing relies upon neighbourhood policing.

Q223 Alun Michael: So the work will continue, but perhaps the label does not?

Sir Norman Bettison: Exactly.

Alun Michael: Mr Wright was nodding at that point.

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: Yes, absolutely. The work that goes on in West Yorkshire is replicated across the whole of England and Wales. I personally visit neighbourhood policing teams throughout the country. They are briefed on some of the signs they ought to be looking for, and on who to speak to within communities to make sure we have communication, and we go out and check that that is the case. Having specific, designated officers does reiterate and reinvent the issue time and time again, because neighbourhood policing officers have a whole host of concerns on their day-to-day business so it is extremely important that they get up-to-date intelligence and they also get an up-to-date route to channel their concerns back into policing organisations.

Q224 Alun Michael: Going to a less clear title, you referred to the Channel programme. When I saw that initially I was not sure whether it referred to Kent or the Bristol Channel, but there we go. Do officers have the ability and the knowledge to be able to identify those at risk of radicalisation, and is that programme working satisfactorily in your view?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes, it is. It started off as a pilot programme, rolled out to 12 police forces in the country that are at particular risk. It is about to be rolled out in January 2012 to every police force in the country. There have been, in the last three years, over 1,500 referrals to the Channel programme. Over 50% of those have come from police officers, but a large minority of about 40% have come from other areas—schools, youth outreach, health and so on. It is a phenomenally successful scheme in that what we do is consider at a multi-agency level what the most appropriate interventions are, given the behaviour that has been exhibited, and what we will do is monitor to make sure that the interventions have been successful. Thus far not one of the 1,500 people that have been intervened with have been arrested for any terrorist-related offence.

Q225 Alun Michael: This identification is not easy. The two young men from Cardiff who recently ended up on the border between Kenya and Somalia, and thank God have been returned safely, were regarded by those who knew them best, as well as by the relevant agencies, as very unlikely candidates for this sort of activity. So identification is not easy, is it?

Sir Norman Bettison: No, it is not. There are some things such as travel, particularly if it is out of the ordinary to exotic parts of the world, that trigger a suspicion. Growing isolation from family and friends or a new-found group of friends who conduct their friendship in secret are all things that we talk about with Muslim communities around the country. We undertake some very successful tabletop exercises with communities in general, to get them to understand what to look for.

Q226 Alun Michael: You referred specifically there to Muslim groups and, in the information that we were given up to the end of 2010 the faith of 67% of the Channel referrals was recorded as Muslim, with 26% "not known" and 7% as "other". To what extent does Channel then work on faith-based interventions?

1 November 2011 Sir Norman Bettison and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: Can I just come back to your earlier point? I think it is an important distinction. Channel is designed for those people who are at risk of crossing over to violent extremism. You gave an example. We are talking about Prevent here. There is obviously a whole host of capability when people travel abroad and pose a much more serious risk to national security. I think that is an important point. It is based on risk, so we will have people referred to us through the multi-agency panel. They are all assessed on the risk they pose. Whether that is Islamic extremism or right wing extremism, they go through that risk assessment process.

Q227 Alun Michael: Yes, I am sorry, but I was asking to what extent you used faith-based interventions. For instance, I heard one of the imams in Cardiff very recently talk in a very clear way to a large number of people about how to make the distinction between the messages of Islam and the distortion of the messages of Islam. That sort of work is a part of the solution, is it not?

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: It is.

Alun Michael: That is why I was asking whether that is an explicit part of the strategy.

Sir Norman Bettison: It is an explicit example of referral routes that can be taken.

Q228 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to ask you both about the future of Prevent funding, or Prevent policing. The Government has said that the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism and the police must stop funding what is termed extremist organisations. Do you share the Government's concerns about this?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes, and we also share the Government policy. I quite understand that it is unacceptable to spend taxpayers' money on organisations or on people who have expressed views that seem to be at odds with the values of the general populace. However, I need to say that we will work sometimes—not funding—with people who might have unpalatable and unacceptable views, so long as they are not criminal views, as a credible route to connecting with younger people.

Q229 Lorraine Fullbrook: Who would be an example in that category?

Sir Norman Bettison: There are people who have been to the edge of terrorism and violent extremism. I think the Committee has already heard from the Quilliam organisation. Quilliam makes no secret of the fact that the people who lead that foundation are people who have gone through Hizb ut-Tahrir and other experiences to the edges of terrorism and have come back. People like that, and for Quilliam read a dozen other people who volunteer their services, who have made that journey and come back, are very powerful intermediaries. We use similar people in the drugs arena. We have even used similar people in child exploitation arenas. People who have made the journey but come back seem to have more to offer in stopping people making the journey in the first place. But we do accept the Government policy that there must be no funding of organisations that either are

extremist or have leaders who have expressed extremist views.

Q230 Lorraine Fullbrook: Mr Wright, would you share the Government's stand?

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: I totally support what Sir Norman has had to say, so I don't think there is anything additional to offer. We have conveyed that message to all forces throughout the country.

Q231 Mr Clappison: We have taken evidence already that the main fora for Islamic radicalisation are the internet and prisons; that a significant amount of radicalisation is taking place through universities, but less than on the internet and in prisons. Would you agree with that general broad-brush categorisation?

Sir Norman Bettison: I would agree that they are all relevant. I think it would be a mistake to see them as being the exclusive or predominant domains that you have to examine.

Q232 Mr Clappison: You mean there is some interaction between them and other sources as well?

Sir Norman Bettison: There are. The internet does seem to feature in most, if not all, of the route to radicalisation.

Q233 Mr Clappison: You have the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit, which has been making progress. Can you give us an idea of what further progress remains to be made in this area?

Sir Norman Bettison: It is a pebble thrown into the World Wide Web ocean, frankly. It consists of a dozen or so officers. It has only been in operation since 2010. There have been 2,025 referrals to date. About 10% of those, just shy of 200, have led to websites or web pages being taken down, almost exclusively voluntarily once we have pointed out that they have come pretty close to a section 58 or section 2 offence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. So it is successful.

Interestingly, you were talking about Breivik with the previous witnesses. We have looked at Breivik's manifesto. He is a Norwegian national, but a UK national putting that manifesto out in the UK, would come very close to crossing, probably cross, the threshold of committing a criminal offence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. So if that had been referred into us as part of the 2,025 we would have investigated who was posting these things and whether we could take it down so it was not an influence on others. I think that the referral site needs greater publicity and, of course, the greater the publicity about the site and what the unit can achieve, the more the capability and the capacity to respond.

Mr Clappison: To inform about what is going on. That is very helpful.

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: Can I just add a couple of points?

Mr Clappison: Yes, please do.

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: On your first point, I think it is unhelpful to try and prioritise all of those routes into radicalisation because they do vary over time and some are much more influential at certain times. In relation to the internet, as Sir Norman

1 November 2011 Sir Norman Bettison and Assistant Chief Constable John Wright

has said, we see the use of the internet in most of our investigations and it is an area that I have no doubt will feature more and more. You asked what more we can do. I think there is a need for greater collaboration with academia to learn best practice, and with internet companies because they tend to have the most up-to-date technology, and also for international co-operation. Most of these websites are hosted outside the UK jurisdiction so international co-operation is extremely important. So if there are areas this Committee would like to recommend, particularly with the internet taking it forward, they will be the three key priorities.

Q234 Mr Clappison: On a slightly different point, we also had a memorandum from the Federation of Student Islamic Societies talking about the effect of activities on campus and the effect of relationships with the police and the security services. What are your feelings on that? Do you think there is room for improvement in working with them?

Sir Norman Bettison: That concern does not match my personal experience. In Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield, we have uniformed officers who are permanently attached to each campus and they speak at Freshers' Fair; they have a broad remit. They talk about dangers generally—safeguarding—but they also build relationships with student unions and with the faculty to ensure that they are in a position to spot radical extremism in any guise, wherever it happens.

Q235 Mr Clappison: I am only putting to you the evidence we have received from them by way of a memorandum. That suggests to me perhaps they need to get in touch with you and have a discussion with you. Have you had an approach from them? It is the Federation of Student Islamic Societies.

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: Yes, we tend to go through the National Union of Students, but we have got very strong relationships with a lot of universities. It is not a universal picture throughout the country, but I could give you some very good examples. The

Universities of Derby and Northampton recently have been very engaged, and have taken products that we have produced to have discussions with students.

Q236 Mr Clappison: If a representative of a students' society came to you and wanted to have a discussion, you would be willing?

Sir Norman Bettison: Yes, absolutely.

Assistant Chief Constable Wright: Yes.

Q237 Chair: Before you go, Sir Norman, as you know there is a proposed new landscape of policing. I am not sure whether you have had the opportunity of seeing the Committee's last report into the new landscape when we suggested that counter-terrorism should be something that should be taken out of the Met's jurisdiction and placed in the new National Crime Agency. You talked about the need to make sure that these issues were mainstreamed. What is your view on that?

Sir Norman Bettison: My general view is that the current infrastructure and network that has been built since 2005 is very robust and very effective. It has the advantage of local ownership and a local focus, coupled with national co-ordination. So what I would like to say, dodging the question, is that whatever we come up with must enhance national co-ordination. I think that is the whole purpose behind the question raised by the Committee, but it also must keep, in my professional view, some local ownership. For example, at the moment the Met is significant in terms of the national co-ordination and yet there are four CTUs—counter-terrorism units—in key parts of the country that maintain in their own way, through their own tentacles, a connection with every individual police force and local authority district. I think that that is important and I worry about a shift to the Met or to the National Crime Agency damaging that.

Chair: Sir Norman, thank you very much. Mr Wright, thank you very much. I am sorry to have delayed you. We will no doubt be in touch with you again.

Tuesday 15 November 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Mr James Clappison
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert

Steve McCabe
Alun Michael
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Professor Geoff Petts, Universities UK, and Nabil Ahmed, President, Federation of Student Islamic Societies, gave evidence.

Q238 Chair: Mr Ahmed, Professor Petts, thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Committee today as part of the Committee's ongoing inquiry into the roots of radicalism. I ask all those present to refer to the Register of Members' Financial Interests, where the interests of Members are noted. I start with a general question about universities to both of you. Is it more likely that, if you go to university, you are radicalised as a result of that experience?

Professor Petts: Clearly that is a very key question. We acknowledge the threat, but we do not see evidence to support that, I am pleased to say. We are all very aware that, in an environment where we have a very large cohort of young, potentially vulnerable people, there is a threat, and we are very alert to that threat. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to those young people.

Nabil Ahmed: Good morning. I would like to thank the Committee for inviting us here today. As the national democratic body for Muslim students, we are on the ground. We feel, see and understand what is happening on the ground, but we have also engaged on this issue of campus extremism. We held a conference on campus extremism just a few months ago, which provided me with some of the views here today.

There are various myths surrounding the issue of campus extremism. There is far too much sensationalism and insufficient evidence or expertise in this wider discussion. I disagree with the notion that you put forth, Chairman. There is a notion that campuses are hotbeds of extremism, which is unfounded in the expertise and experience of the sector and the experience of students. There is a notion that, just because these people who have gone on to become terrorists went to university, in some way those two things are connected—the evidence suggests not. There was an independent inquiry, for example, into the case of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who went to UCL, which showed that he was not actually radicalised at university.

Q239 Chair: Do you agree with the Government that some extremist organisations target universities with the aim of recruiting students to support their cause? The Government is quite clear in its Prevent strategy that this is happening.

Professor Petts: Certainly. Again, I would argue that the evidence we have is largely circumstantial. We recognise a very strong responsibility to all these people. The university is a place where young people are exposed to a wide range of views and opinions, and as academics, we want to encourage them to be exposed to those views and to challenge those views.

Q240 Chair: Sure, but are groups going in there to try and expose them in a different direction?

Professor Petts: That is always a threat, but we are responsible institutions, and it is our responsibility to ensure that we have practical protocols in place to ensure that those groups that step across the line are not allowed into our institutions.

Q241 Chair: How do you find them? Do you have secret lecturers—secret policemen—who do that?

Professor Petts: I am from the university of Westminster, and maybe a little context here would be helpful. We are a metropolitan and cosmopolitan institution in the west end of London. We have students from 157 different countries. It is a diverse community. We are not a simple campus that we can put a brick wall around. We encourage people to engage with us, but we have put in place a very detailed set of protocols and procedures to ensure that the engagement with these big issues—and we want to encourage our students to engage with these issues, because we believe that the educational process will actually, to put it crudely, turn people off some of these ideas and certainly not encourage them to engage. We have a detailed process in place and we check all organisations that wish to become engaged with our students, and we draw a line.

To give you an example, I believe that we are one of the few universities in the country where, in the last year, we actually said no on one occasion, and we engaged with an organisation on another occasion to change the programme of events to ensure that our students were not exposed to radical extremism.

Q242 Chair: In the last year, the university of Westminster, with people from about 170 different countries, has only said no to one organisation.

Professor Petts: One organisation. With another organisation, we had a discussion and changed the programme to ensure we were confident about it.

15 November 2011 Professor Geoff Petts and Nabil Ahmed

Q243 Chair: Mr Ahmed, the Home Secretary has criticised your organisation for failing to challenge extremism sufficiently. Why have you not challenged it in the way that the Home Secretary thinks you should?

Nabil Ahmed: I disagree with the Home Secretary's comments here. I think her approach has bought into the sensationalism surrounding this discourse. Our organisation—the democratic national body of Muslim students—has continued to engage with the past three Universities Ministers, security experts, and universities on the issue of campus extremism. In fact, I pointed to the lack of research and evidence on this very issue. Together with the last Government, we initiated research into not only the welfare of Muslim students, but issues of extremism. Unfortunately, when this Government came into place, that research was cancelled.

Further to that, we held this conference on the issue of campus extremism, and the voice from the sector was different to what was coming from our Home Secretary. We very much believed, if I may say so, that universities are this very special place in society where status quo can be challenged and where ideas can be built, within the scope of the law. It is very important to protect that.

Q244 Chair: Do you have examples of extremist groups who go to universities and target them with the specific desire to recruit students to their cause, or do you have no examples of that?

Nabil Ahmed: What I am saying here is that we have to be specific about what we mean by extremist.

Q245 Chair: You be specific; what do you mean by extremist?

Nabil Ahmed: Absolutely. If we have people who are willing to cross the line of the law, whether it be issues relating to incitement to hatred, or incitement to violence, we have laws for that, and I will be the first to report those people to the police.

Q246 Chair: Have you come across evidence of that?

Nabil Ahmed: I have not actually.

Q247 Chair: You have come across no evidence that any organisation has gone to any university where your organisation exists to recruit people for an extremist cause.

Nabil Ahmed: Where these cases should happen, these are matters for the police. What is our role—

Q248 Chair: You have no evidence—we understand the police responsibility, but you have no evidence.

Nabil Ahmed: There is no evidence to suggest that there is recruitment, but that should not stop us—we shouldn't bury our heads in the sand. What we should be doing is saying, "How can ideas be challenged on campus in the first place?"

Chair: Yes, we understand.

Nabil Ahmed: If I may, Chairman, that is where I believe that Islamic societies—

Chair: We will come on to that, Mr Ahmed, but the answer to my question is that you can come here with

no evidence that any organisations are targeting students in order to recruit them to their cause.

Nabil Ahmed: To be specific in my answer, I have not come across organisations, in my experience, recruiting to people who are going to cross the line of the law, no.

Q249 Steve McCabe: Professor Petts, can you tell me what is happening with the "Freedom of speech on campus" proposals? You talked about your own university, but in terms of implementation across the country could you give us a brief update on the progress that has been made?

Professor Petts: Thank you very much for asking that question and thank you for, in doing so, acknowledging the important step that Universities UK has made in undertaking this project and producing this report because one of the points that arose from this was the genuine engagement across the country of the majority of institutions in this issue. From my perspective, if I may just divert for a moment, it is an issue around location. In London the biggest threat that I see is not on campus. It is the fact that small groups of students in London can get together very easily with small groups of students in other institutions in London because of the number of institutions in close proximity. Four students in Aberystwyth, with all respect to Aberystwyth, might be rather isolated. Four students in Westminster can talk to four students at SOAS or four students at King's College very, very easily. So there is that issue around the institutions within their region which is a big issue that is picked up by the Prevent strategy. That is a very positive move.

Specifically on freedom of speech, we are required under the Education Acts to engage in freedom of speech and that involves identifying where the boundaries to freedom of speech are in relation to all the other responsibilities that we have relating to harassment, public order offences and so on and so forth—providing a safe environment. What this report has done is refocus institutions' minds on how we deliver practically freedom of speech in an environment that is safe and fair to all people.

Q250 Chair: That is helpful. If you circulate copies we should be most grateful. Mr Ahmed, do you have anything to add?

Nabil Ahmed: I would add to that by reiterating from the outset, beyond this issue of extremism, the important role that universities hold in generating ideas and thoughts. The other extension of freedom of expression is that it enables radical ideas to be debated and challenged on campus as well. If I could extend to your earlier question Chairman, about beyond the remit of the law, I have debated with people on campus who use anti-Muslim rhetoric or anti whatever it may be rhetoric, but that is within the framework of the law. I think that is very important to preserve so that ideas can be challenged in the first place.

The second thing I would add is the recent comments by the Deputy Prime Minister and also the Home Secretary, who cancelled, for example, our event—an aspiration careers event with Muslim students; she refused to engage with Muslim students when we

15 November 2011 Professor Geoff Petts and Nabil Ahmed

invited her to our conference so that she could discuss these issues—and the cancellation of the research we initiated under the last Government. These examples show that, despite our continued engagement with security experts and with the Government, the Government's attitude is that they are not willing to engage with students on the ground but also not willing properly to research and evidence these very issues. That is a real concern for us.

Chair: Thank you that is very helpful.

Q251 Dr Huppert: We talked quite a bit about Islamist radicalisation but, as I think you touched on, that is not the only direction of radicalisation that can happen. I should be interested to know whether you would have similar comments about other radical groups—the far right or whatever we may be talking about—and also comments on some of the no platform ideas that have been floating around for some of those groups.

Professor Petts: I go back long enough to remember animal rights issues, which I guess is the one issue where most institutions have had most experience in the longer term. Clearly the whole issue about violent radicalisation is of particular concern and extends well beyond any particular issue there. But let us identify that violent radicalisation is different from the development of radical ideas by young people. Violent radicalisation is a particular threat to everybody and we are very aware of that. Freedom of speech really addresses the boundary between freedom of speech to debate an issue and incitement to commit. That really is the important development we have made in the university sector in addressing where that boundary is.

Nabil Ahmed: If I may add to that, I am actually very much in agreement with the professor's comments here in relation to radical discussions about animal rights or whatever it may be. They too exist on campus. I think there has been a disproportionate and unfair focus on Muslim students, and I think this attitude is actually quite unhelpful, especially when we consider that we want all members of society to be able to contribute properly, rather than pushing them and segregating them in the first place.

I want to say as well to this Committee that I think this discourse needs us to realise and remember when we were students. Students wake up in the morning thinking about their lectures and their careers. They do not wake up in the morning thinking, "I am going to go and stop some terrorists today," and other such things. This discourse needs some reality checks as to what is actually happening on the ground in relation to students.

Q252 Michael Ellis: Mr Ahmed, you have made some rather partisan points in relation to the Home Secretary, and you have alleged that the Government do not have any policies to deal with the issues, which I would clearly suggest is nonsense, but I want to ask you something specific. It is not just the Home Secretary whom you have been rather keen to criticise this morning. I am looking at an oversight report by Lord Carlile, who—I think I am right in saying—worked extensively with the previous Government on matters not unconnected to this. He states in the report

that "there is evidence too that The Federation of Student Islamic Societies [FOSIS] could and should do more to ensure that extremists will be no part of any platform with which it is associated, alongside demonstrating that it rejects extremism." Do you accept that the federation could and should do more? Are you doing anything to demonstrate that you do indeed reject extremism, or do you disagree with Lord Carlile as well?

Nabil Ahmed: Thank you for the question, actually. Our organisation has continued to denounce and condemn extremism. We are a 50-year-old democratic Muslim organisation and that is not an issue for us.

Q253 Michael Ellis: If you would just answer the question, please, because Lord Carlile does not agree with you. He says in his report that you have not, so can you please tell me your answer?

Nabil Ahmed: Absolutely. We disagree with the comments made here. Extremism is no part of our work. Our work is to do with charity, with engagement between different faiths, with leadership projects and so on and forth. I need to add to, if I may, to finish my answer, that I did not say that the Government have no policies on the issues, rather that the approach has to be based upon research and freedom of expression on campuses, so that ideas actually can be challenged. It must also be one that engages with Muslim groups on campus, which provide a definitive mainstream on campus through which ideas can actually be challenged. You asked about our work on this issue. I will reiterate it again for the benefit of the Committee and the public here.

Chair: Briefly.

Q254 Michael Ellis: Even more briefly than the Chairman expects. I would just like you to tell us how you demonstrate that you reject extremism, because that seems to be a fundamental concern of Lord Carlile. How do you reject extremism?

Nabil Ahmed: We have continued in our statements and in our work to condemn extremism. It seems like quite a loaded and unfair question to actually question that in the first place. Let me add to that. I hope that our work—whether it be a conference on tackling campus extremism, which included Government security experts and universities, whether it be our research on this issue, whether it be actually providing these definitive mainstreams on campus, through which extremism can be challenged, or whether it be our engagement with the Government on this issue—provides sufficient basis to say not only that we are doing enough, but also that the Government could learn from the higher education sector about how extremism can and should be dealt with.

Q255 Michael Ellis: So what advice do you give your members in relation to engaging with extremist organisations? Do you give any advice to your members if they come to you on that subject or even if they do not come to you?

Nabil Ahmed: I will give you an example. I am a member of this, so I can perhaps relate to this first hand. I have personally debated with people. Whether it be with anti-Muslim, quite fierce political views on

15 November 2011 Professor Geoff Petts and Nabil Ahmed

campus, our encouragement is one that both engages with people on campus and debates with real critical discussion the serious issues. That is our approach, as opposed to isolating groups.

Chair: Thank you, Mr Ahmed. That is very helpful indeed.

Q256 Mr Winnick: I have one or two questions on extremism. If someone comes along to a meeting and argues that according to their interpretation of Islam—I speak as a lifelong atheist, but we know all religions have extremists—stoning to death is perfectly justified for adultery and homosexuality, would you consider that extremist?

Nabil Ahmed: We had a speaker last week at one of our events. He noted the importance of respect for homosexuals. That is what our speakers are actually speaking about. That was just a few days ago. Radical ideas, again. Let us step away from the myths and into reality.

Q257 Mr Winnick: We can have respect for homosexuals, heterosexuals, all kinds of sexuals. The point is that if someone came along and said, unlike the speaker you mentioned, that those who engaged in adultery or homosexuality—to repeat myself—should be stoned to death in a perfect Islamic society, would you consider that to be extremist?

Nabil Ahmed: I consider that that is not really relevant to our work today and something that needs to be challenged and criticised.

Q258 Mr Winnick: Yes or no?

Chair: Mr Ahmed, please answer Mr Winnick's question.

Nabil Ahmed: Personally I consider that an extreme view relating to Britain today. It is an idea that needs to be discussed and challenged, as with anything. I ask the Committee again really to look at the questions it is asking, and turn to the reality of campuses. This sort of rhetoric and discussion does not actually engage and reflect the realities on the ground in campuses.

Q259 Mr Winnick: That is your opinion. One other question if I may. Say someone comes along—and they may have done—and says that the systematic extermination of millions of people due to their racial origin during the Second World War, the holocaust, is a lie, a hoax, a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world and so on, would you consider that to be extremist?

Nabil Ahmed: Yes, I consider that not only to be extreme but hurtful to my Jewish brothers and sisters. It was not only Jews who were targeted during the world wars; there were Muslims and many others. Let's remember that. Again, I ask the Committee to turn to the reality. Some of this rhetoric is distinctly unhelpful. This is why I ask the Committee to ensure—

Q260 Mr Winnick: What rhetoric? Those who argue of holocaust denial—you are saying that is unhelpful?

Nabil Ahmed: I think it is unhelpful and needs to be debated and challenged. Of course it does.

Chair: I can assure you the Committee is engaging with students on campuses. We have a conference at De Montfort University on 13 December. I hope you and colleagues will come and participate in that engagement. We are not just holding sessions in Westminster.

Q261 Mr Clappison: A quick question: can I clarify what you said a moment ago regarding gay people? If you heard somebody advocating extremist views of intolerance, including violence, against gay people, you would condemn that. Yes or no?

Nabil Ahmed: The law is very clear on these issues and we stick to the law, of course. Violence against homosexuals? It seems such an obvious question, that violence against homosexuals is something that should be condemned. Of course, that is against the law. Incitement to hatred and incitement to violence?

Chair: Order. We can only have one person asking the question and one person answering at a time.

Q262 Mr Clappison: You would condemn that yourself, yes or no?

Nabil Ahmed: Yes. Incitement to hatred or violence against any group is against the law. Of course, it should not only be condemned, but be a matter for referral to the police. It is such a simple thing.

Q263 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to ask Professor Petts about the Prevent strategy and how it should be put into action in the university sector. The National Union of Students has argued that there is insufficient guidance available to universities to enable them to work alongside Government to mitigate the threat of radicalisation. Would you agree with that? What specific information would be useful and in what form?

Professor Petts: Prevent is a very important strategy. We are particularly pleased with the revised version, which has removed what we felt was an unhelpful specific reference to Muslims in the original version. The current version of Prevent focuses on the regional agenda and looks at sharing best practice and guidance, and is very helpful. I know from a survey undertaken by Universities UK that the vast majority of institutions has signed up wholeheartedly to the Prevent strategy. It is also important because it encourages universities to engage with their communities, the police and the security authorities. That engagement is how we collectively understand and evaluate a threat. The Prevent agenda has re-catalysed universities' contributions to seeking practical solutions to these real problems.

Chair: Mr Ahmed, as briefly as you can.

Nabil Ahmed: As final comments, I would say the following: yes, the approach needs to move forward in taking the issue of campus extremism seriously, but based on evidence and firm research, which does not exist at the moment. I ask the Committee to consider that engagement with Muslim students on the ground should happen and should not be ignored or criticised, because that sends out a distinctly unhelpful message. Research projects should be considered, but you should also consider the great work, despite all the challenges, that Muslim students continue to do on the

15 November 2011 Professor Geoff Petts and Nabil Ahmed

ground, whether it is raising hundreds of thousands of pounds in charitable work, better careers and so much more. You are all very welcome to any of our events as first-hand witnesses.

Chair: We all have a constituency interest. We all have Muslims within our constituencies, including Muslim students, so we are all able to engage on this, especially Nicola Blackwood, who must have a lot of students in Oxford.

Q264 Nicola Blackwood: Professor Petts, it is good to hear Universities UK welcoming the role of universities in Prevent and in combating the threat of radicalisation at universities, but there was initially some concern about the practicalities of how this would work. Could you give the Committee some idea of how you think this might work in practice? In particular I wonder whether it would be tutors, pastoral staff or administrative staff. Who would be engaged in making sure that the oversight is working properly? What kind of guidance are you thinking about providing to universities on how to implement some of the proposals in Prevent?

Professor Petts: Recognising the time, I will give you a few quick bullet points.

The regional agenda is the key. Universities UK is made up of a large number of organisations of different size, shape and location, and they each require a different answer to your particular question. In my own institution, we have a team of four individuals who are responsible for ensuring that we have the right protocols in place, that staff are aware of those protocols and that students are aware of those protocols through the student charter, which explains to students their responsibilities to each other and the staff's responsibilities to them. It is very much a personal development process framed around clear guidelines through these protocols.

Q265 Dr Huppert: There were some comments on the improvements to the Prevent strategy. Would either of you want further changes to the Prevent strategy? If so, what exactly would be on your wish list?

Professor Petts: The current Prevent strategy is relatively new. We are engaging with all academic institutions, communities outside our institutions, the police and other authorities. There is a lot of learning to do, and Universities UK is ensuring that there are

appropriate forums for the universities to get together to learn from each other. We have a long way to go, but I have been very impressed by the commitment of my colleagues to this agenda.

Nabil Ahmed: I present the same thoughts to you as I did to the Home Office when I met them on this security issue.

My brief five-point plan is as follows. First, there needs to be serious evidence-based research on this issue—cancelling research will not help. Secondly, freedom of expression is crucial to challenging ideas on campus and it must be upheld. Thirdly, groups such as Islamic societies are, and have been shown to be, part of the solution to building a definitive mainstream on campus that challenges ideas. Fourthly, we have the law, which must be upheld and stuck to—that is our line. Finally, engage with Muslim students and all students, their societies and democratic representatives on the ground. We need to view Muslim students like all students, not through the lens of security. Dame Stella Rimington, the former head of MI5, said that there has been this politicisation of our national security discourse. I think that that has very much fed into this discourse here today. Let's view students as human beings who wake up in the morning, want to go to their lectures, want better careers and so forth, not through the lens of security, because I think that this all together will provide us with a more definitive, accurate and effective means of challenging extremism.

Chair: Thank you, Mr Ahmed. I assure you that we on this Committee do treat students as human beings. Some of us have children who are students and therefore we are well aware of what students have to go through. I also assure you that we are going to De Montfort university on 13 December. We would like to see as many universities and as many students there as possible to engage with the Committee in our report. We will not be publishing our report until we have got the widest possible view. If there is anything that you have missed out today that you feel will be helpful to the Committee, please write to the Committee and we will follow it up.

We are most grateful to both of you for coming here and for giving us your views on this very important issue. Thank you very much.

Nabil Ahmed: Thank you.

Professor Petts: Thank you.

Tuesday 22 November 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert

Steve McCabe
Alun Michael
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Michael Spurr**, Chief Executive Officer, **Richard Pickering**, Head of Security Group, and **Ahtsham Ali**, Muslim Adviser, National Offender Management Service, gave evidence.

Q266 Chair: Mr Pickering, Mr Spurr and Mr Ali, thank you very much for coming in to give evidence to us today. This is our ongoing inquiry into the roots of radicalism. As you may know, on Monday, members of the Committee will be trying to get into Belmarsh prison to see some of your people, and we look forward to speaking to some of the inmates. There has been criticism in the media that inmates such as Abu Hamza are using the opportunity of being in prisons to radicalise other prisoners through their sermons. Do you have any evidence of that?

Michael Spurr: We have some evidence of individual prisoners who may have attempted to say things or have indicated views that could attract people to a radical cause. We have a population in prison who are there because they are criminal and who would see themselves as being alienated; therefore, there is an issue about authority. They are therefore a vulnerable population for radicalisation, but actually, we work very hard to address that threat, as we work hard to address a whole range of threats that we face in prisons. This is one of them, and one we take seriously.

Q267 Chair: But how would you know? Presumably, terrorist offenders will have the ability to meet other terrorist offenders once inside prisons. How would you know what they are saying to one another?

Michael Spurr: You cannot know what everyone is saying to anyone else at every moment of the day, but we have appropriate systems to gather intelligence. People talk about what is going on—not just prisoners in direct conversation with one another, but other prisoners who hear things within an establishment. We gather intelligence. We try and identify behaviours that indicate potential for radicalisation or for other criminal behaviour within a prison. We encourage staff and have supported them with awareness training of the types of behaviour, language and material that might indicate there is a potential risk. We expect them to identify those behaviours, to report them, and then we look to manage the individuals. That is our approach.

Q268 Chair: You said in the *Prison Service Journal*, “That is a major issue for us in terms of how Muslims feel they are perceived...by society and how they are managed in prison.” Is it management of the whole religion, when you talk about Muslims, or is it people

you think are particularly vulnerable to being influenced by radical preachers?

Michael Spurr: I think both issues are important. We have 12% of the prison population who are Muslim. We know from the thematic review undertaken by Her Majesty’s inspectorate of prisons in 2010 that they feel more alienated than the rest of the population. That was what I was referring to. We are very clear that faith is a positive within prison potentially for people to change, and we support people of all faiths in practising their faith.

Q269 Chair: Do you think it is on the increase or decrease?

Michael Spurr: Is what on the increase or decrease?
Chair: Radicalisation in prisons.

Michael Spurr: It is difficult to say whether it is on the increase or decrease. Actual evidence of people who have been radicalised in prison is very hard to ascertain. We are managing the threat of that. I have no evidence that it is on the increase. I am very conscious that there is a genuine threat; that is why we take action to address that threat.

Q270 Nicola Blackwood: It would be helpful for the Committee to understand in which prisons and under what conditions terrorist prisoners are held; which offenders are classed as international; which are Northern Ireland-related; and which are domestic-related.

Michael Spurr: We hold terrorist prisoners in a range of prisons. We risk-assess individuals rather than determine that all terrorists will be held in a particular prison or location. We risk-assess individuals and we manage them with regard to their risk. The majority of those who are in prison for terrorist-related activities are managed within the high-security estate, because we recognise that their risk is significant. Our policy in the high-security estate for the majority of prisoners who require conditions of high security is to disperse them around five high-security prisons. Terrorists are generally dispersed and managed within that population.

However, if we had evidence of individual risk or attempts to radicalise or create disorder in the establishment, we would respond to that and we could manage individuals in tighter security, for example, in periods of segregation or in close supervision centres, which have particularly high levels of security. Some individuals will be managed in such centres because

22 November 2011 Michael Spurr, Richard Pickering and Ahtsham Ali

they pose particular threats to order or the operation of prisons, or the potential for wider radicalisation. We look at individuals. You will see in Belmarsh, if you go on Monday—

Chair: We are going.

Michael Spurr: Indeed; I understand that you are doing that. You will see that there are main prison wings, and there are smaller units, and we manage people depending on their risk, within the range of options available to us.

Q271 Nicola Blackwood: I wonder if you could give us an example of how you would monitor an individual terrorist prisoner, so that you would pick up on their potential for radicalising other prisoners. Would you do spot checks? Would you be checking the cell? What exactly would be the process that you would go through?

Michael Spurr: There are a number of things. There are some things that we would do routinely with all prisoners, which would include cell searches and general searching of individuals, in order to maintain the security of the establishment. Those who are in prison for terrorist offences would be identified and known to staff, because of the nature of their offences. We expect staff to monitor their behaviour routinely when they are operating on wings and engaging with prisoners. We expect them to submit security information reports about anything they see that could potentially indicate a concern. We would monitor on that basis. We would review that intelligence at security meetings and share that with police and then receive any intelligence that they might have.

Q272 Nicola Blackwood: Is there special guidance or a special procedure that you would use for this? Is there some standard way in which you would ensure that you protected the rest of the prison population, or do you just put in place a specific procedure for each individual prisoner?

Michael Spurr: We have standard procedures for monitoring intelligence and managing security, which are applied differentially to the risk for individual prisoners. We expect staff to report security information about a whole range of things, such as drug use and risk of escape. We specifically highlight extremism and radicalisation as something that we would expect staff to report on.

Q273 Dr Huppert: To follow up on that, what training do you give police officers on what signs of radicalisation to identify? You will be aware that there has been criticism of that by Peter Neumann and various others. What signs do they look for?

Michael Spurr: Prison officers, you mean?

Dr Huppert: Yes.

Michael Spurr: We have some basic awareness training when staff are first recruited. We offer some basic awareness workshops to staff who are already in post. They focus on a range of things around behaviours, presentation, how prisoners present, how they challenge, how they might challenge—for example, imams, and how they operate. They are also looking at how prisoners might indicate through their language a lack of acceptance of accepted norms, how

their attitude might be towards—if we were looking at al-Qaeda related terrorism—the west, or what their attitude is to general news items and what type of material they might be quoting or looking at or seeking to get access to.

We would focus on the types of relationships that individuals were looking to foster. Are there particular terrorism-related offenders, for example, who are singling out the more vulnerable in the population and looking to get close to them in a grooming style? What is their relationship with higher-end criminal offenders? We ask staff to be conscious of that. We ask them to look at the types of behaviour that have been expressed. A lot of behaviour may well be criminal behaviour. There is criminal behaviour in prisons, there are hierarchies, there are attempts to subvert authority, and there are issues around how people gain status in prison. We look at that behaviour and what the implications of that behaviour are. Obviously, we also look at factual things, such as levels of violence and, where violence occurs, what links back to other prisoners in how the violence appears to have been orchestrated.

Q274 Dr Huppert: That is more encouraging than I have seen it described elsewhere. The flip side is what training prison officers get in counter-radicalisation to try to deal with that. Do all officers get training and, if so, what is it?

Michael Spurr: In terms of counter-radicalisation, our premise is that one of the first things that we have to do is address the negative impacts of prison, which might reinforce alienation and anti-authority views. The whole decency agenda for us—treating people fairly and equally, so as not to alienate the Muslim population, for example—is critical in trying to counter someone who is vulnerable to an anti-authority message. We start with that premise.

We have a whole range of things that we are developing to tackle individuals and counter radical views. We have been working on an extremist risk-guidance assessment, which we have now established and shared with the police. It has been used both externally and internally. It works through 22 risk factors that we want to work on with people who are exhibiting extremist views. We have developed interventions called healthy identity interventions—there is a foundation and a plus level—which we have piloted and are now about to roll out to all terrorist offenders over the next 12 months in custody and the community. We are looking to adapt those interventions to be used also with people who are at risk of becoming radicalised.

Q275 Dr Huppert: So this is for terrorist offenders and people who may be at risk?

Michael Spurr: Yes.

Q276 Dr Huppert: Identified how?

Michael Spurr: For terrorist offenders, through offence, and then for those who are at risk, through intelligence and the engagement that we have with individual offenders within establishments in the way that I have described.

22 November 2011 Michael Spurr, Richard Pickering and Ahtsham Ali

Chair: Nicola Blackwood had a supplementary to the previous question.

Q277 Nicola Blackwood: You mentioned in an earlier answer that there was very little research into radicalisation within prisons, but I wonder, from that research, what conditions you felt led to radicalisation. Is it overcrowding or certain social or psychological factors? What is your assessment from your experience within the prison system? Mr Pickering or Mr Ali may want to come in on that.

Michael Spurr: Yes, of course. I do not think it is so much things like overcrowding. I would refer back to my earlier answer. I do think it is about the potential for individuals who are incarcerated and who therefore feel anti-authority to have negative perceptions of society reinforced while they are in prison and for people to be manipulated because they are vulnerable in prison. They are looking for support from others. They are looking in terms of their own safety. Prisons have always had gang formations and attempts to operate and survive within prisons. There is a prison dynamic around that, which could lead to people who are already criminal moving towards accepting a more radicalising philosophy. That is what I think the risk is. In terms of evidence, what we have seen is that that makes prisons a potential risk for radicalisation, and we need to counter that in the way that we operate.

Q278 Chair: Yes. I think that is the purpose of the inquiry.

Mr Ali, very few of the guards in prison would speak Urdu or Arabic.

Ahtsham Ali: That is correct.

Q279 Chair: So how would they pick up all this information and all the wonderful things that Mr Spurr is talking about? How would they know what they were saying?

Ahtsham Ali: Within the prison population itself, Urdu or Arabic are not common languages. It is mainly English, so the officers will pick that up.

Q280 Chair: Do you mean that Abu Hamza would give his sermon in English? He would not give it in Arabic?

Ahtsham Ali: Sorry?

Chair: Would Abu Hamza speak Arabic if he was giving a sermon?

Ahtsham Ali: He would not be giving a sermon in prison.

Q281 Chair: But if he was dealing with other people?

Ahtsham Ali: He would probably be speaking in Arabic, but when he speaks in Arabic most of the congregation will not understand the Arabic. All our Muslim chaplains, when they give their sermons, they will do so in English with a little bit of Arabic that is part of the whole sermon anyway, but the rest of the message—the core message—will be in English and has to be, because English is the language of the majority of the congregation.

Chair: Thank you. Mark Reckless.

Q282 Mark Reckless: How do prison officers distinguish between the moderate Muslim convert and the potentially radicalised individual?

Michael Spurr: That is obviously something that is difficult and complex. It is one of the reasons why we have actually promoted much greater involvement of imams in the way we operate within prisons. As I said earlier, we absolutely accept and see faith as something that is positive, and our aim therefore is to start from that premise. We now have imams across the estate who are able to support the staff and who are able to support prisoners who are seeking faith. Many prisoners who are Muslims in prison are Muslims because they are looking for fellowship, for brotherhood, for safety, for belonging and all of the things that bring people to faith. That is equally true for Christians in prison as well. When you are at your lowest, people seek ways to find a way of belonging, and that is true. We are focused on the use of imams to support that and to support staff to understand the faith and the differences between people who might be moderate and exploring their faith and those who are trying to drive unrealistic and unfair—

Q283 Mark Reckless: I wonder if I can ask Mr Ali, who may have been about to respond in any event, whether he finds that his imams carry credibility with Muslims—converted or otherwise—in prison, given the structure for their appointment by prisons, albeit with your involvement and advice?

Ahtsham Ali: Yes, very much so. One of the signs for a Muslim chaplain in prison to watch out for is if a prisoner is refusing to pray behind him or whatever. That could be an indicator that something is going on. He could then explore it further and go to speak to him one to one. Your earlier question about moderate Muslims is quite key. Moderate according to whom? It might be officers on a wing. It is important that we get this right, that we look at the signs for radicalisation and that we do not confuse them with the indicators of good, pious behaviour. Obviously, an officer on the wing might see someone praying five times a day and think that that is extreme. Or they might notice that someone's beard has lengthened. An undue pressure from officers or more monitoring might lead that individual to go more towards the radicalising philosophy. It is important to make sure that officers know what to look for. If they do not know, they should get expert help within the establishment from the Muslim chaplain.

Richard Pickering: If I might come in on that point. Just to reiterate the point that Ahtsham was making, we try not to take a siloed approach to this. We talk in terms of security departments working jointly with the multi-faith chaplaincy. Answering your earlier question about how you distinguish types of behaviour, we would make it understood that one of the sources of advice would be the Muslim chaplain or, alternatively, the seconded police officer. We have a range of sources of information to get behind what is being reported.

Q284 Mark Reckless: What do you say to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation

22 November 2011 Michael Spurr, Richard Pickering and Ahtsham Ali

and Political Violence, which suggests that you have not provided effective guidance on this issue?

Richard Pickering: I have discussed Peter Neumann's book with him and that was right at its time. It is now some time since Peter wrote that book and we have had further conversations with him. I would not speak for him, but what I would say is that since 2009–10 when he was doing the background work for this and since 2010 when it was published, we have made significant advances, not least in the areas of training and of interventions.

Chair: Thank you very much. Lorraine Fullbrook.

Q285 Lorraine Fullbrook: Just following on from that, I should like to ask a bit more about the role of imams in prisons. Until about the last 10 years or so, imams in prison were regarded with some suspicion. That changed, and it was realised that imams could be extremely effective in helping to combat radicalisation. How do you ensure that extremist imams are not brought into prison roles?

Ahtsham Ali: All recruitment for employed Muslim chaplains has to take place through myself. I have to be present at every single recruitment board and I have been present at every board for the past eight years since I have been in post. Each individual has to have credible qualifications through seminaries, although there are different seminaries. The problem is that we do not have a set-up like the Anglican Church, with ordination and so on. We have different mechanisms for getting knowledgeable people—imams. I check all the qualifications of the individuals. I double check them as well. I have a database of about 200 imams who currently work for the Prison Service, both sessional and employed. Many of them will have been to the same seminaries as the new candidate, so I double check with them and ask, "Has this candidate been there and studied there?" Following that, they have a rigorous extended interview system. They give a sermon, which has to be in English. They do a role play and then an interview. After, there is security vetting for each chaplain who comes into prison, irrespective of faith. I am confident that that particular aspect is well taken care of.

Q286 Lorraine Fullbrook: Thank you, Mr Ali, that was very interesting. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation has been referred to. It has been suggested that imams should not be regarded as the panacea for the problems of radicalisation in prison. Do you agree with that?

Ahtsham Ali: Yes, I do. There are many factors. One of them is a theological issue, but there are other factors. I am glad that the interventions we have look at psychology, placement and various other factors.

Michael Spurr: That is absolutely right. Imams are important in prisons for the wider issue of supporting the Muslim faith. But imams alone are not the answer, from our perspective, to dealing with people who are potentially vulnerable to radicalisation. I have already described some of the other measures that we take, which are absolutely equally important.

Q287 Lorraine Fullbrook: That really brings me on to the wider range of Islamic schools of thought. Do you think that if prisoners had more access to imams representing those wider schools of thought, they would be less vulnerable to radicalisation?

Ahtsham Ali: I do not think so. I think that on the whole we are reasonably cohesive in terms of denominational issues. Attendance at Friday prayers in some establishments is as high as 95% of Muslim prisoners. On the whole, the majority will consider an imam from a different denomination to them as an imam. But yes, there are a few nuances and, as I have said, one of the indicators is that you have a prisoner—we have had this happen—who refuses to pray behind an imam. These are very rare occasions, but we then go and find out what the problem is, what the issues are, why not and so on. It might be an issue, in some cases, of denominational difference, or it might be that they say "You are Government imams", which is, I think, the point you raised earlier.

Q288 Mr Winnick: Those responsible for the atrocities of 7/7 and 9/11 in the States obviously believed that they would go into paradise as a result of mass murder. How far is it possible from a religious point of view to persuade those who take their religion too seriously—religious fanatics or near-fanatics in all religions—to say that, far from guaranteeing paradise, mass murder is a terrible sin? How far is that possible from the Islamic religious stream?

Ahtsham Ali: It is very clear, and it very clearly can be demonstrated. That is part of the remit of the theological countering of this extremist narrative. You do not go to paradise by doing a wrong, even if you, in your mind, think it's a right, because justice is paramount. You cannot kill an individual—an innocent person. The issue about paradise within the Islamic context and theologically is there in a battle situation—a legitimate, just war pursued and authorised at state level. It is there, and what extremists do is pick at it and pervert it to include what Osama bin Laden said in his fatwa, that all American civilians are targets. He opened it up to any innocent person being killed which, if you look classically, is absolutely not there in our theology at all.

Q289 Mr Winnick: It is argued that part of the difficulty is that the Saudi Arabian strand of Islam is so conservative, rigid and dogmatic that it does, in an indirect way if you like, help potential mass murderers. Do you agree?

Ahtsham Ali: I think that if you look at the extremist or terrorist prisoners right across the globe, many of them started off in that denominational background, but I have to say that that denomination in itself is not extremist in that sense. Salafist and Wahhabi scholars will equally argue that the taking of an innocent life is absolutely against the core of Islam. To what extent that denomination plays a role is an interesting question, and sometimes I think to myself that we need a plethora of denominational approaches. Some individuals might be more easily persuaded by someone from a particular denomination than someone else.

22 November 2011 Michael Spurr, Richard Pickering and Ahtsham Ali

Chair: Thank you. Michael Ellis.

Q290 Michael Ellis: Gentlemen, looking at Professor Neumann's report, and this follows on somewhat from Mr Winnick's question that made reference to Saudi Arabia, there are recommendations that prison services should be more ambitious in promoting positive influences inside prison, and also be more innovative in their approaches. I am referring now to the practices in Egyptian prisons, and we have read something about Saudi Arabian prisons, in terms of the positive influences that they try to instil inside prison as a means of de-radicalisation. Presumably, they are having to deal with greater numbers than us within their prison system. I am not suggesting for a moment that their prison system is flawless, because it certainly isn't. But they have methods of deradicalising people that are innovative and somewhat more ambitious than ours. Do you have any comment to make about that?

Michael Spurr: I'll start; Mr Pickering may want to say something else. The first thing is that we are aware of the work that is being done in those countries; indeed, we have looked at that very carefully.

Q291 Chair: Which countries?

Michael Spurr: In Saudi Arabia, for example, and previously, Yemen and elsewhere. In terms of our view in determining how to address the issues here, you've got to look at the culture and the experience of people who are in our prisons in England and Wales. That's what we've done. We've developed interventions that reflect their experience to try to address the whole issue about motivation to act in an extremist way. I don't think that is any lack of ambition; I think it's an appropriate and proper application of what is required to deal with the issues that those individuals are posing here. So that's what we've done. We've spent some time looking at and developing what I think are internationally forward-leading programmes to address motivation for extremism.

Q292 Michael Ellis: As far as the innovative approach is concerned, there is the general rehabilitative approach that we tend to adopt in English prisons in terms of all criminal offending, in the form of education, work experience and so on. Do you feel—I invite any of you to comment—that terrorist prisoners require a more tailored approach?

Chair: Mr Ali?

Michael Ellis: Mr Pickering was going to say something.

Richard Pickering: By all means. It has to be tailored to the individual in all circumstances. I think it's difficult to talk in terms of a blanket approach. Returning to your first question, absolutely we understand the approaches that have been adopted in other jurisdictions and Administrations. We have worked with international colleagues in developing the packages that we think are appropriate to our population.

Q293 Michael Ellis: So you are talking to others?

Richard Pickering: Yes, absolutely. Again, in terms of whether they need a different sort of intervention that is tailored to their specific requirements, yes, I think we're beginning to develop those specific new interventions, which are available not just necessarily to terrorist offenders but to the people with the mindset that perhaps leads them to offend in that fashion.

Michael Ellis: I think Mr Ali wanted to come in.

Chair: Please be as brief as possible.

Ahtsham Ali: We have a programme at the end of December in which we will look at sharing good practice. We've got imams coming from different countries, organised by the FCO and jointly with us, to share good practice and how they do it.

Chair: Mr Michael has a final question.

Q294 Alun Michael: Yes. Obviously there is the issue of the release, first of terrorist offenders and secondly of people whom you believe might have been radicalised during their time in prison. How does the prison service interact with the probation service at the local level, in making the connections both with families and the community to which people are returning? I get the impression, from speaking to the local services, that you have gone back to a much better link to community level in recent times? Is that correct?

Michael Spurr: I think that that is true. All the terrorist offenders would come out under multi-agency protection panel arrangements, which, by their very nature, require interaction between all the relevant agencies—the police, prison and probation—on the release arrangements, the support that the individual gets and the licence conditions that they will operate under.

Q295 Alun Michael: Could I ask Mr Ali in particular, is that a question of looking at the attitudes of families in relation to people who have offended, and perhaps the way in which they can be reintegrated?

Ahtsham Ali: It is, but that's not my specialist area. Once they go past the prison gate and into the community, the probation service—

Q296 Alun Michael: Sure. We did have one witness who suggested that perhaps when someone has offended, it is a particular issue for Muslim families to reconnect.

Ahtsham Ali: Often, probation officers and authorities will ask, what particular mosques individuals can go to for help with family reintegration. I'll signpost them to some imams. I know that there are various Muslim community organisations that are helping reintegration.

Richard Pickering: On the second part of your question, which was about the non-terrorist offenders who have potentially been exposed to radicalising influences in prison, that is part of the picture that would be shared with the multi-agency public protection partners, so that movement between prison and the community is as seamless as possible.

22 November 2011 Michael Spurr, Richard Pickering and Ahtsham Ali

Q297 Chair: Mr Spurr, the Committee will be visiting Belmarsh on Monday, as I said at the beginning. We are told that it will take 45 minutes to get in. I hope that it does not take 45 minutes to get out, because, since we cannot bring the witnesses to the Committee, we would obviously like to spend as much time as possible talking to some of the inmates there. So anything that you can do as head of the service to make our arrival and departure as smooth as possible would help. We would like to leave at the end, by the way.

Michael Spurr: I will do my best. We obviously have to go through appropriate security arrangements,

given the type of prison it is, but we will make it as swift as we can—both in and out.

Chair: Indeed. We may well write to you, because you have raised a number of points. Even though your evidence has been very full, it still remains the case that the Home Secretary is clear that radicalisation goes on and you are not clear whether we are winning the battle against radicalisation, although you have imaginative schemes by which you challenge what is going on. We may well write to you again before the end of the inquiry. Thank you very much for coming.

Tuesday 29 November 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Michael Ellis
Dr Julian Huppert
Alun Michael

Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Charles Farr**, Director General, Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, Home Office, gave evidence.

Q298 Chair: Mr Farr, thank you very much for giving evidence to us today.

Charles Farr: *****

Q299 Chair: Excellent. Can I begin then by asking you a question about the extent of radicalism in the UK? Is it on the increase? Is it on the decrease? Are we winning the war against radicalism or is this just £2 billion, or whatever it is, of public money and we don't really know outcomes?

Charles Farr: As you know, I have to preface that by saying that statistics on this are hard to develop and hard to come to. However, if we look at the CLG-sponsored Community Attitude Survey and we compare the most recent batch of statistics with those from several years ago, we have seen that sympathy for violent extremism is declining rather than increasing. I am told by the people who are expert in these matters that that decrease is statistically significant, although clearly—because as you know, Chairman, we are talking about one or two percentages here and there—it is risky to read too much into it. I would add immediately, of course, that you don't quite know why those figures have fallen, and I certainly would not presume that it is because we are running a Prevent Strategy.

Q300 Chair: Yes. So you cannot give us any figures?

Charles Farr: I can give you—

Chair: Give us some figures; let us feel as if we have got something out of this private session, since it is private—that you are giving us some information.

Charles Farr: The figures are public and we quoted them in the Prevent Strategy, *****

So if we ask the question, "Is violent extremism always or often right?" then across the UK population, as a whole, about 1% of people will answer, "Yes." If

you ask the question, "Is it sometimes right?" then obviously you will get a higher number, somewhere in the region of 5% or 6%. If you poll an age group—16 to 19—the number who would answer "sometimes" or "always" goes up together to nearer 20%. In other words, there is a very striking correlation between age and sympathy for violent extremism, which I don't think surprises us but it is worth noting anyway. Of course there is a degree of sensitivity about this, as you will appreciate, but if you look at the responses of different faith groups there are slight variations, but not particularly significant ones, between Muslim, Christian, Sikh and Hindu; those variations are not nearly as great as the variation between different age groups.

Q301 Chair: So, if you are looking at the fora where radicalisation takes place—in our inquiry we basically ask people for their top five—what would be your top five? We have universities, prisons and so on. If you were giving us a top five, what would they be?

Charles Farr: I am going to be rather pedantic, and I apologise for that. In our experience, most radicalisation does not take place in fora at all; it takes place in private premises, simply because the people who are doing the radicalising are now much more aware of the activities that we are conducting, which you are investigating, than was the case two or three years ago when, as they saw it, it was much more possible to conduct radicalisation in the margins of religious institutions: mosques, madrassas, and others, and—

Q302 Chair: It used to be the madrassas, now it is in the privacy of people's homes, is it?

Charles Farr: I think there has been a trend. I would not be quite specific with that, but I think there has been a trend towards much greater use of private venues, simply because for obvious reasons they feel that they are much more secure. If we leave that to one side, I think we can continue to see some radicalisation going on in religious institutions but it is a very small percentage of the total number that we have in this country, certainly no more than 1% or 2%. We can see some radicalisation of course conducted on the internet, sometimes by those institutions operating in the electronic space. We can see some related activity going on in higher and further education, but it is not specifically terrorist-related; it is about cultivating people into a world of non-violent extremism. We can see some activity going on in

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

charitable organisations, often with the pretext of raising funds to be sent overseas for good works, for example to Pakistan or indeed Bangladesh.

I think I would mention those, but I would emphasise that most of the really significant work does not happen in those areas, or if it does happen there it rapidly migrates into a private house where people are brought together, usually under the excuse of there being a faith-based meeting, and the discussion rapidly develops into something much more about terrorism and the legitimacy of violence.

Q303 Dr Huppert: You are giving us fascinating evidence, and you did not mention jails, which is, interestingly enough, where we were yesterday. It would be interesting to get the full breakdown of the figures you were giving about support for violent radicalisation, because I would be interested in exactly what the questions were and exactly what that says.

Charles Farr: Yes.

Dr Huppert: One question that immediately occurs to me: you said that all faith groups were fairly similar to each other—I am interested to explore that a bit more—and did you look at people who don't have a faith group who are humanists, was that higher or lower and how does that fit in?

Charles Farr: That is a good question. People were asked to identify themselves, if they chose to do so, by their faith group. Off the top of my head, I certainly don't know how many people chose not to respond to that question but it will be in the data.

Dr Huppert: But it would be really fascinating statistically to see the full breakdown.

Q304 Michael Ellis: Yes, I am also interested in that. But your analysis of the situation is that in that 16 to 19 age range there wasn't an awful lot of difference between a Christian 19-year old or a Sikh one and a Muslim one, in terms of their radicalisation.

Charles Farr: If you look at the percentages, both for the population as a whole and for the 16 to 19 age group, Muslims respond more positively to questions about violent extremism than do Christians. However, I think I am right in saying—and again I would ask you to check the data that we send you—that you can get Hindus or Sikhs responding more positively even than Muslim communities, so there is some variation.¹ However, I come back to the point that the variation between faith communities within age brackets is not nearly as different or as significant as

the variation between those age brackets themselves.²

Q305 Michael Ellis: On the point that the Chairman asked you about the fora and you indicating that it happens mainly at home, that begs the question, what are the main ways by which these radicalised or at-risk individuals come to your attention or come to the authorities' attention? If a lot of this is happening in the home, presumably this is parental influence and the like.

Charles Farr: Yes.

Michael Ellis: How do you find these people are coming to your attention in the first instance?

Charles Farr: Statistically, if we look at the sources of the referrals to the Channel programme, which I imagine you are familiar with—the programme to support vulnerable people—the three main sources are from educational institutes, health and policing. Sometimes of course parents have phoned policing, so it is an indirect reference; sometimes friends have, but those are the three main routes that people are referred into the Channel programme.

In each case there is obviously a distinction to be made between where the radicalisation takes place and where it is most obtrusively demonstrated, and “the where”, as I have suggested already, is private; fundamentally private houses, private venues. The radicalisation of course does make itself felt much more widely.

Michael Ellis: It comes to the authorities' attention through public scenarios, like policing, health and the like.

Charles Farr: Yes.

Q306 Michael Ellis: Do you perceive there to be a lack of clarity in what drives radicalisation, and if so does that inhibit the authorities in the action that they can take?

Charles Farr: We would always like to know more, but my view is that over the past few years, based on intelligence, polling, surveying, academic work, consultation with other international colleagues in Europe and elsewhere, I think we have a fairly good idea about what is driving radicalisation. There are still questions to be asked—the comparative influence of the internet and face-to-face meetings of course. But there is a great deal of data there fortunately,

² The witness later clarified that, according to the survey, from April 2009–March 2010 (unpublished data), 3% of Muslims thought it was ‘always’ or ‘often right’ to use violent extremism in Britain to protest against things they judged to be very unfair or unjust compared to 1% of Christians and 1% of those with no religion. While 6% of Christians said violent extremism was ‘always/often right’ or ‘sometimes right, sometimes wrong’, a higher proportion of Hindus (15%) Muslims (12%) and those with no religion (10%) chose one of these responses. Other analysis conducted by CLG researchers on survey data from April 2009–December 2009 (published data) showed that people with no religion were the only group that were significantly different from Christians once age, income, social class and other factors were taken into account. This tells us that while Muslims and Hindus are, as a group, less likely than Christians to reject violent extremism, the differences may be explained by their younger age profile and/or socioeconomic profile.

¹ The witness later clarified that “responding positively” meant answering yes to the question “Is violent extremism always or often right?” or “Is it sometimes right?”

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

Michael Ellis: Thank you.

Q307 Mark Reckless: Do the developments in the Prevent Strategy reflect the changing nature of the terrorist threat?

Charles Farr: To some degree, I think last year, when the Government broadened CONTEST—and thus Prevent too—to deal with all forms of extremism and terrorism, that certainly reflected the re-emergence of a very significant terrorist threat in Northern Ireland, which you are well aware of, and our growing concern with the extreme right wing. Of course, it made no sense to have a terrorist strategy in general, or a Prevent Strategy in particular, focused on one particular type of terrorism. So yes, I think the change in threat in Northern Ireland and in the extreme right did and has determined the range of Prevent work.

Q308 Mark Reckless: I don't know if it is fair to characterise that in this way, but my impression is that there have been shifts in the extent to which the rent or derivatives of that strategy is focused on simply violent extremism and narrowly rooting it out where there is a particular threat, or the extent to which it has been a broad engagement of softer community integration-type projects. Have the developments and shifts in that reflected a change in the terrorist threat or a change in our analysis of what is the best way to deal with the terrorist threat?

Charles Farr: The latter rather than the former.

Q309 Mark Reckless: On Northern Ireland, could I ask whether the drivers of radicalisation are different than they were before the Good Friday Agreement, and if so, in what way?

Charles Farr: Not fundamentally, no. I would also argue, by the way, that I think the drivers are comparable in type but not in detail to those for Islamist-related terrorism or even for the extreme right wing. In other words, there is an ideological component, which is important, but there is a lot about personal vulnerabilities that drives people into the arms of terrorist organisations.

Q310 Mr Winnick: The difference in Northern Ireland is surely, and always has been, that it is not done in the name of the Catholic faith. The fact that the overwhelming majority are Catholics is neither here nor there because they always claim that it is not sectarian, although we know from time to time Protestants were murdered, but of course there were Catholics and vice versa. Before the atrocities in Norway, would it not be correct to say there was less emphasis on the extreme right and that, since Norway, it has been demonstrated that extreme rightist elements are quite as willing as Islamists to take lives?

Charles Farr: I think I would take issue with your last statement. It is certainly the case that there is a strong extreme right group or groups in this country, significant numbers of people who would subscribe to extreme right wing views. However, we don't see

such a tendency for people who hold those views to drift into the world of terrorism. Extreme right terrorism in this country is and remains rare, and there are no extreme right wing terrorist organisations operating here in the way that we may have seen in some other countries overseas.

Q311 Mr Winnick: Yes, but a memo from Mike Whine—who obviously you know and the work that he has done—has made reference to the latest organisation, the EDL, and says that in fact it could be far more of a danger than previous Fascist hooligan groups. You don't accept that?

Charles Farr: I certainly accept that EDL is a significant organisation and, of course, that it is deeply troubling in many respects and can cause great harm.

Q312 Mr Winnick: Is it more prone to violence than other Fascist groups?

Charles Farr: I am less convinced about that.

Mr Winnick: You are or not?

Charles Farr: I am less convinced about that. I am not for one moment excusing EDL, but it is wrong to characterise it as an organisation that is sympathetic towards or remotely interested in engaging in terrorism because, as far as we know, there is no evidence for that. It doesn't make it any less difficult to deal with. It is very difficult to deal with and very challenging, but I think we look at it in that way.

Q313 Mr Winnick: We are dealing with the challenge of Islamists who are willing to cause untold misery, mass murder and the rest, 7/7, and what they attempted a fortnight afterwards. In the 1930s, against Fascism, efforts were made to persuade people by various means of what was happening in Nazi Germany. Certainly the left were very vocal, and those on the right were very vocal about the terror in Stalin's Russia, and in the 1950s the Foreign Office had a special unit, did they not, to combat Communist ideas?

When we were in Belmarsh yesterday I spoke to a very articulate Muslim who is not a preacher in any way; he is being held or charged with theft but is very articulate as a Muslim—there is no doubt about that—and possibly could be dangerous; who knows? I said, if Britain is involved in trying to do its utmost to undermine Islam—leaving aside the fact that up and down this country there are mosques everywhere, like there are Sikh and Hindu temples, and in the past so many synagogues because of the growing Jewish community in the beginning of the 20th century onwards—why did we go to war because of what was happening to Muslims in Kosovo? He was very hesitant to agree that that was done for Muslims. How far can this be pushed—that, far from being anti-Muslim, this is a country where Muslims have complete freedom, far more so than in most countries in the world, and moreover that we actually went to war for the reasons I have stated?

Charles Farr: I don't have any doubt that the view that we are conducting a war on Islam, not a war on terrorism, has been a very significant reason why people have gravitated and drifted into terrorist activities—

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

Mr Winnick: Iraq and Afghanistan.

Charles Farr: All sorts of incidents and episodes are used to justify that claim, including of course Iraq and Afghanistan but also on a much more tactical local level; actually counter-terrorism legislation itself is felt to provide evidence that what we are dealing with, or what we are engaged in, is the persecution, humiliation and subjugation of Islam and Muslims, not counter-terrorist operations. It must be part of our work to challenge that, and there are all sorts of ways that can be done. Kosovo is one example. I would argue that Libya more recently is another. There are repeated instances where we have intervened to save Muslim lives overseas for the best of motives.

Getting that message across to people like the man you met yesterday, and to a group of people who would rarely read the media that we would normally work with, is very challenging. That is part of the work of the Research, Information and Communications Unit, which you have been aware of. It is part of the job of RICU to get that message through outlets, which can and will be read by our target audience.

Q314 Alun Michael: I take your point, mentioned earlier, that we seem to have moved to a situation where radicalisation takes place in private, where one Muslim leader in my constituency said, “The biggest problem is Sheikh Google” but there are two aspects, aren’t there? One is the evidence, which David has just been probing—how can we counter any evidence that appears to bolster a terrorist ideology?—but the other is the ideology itself.

The Prevent Strategy criticises the Research, Information and Communications Unit, that part of the Home Office, for using language that risks “removing the ideological component which it should be the purpose of that unit to address”. What are you doing to combat the ideology, to challenge and try to undermine a persuasive ideology?

Charles Farr: Perhaps I could just say very briefly what was behind that remark in the appraisal of the strategy. In its early days, RICU had done a lot of polling in communities in this country about the language that those communities felt worked best in describing counter-terrorism. Many communities wanted terrorists to be described as criminals because, fundamentally, that is how they preferred to see them, and using the language of terrorism-as-criminality meant that they were more prepared to engage in counter-terrorist activity. However, the problem about that is of course that criminals aren’t fundamentally ideological. So the language of criminality, although useful in one respect, risked taking people’s eyes off the ideological challenge that we face. That is the background.

As to what we are doing now—

Q315 Alun Michael: So it is meant to be a balance of, on the one hand, trying to downgrade the attractiveness by linking it with criminality but also challenging the ideology?

Charles Farr: Correct, and I think we are trying to find that balance.

RICU’s job in challenging ideology is important for the whole Prevent Strategy and it is done in this country and overseas. The starting point must be to understand the ideology that we are trying to challenge and who is pushing that ideology out. The individuals are as important as the message. We need to begin by looking at the key texts or the key websites, or both, which vulnerable people are looking at and absorbing and using as part of the radicalisation process. For example, Anwar al-Awlaki—now dead, but recently the head of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula based in Yemen—*****

*****. He lived here for many years; he lived in the States as well. Understanding what he said and what his writings claimed is the starting point for counter-ideological work. Once you have understood the message, you then need to work out who is best placed to refute it. In general, we are not the right people to try to do so. We don’t have the theological expertise. Even if we did have the theological expertise we don’t always have the channels to push it out.

Q316 Alun Michael: So who are the right people?

Charles Farr: We will go to people in communities, perhaps someone working at your local mosque, whose knowledge about al-Awlaki—and about why al-Awlaki’s writings make no sense—will be far greater than ours and, critically, who will be then able to develop a counter-message and push it out using his own resources.

Q317 Alun Michael: I am pleased to say that, certainly in my constituency, imams are being much clearer and much more robust in that sort of way. However, one of the problems suggested—and I think Mike Whine made this comment—is that it is totally unrealistic to attempt to control online radicalisation. On the other hand, we saw during the riots this summer that social networks, rather than being all bad, needed to be used constructively by the police and others. So, is it realistic to try to counter the online issues, and if so, how do you do that?

Charles Farr: It is possible to engage on the internet in debate and challenge, and that is part of the ideological work that we *****. However, on the internet that policy will not suffice on its own. You have to supplement it by attempts to remove those websites that seem to be most active in encouraging people to turn to violence. We have a unit here in the police force whose job it is to monitor websites, identify those that are particularly pernicious and, where the content is judged to be inappropriate, talk to the service providers about whether they really want to be hosting a website like that.

Q318 Alun Michael: Is your priority to tackle the bad or to encourage the good to drive out the bad, if you understand what I mean?

Charles Farr: You have to do both, very simply. You have to tackle the bad directly where it is so egregious—either because it is breaking the law or on the edge of it—that really encouraging the good is not

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

of itself going to suffice. But encouraging the good and engendering that debate is also part of the strategy.

Q319 Dr Huppert: In terms of dealing with websites, I can understand the processes for dealing with illegal material. What sort of reaction do you get in various countries when you collect the material and you say, “This is a perfectly legal website but we would rather you didn’t host it”?

Charles Farr: First of all, of course, every internet service provider has acceptable behaviour codes for use on their systems. So having that conversation, even where the website is operating in a broadly legal space, is not unusual for them. Governments all around the world have those conversations with ISPs every day,³ and the public will very often make their own representations to ISPs about particularly unacceptable content that may still be legal on websites around the world. But of course the answer to your question is that it varies.

In the United States, which hosts a very significant number of violent extremist websites, the First Amendment largely protects those websites and that is one of the reasons why they are there. Sometimes the service providers will look at the website and decide that they don’t want to be hosting it, but it will be for acceptable use reasons not because they are necessarily breaking the law because, of course, the First Amendment itself gives great privilege to free speech. So it depends, but I would emphasise that having that conversation with ISPs is not regarded as being particularly out of the ordinary.

Q320 Chair: One of the things we picked up yesterday was the lack of a cohesive thread that links the Prison Service, the police, and what happens after people leave prison. It was interesting to hear from the Governor of Belmarsh. We had a very good visit yesterday, as Mr Winnick has indicated. In a sense, he said that the Prison Service has had to fight its way to the top table; they have valuable information that they can give to the CT command in the Met, and no doubt that is passed on to you. Everyone is doing their job, but it appears to some extent—I am exaggerating here because he did not use these words—that everyone is in their silos.

Tracking people who leave prison and end up in Afghanistan—you no doubt saw the article in *The Times* about the two British citizens who were killed by American drones in Afghanistan. At some stage they must have been known to the authorities in this country, otherwise why do we have such a sophisticated service and so much money being spent on it? In particular, the UK Border Agency does not seem to be involved in any of this. If somebody leaves the country or somebody enters the country, with the sophisticated system that we have, someone who you are interested in—“you” in a general sense—surely we ought to know about it? Good people are doing good work but it does not seem to be joined up.

³ The witness later clarified that HMG refrains from these conversations except where they consider that the material would be illegal in the UK.

Charles Farr: Obviously I would be disappointed if that was the case. We fund out of Home Office grants a considerable effort by both NOMS, who you have spoken to, and the police to develop ***** prison interventions around Prevent. It has been a significant investment over the past two or three years. It is in every high security prison around the country and it is rapidly extending into other prisons as well, even where there are no tagged offenders. It is true that they use different databases and slightly different reporting systems but they are collocated, they are sitting in the same area, they are talking to each other—

Chair: Sitting in which area? Where?

Charles Farr: Inside the prison.

Chair: In the prison; I see.

Charles Farr: Talking to each other and, as far as I can tell, liaising regularly and constructively. I think it is much better than it was three years ago.

If I may add on the release method, serious prisoners go through the MAPPA process, in the same way as everyone else. There are some differences, namely the Security Service is involved in the MAPPA process. We have looked at the MAPPA process because it is particularly critical now that quite a lot of prisoners are coming out quite quickly. We believe that it still holds good and does what it wants and needs to do. If you have found something different then, obviously, we will look at that very closely because it is a really important point for us at the moment.

Q321 Chair: For example, when did you last have a conversation, when did you last attend a round table meeting with the head of security, the head of UK border force at UKBA? Let us leave aside all the problems of Brodie Clark and the difficulties that we have there; I do not want you to get involved in that, I assure you. But UKBA is critical, is it not, because it is people entering and leaving the country. I think of someone like Raed Salah. The Home Secretary signs an order, gives it to UKBA; they don’t serve it. The guy enters the country, and he is giving a lecture in Birmingham while the Home Secretary is on her feet telling a colleague of ours that she does not know where he is. This is a £2 billion service that can’t find one man.

Charles Farr: You have seen the report of the Raed Salah case.

Chair: Yes.

Charles Farr: I will not attempt to—

Chair: It is administrative stuff; all Sir Denis O’Connor’s talk is admin. Where are the spies in all this? Surely somebody would know. Don’t we talk to the Israelis? Aren’t they watching who is leaving their country?

Charles Farr: Raed Salah, of course, was not a terrorist.

Chair: No, I understand that, but he was banned by the Home Secretary.

Charles Farr: That is true. I am not seeking to defend the way in which he entered the country. But if I can reassure you, we work closely with UKBA to ensure that we have an effective system for identifying who is coming into this country, not just when they arrive at borders but before they get on the plane, and that

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

we have mechanisms in place for getting them off that plane so the plane doesn't even take off.

Q322 Chair: But clearly it does not work, as shown in the Raed Salah case.

Charles Farr: You are dealing with very large numbers of people and unfortunately, in that particular case the system let us down. However, I do continue to believe that much of the system has great integrity and delivers day-to-day important results for us. Yes, that was a slip-up and I am certainly not excusing it and I am not underplaying its importance. The fact that he wasn't a terrorist was fortunate for us; he could have been, and that is a big problem. We must ensure that it does not happen again.

Q323 Mark Reckless: Could you follow up one specific concern that was raised with us at Belmarsh yesterday, about co-ordination and exchange of information? As you say, they are going to considerable effort to prevent radicalisation within prison, but we are told they are handicapped in doing that by not knowing what happens to people afterwards. They do their best to identify the people at risk in prison and alert you to those, but it is very hard for them to do that if they don't have the feedback loop of who has become a terrorist or come to your attention after they have come out of prison. Can you ensure that that information goes back to them on prisoners who have been in any particular prison, so they can feed that in to their identification process?

Charles Farr: That is a good point. If it is not happening—and I take your word that it is not—then we must ensure it does. There is no reason why it should not.

Q324 Mr Winnick: I know that you are not in the business of predicting the future, and I think I can say, bearing in mind my age, Islamist terrorism will certainly outlast me. In so far as you can look into the future, would you say that we are dealing with an acute threat for the next half century, bearing in mind that communism—until the collapse of the Soviet Union—is no longer a threat in any real sense? It lasted 70-odd years. Fascism was destroyed because of the Second World War—world fascism, at least. What is your view about this threat?

Charles Farr: I am more optimistic than that. Over the past year we have seen significant changes in the terrorist threat—significant developments in the Middle East and the Arab world, which have impacted on the threat in broadly positive ways. Al-Qaeda is no longer the organisation it was. It is at its weakest state since 9/11, and it is possible to talk of the demise of parts of Al-Qaeda in a way that we could not have done if we had been having this conversation even a year ago. I think opinion is changing in the Muslim majority world as well, generally, against terrorism and against terrorist organisations. I am not quite as pessimistic as you may be and I certainly don't think in 50-year terms.

Q325 Chair: Can we move to proscription before we move to universities. Why is the Prime Minister's

Q326 Chair: Why is the LTTE still banned in the UK when they don't operate here, when the leader of the LTTE was assassinated in Sri Lanka? It has been wiped out as a force in Sri Lanka, yet members of the Tamil community can't get together in a meeting in Croydon without members of the Security Service questioning whether they are involved in LTTE activity. They have never been involved in terrorist activity in this country, have they? Why are they still on the list?

Charles Farr: I can't comment in detail about LTTE members here, but the relationship between people sympathetic to LTTE in this country and terrorist activity in Sri Lanka has been qualitatively completely different from the relationship between

Chair: How, when there has never been a terrorist outrage here from the LTTE?

Charles Farr: No, terrorist activity in Sri Lanka.

Chair: But it doesn't exist in Sri Lanka any more; it has been wiped out.

Charles Farr: No, I said in the past the relationship has been—

Chair: Why are they still on the proscription list?

Chair: Why are they still on the prescription list?
Charles Farr: That is a list that allows for people to be reviewed. It is open to others to put that case. I am not aware that they have done so and I entirely accept that we should do it ourselves.

Q327 Chair: One of the problems about the list, as the Mujahideen showed when they took us to court—"us" meaning the British Government and the British people, and so on—and they won and they had to be de-proscribed, this proscription stuff, as Professor Clive Walker has stated, really does need to be looked at very carefully. There is a list in somebody's cupboard. It is not in your cupboard. Whose cupboard is it in, this list? Who has responsibility for this list?

Charles Farr: OSCT.

Chair: Your Department?

Charles Farr: Yes.

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

Q328 Chair: How often do you look at this list?

Charles Farr: It is looked at regularly and we are constantly—

Q329 Chair: Did nobody realise that the LTTE no longer exists?

Charles Farr: The question is not so much what the LTTE may or may not be doing in Sri Lanka but what people in this country, associates of LTTE, are doing now.

Chair: But it does not exist in this country.

Charles Farr: But of course we will go away and have a look at LTTE again and come back to you and let you know what we find.

Q330 Chair: Are you saying that the LTTE operates in the United Kingdom?

Charles Farr: I can't comment. I don't know in enough detail. I can't comment on that.

Q331 Chair: Clive Walker, having done his study, says that the problem with proscription is that the group simply change their name; it is an endemic weakness in the proscription mechanism. How would you respond to that?

Charles Farr: It is certainly true that groups that are proscribed change their name. That doesn't mean to say that you can't prosecute people under the proscription law. That is one of the fundamental reasons. We have prosecuted 30 people since 9/11. We have convicted nearly 20 of proscription-related offences. For me, that is one of the key tests of whether it is being effective. Yes, it is weak because people can change names. No, it is not toothless because you can still convict on the basis of proscription.

Q332 Dr Huppert: If I remember correctly, you said that in universities you do not find violent radicalisation, you find non-violent radicalisation. Am I remembering correctly?

Charles Farr: What do you mean by that?

Dr Huppert: I was trying to draw a distinction about activity in universities, on which I know you have taken evidence from UUK already.

Charles Farr: We are concerned about the activity of non-violent extremist organisations in some universities, by no means all, certainly not most.

Q333 Dr Huppert: When you say "non-violent extremists", do you mean the students who have occupied a lecture theatre in Cambridge for the last week?

Charles Farr: No.

Q334 Dr Huppert: What is your definition of "non-violent extremist"?

Charles Farr: As set out in the Prevent Strategy. In other words, people who are speaking regularly against core UK values and whose ideology incidentally is also shared with terrorist organisations or by terrorist organisations. We are concerned about the activities of such people, not because they are illegal—they are not—but because they appear to go unchallenged. They are set up in a particularly

systematic way and they appear very deliberately, and in a very well organised way, to target universities with significant numbers of Muslim students. We are not asking for that activity to be banned but we are asking it to be challenged and for there to be a degree of balance, which at present in certain areas seems to us to be lacking. That is a very different thing from saying that terrorists themselves are active in our universities, recruiting people directly into terrorist organisations. We did not say that in the Prevent Review and it is not our view. It may happen, it may have happened, but it is certainly not so extensive that we can generalise about it.

Q335 Dr Huppert: What challenge do you envisage happening? What is it that you would like to see? Is it about debates, is it about—

Charles Farr: Yes. It is about ensuring a broad spectrum of speakers rather than a consistent series of speakers representing one particular point of view. It is about ensuring that it is open to everyone and it is not, in effect, a closed meeting, which is what many of them are. It is about, in some cases, ensuring that there is more than one speaker speaking, so that people hear a varied and broad range of views rather than simply one.

Q336 Mr Winnick: Mr Farr, I will be the devil's advocate for the moment. On apartheid, you would not, for one moment, have suggested there should have been a different viewpoint to outright condemnation—at least, I hope not—of the notorious regime that existed in South Africa. If someone comes along, be it SOAS and the rest, and condemns Israeli occupation in the occupied territories (I am being devil's advocate; I am totally opposed to Israeli policies in the occupied territories, and the rest) is it really necessary to have a balanced view—someone coming along and saying, "The justification for what Israel is doing is so and so, and so and so"?

The grey area is the difference between condemnation—this is just one example, and SOAS has been very much in the news over this—of Israeli policy, even questioning the existence of Israel, which is not an illegitimate point of view, although it is one which I don't happen to share, and the slide into anti-Semitism, which various students from abroad have been accused of, perhaps with every justification. That issue is a rather delicate balancing act and, of course, if you want to engage in anti-Semitism, the Palestinian cause is the easy one. Disguising it as being pro-Palestinian—

Chair: I am sorry, Mr Winnick: what is your question?

Mr Winnick: Is this not a very difficult and grey area?

Charles Farr: I would not for one moment have thought that we should balance an anti-apartheid speaker with one representing the South African regime. The anti-apartheid movement was not an extremist organisation—quite the opposite, actually. Nor have we ever suggested, nor would we ever suggest, that a speaker talking about Israel, Palestine, in itself, should be balanced by anyone else. The issue is that if a speaker—and this is happening around us—

29 November 2011 Charles Farr

attends a university and repeatedly talks about the fact that we are waging a war on Islam—going back to the earlier question—I think, and more importantly the Government thinks, that it is no more than sensible and legitimate to have a balancing point of view. We are only talking about circumstances where extremists are taking the floor. That is the balance that we are looking for.

Q337 Chair: *****

Charles Farr: *****

Chair: *****

Charles Farr: *****

Q338 Chair: *****

Charles Farr: *****

Chair: *****

Charles Farr: *****

Chair: *****

Charles Farr: *****

Q339 Mark Reckless: Are you able to identify individuals returning from terrorist training camps abroad, and if so, what do we then do about it?

Charles Farr: *****
***** Generally speaking, someone who comes back from a terrorist training camp overseas is not a person that we want in a Prevent programme. He or, more rarely, she would be a target for the Security Service or for the police and would go on their target priority list, in the same way as anyone else engaged in terrorist-related activities.

Q340 **Mark Reckless:** Are you aware that in Doha there is, we understand, a programme that purports to be able to de-radicalise people? What is your assessment of that programme? Is that something we—

Charles Farr: There are de-radicalisation programmes in most countries in the Muslim majority world, Saudi Arabia being perhaps the best known example. There is one in Doha, there was even one in Yemen and there are others. I think some of those are very effective in the context of the particular state in which they are working, but they are much less applicable to the state in this country and to the powers that we find ourselves with and, indeed, the expertise that we have. In other words, they are geared to Muslim majority countries where theologians can interact in a very regular and consistent manner with people in prison and where very significant resources—much greater than in this country—can be devoted to that task.

Q341 Mark Reckless: There is no argument for setting up something similar in this country?

Charles Farr: I think we have set up something similar. I would argue that Channel is our response or counterpart to the programmes that you have heard about in Doha or that run in Saudi Arabia. We exchange notes with those programmes. We have interacted; we sponsored visits by NOMS to those other countries to ensure that we were getting the lessons from them. So like for like? No, I don't think we can produce something identical but we can do things that are similar.

Q342 Dr Huppert: Very briefly, I would like to understand a bit more about how some of the changes have happened since the Prevent Strategy. In particular, I understand there are a number of delivery organisations that have lost funding because they are now deemed to be too extremist to be funded. I think one of the examples is STREET and various others. Is the reason for this to do with how they are perceived to be extremists? How many groups do you think there are who will withdraw funding? What do you think the effects of that will be?

Charles Farr: First of all, let me be clear: the groups have had funding withdrawn for all sorts of reasons, of which being extremist is not actually the principal one. Some groups have had funding withdrawn because Ministers felt, based on the information we provided them, that they didn't offer value for money, that they simply weren't addressing the issue in a way that was justified or that justified the amount of taxpayers' money that was going on them. Some of the groups have had their funding withdrawn because we weren't quite sure where they stood on certain key issues or certain key principles. It wasn't that they were extremist; it was just that there was felt to be some ambiguity about their views on issues that were important, such as the role of women. So groups have had their funding withdrawn for a variety of reasons. As an overall percentage of the groups that we have supported, the number that have had their funding withdrawn is quite small and I am completely confident that other organisations will be available to

29 November 2011 **Charles Farr**

take their place and that we will get more value from the future investments that we are going to be making.

Q343 Dr Huppert: Local authorities give out some of this money. Do you give them guidance about this? Is there just a switch from national funding to local funding?

Charles Farr: No. There is quite a stringent system of approvals, partly because we can hold information that is not available to them so they have to refer things back to us. We do scrutinise and we will stop funding if we think it is obviously in danger of going to the wrong people.

Q344 Dr Huppert: It would be clear that it was you stopping it rather than the local authority having to come up with a reason?

Charles Farr: Yes.

Q345 Dr Huppert: If you are unclear on people's key principles, does that have any other effects? Would the police still work with them? Does it have any other issues other than the funding that they get?

Charles Farr: The police would often want to work with organisations for operational reasons and it is recognised that they should continue to do so. We would not want the police to be funding those organisations because that would appear to create an inconsistency between central government, policing and possibly local authorities.

Q346 Chair: A final question about co-ordination; I go back to this tracking and to my concerns. We knew about Sheik Salah because he was giving a lecture in Birmingham; it was very open. If somebody arrived in this country and ended up in somebody's house in, say, Leicestershire, we would not know about it if they were not publicly making their statements. No doubt you have been to America, you have no doubt seen what I saw when I went there, which is the centre that was set up after 9/11 where you have the FBI and the

CIA and everybody in the same room. We know this happens at the NCA. Obviously you are going to the National Security Council shortly where everyone gets together, briefs the Prime Minister, the politicians—

Charles Farr: I am late for it, but—

Chair: I am sorry, we will be very quick. Do we need something similar where everyone can sit in the same room? Because what we have seen is lots of good people do good work—and no doubt you are doing good work, Mr Farr, because you are at the very forefront of the fight against extremism and terrorism, and we are very grateful for what you and your colleagues do—but it is all kind of separate. Should we all be together in one command centre?

Charles Farr: We do have the National Border Targeting Centre in Manchester whose job it is to ensure that our warnings indexes are operational. In other words, so that we can identify in advance if someone is trying to come into this country who has been put on a warnings index by one of the agencies that is operating here. I think NBTC, which the Americans have been to and we have been to their centre, is a very effective organisation. It is a separate subject about where it should go in the NCA, and that is an interesting—

Chair: Maybe it would be helpful if the Committee came to visit. If you could set that up that would be great.

Charles Farr: Yes, glad to.

Chair: I am sorry to delay you, but please give our regards to the Prime Minister.

Mr Winnick: No. We will have to vote on that one.

Charles Farr: I don't think I dare.

Chair: Tell him you were detained on very important business. But thank you very much for coming. We are very grateful, as usual. Thank you, Mr Farr, we are most grateful.

Charles Farr: We will give you the data on the survey.

Chair: Please. Thank you very much.

Tuesday 6 December 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Nicola Blackwood
Michael Ellis
Dr Julian Huppert

Steve McCabe
Alun Michael
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Jamie Bartlett, Demos, Hannah Stuart, Henry Jackson Society, and Professor Peter Neumann, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, gave evidence.

Q347 Chair: This is a further session in the Committee's inquiry into the roots of radicalism. Mr Bartlett, Mr Neumann, Ms Stuart, thank you very much for coming to give evidence. I hope you have been following our evidence sessions so far. Following you we will be having evidence from David Anderson, QC, and then the Minister will be coming to give evidence to us.

Perhaps I could start with a general question about what appears to the Committee to be a lack of hard evidence about the process of radicalism. Starting with you, Mr Bartlett, and then we will move on to the other witnesses, can you throw any light on this lack of evidence that seems to puzzle the Committee?

Mr Bartlett: There is a combination of reasons, I think. Firstly—

Chair: I think you will need to speak up.

Mr Bartlett: Sorry, I have a bit of a cold as well. I think there are a number of reasons for that. Firstly, it is obviously quite difficult to generate primary evidence on a subject like this. Research subjects are not always so forthcoming in talking to academia or to think-tankers or to Government, and therefore it can be quite difficult to generate what is really required, which is a lot of in-depth research evidence into what these people think, their journey through their lives and so on. The second problem is that a lot of the research on this has been very theoretical. There has been a lot of modelling about different processes of radicalisation that has not really been based, partly for the reasons I just set out, on firm evidence.

There is a third issue here, which is that we are talking about, essentially, a very complicated personal journey. It is research that can be done by social sciences and humanities that are notoriously difficult, and weak in many ways, at generating very solid, trustworthy evidence bases. There is not really any way of getting around that. We use the language of science but we are essentially using humanities to try to understand this and oftentimes we do not acknowledge the weakness in the evidence base that we have. So I think that is an extremely dangerous and worrying problem. I would be very interested to know that you are taking care to be aware of the sort of evidence that you are willing to accept because a lot of what you will probably hear is based on anecdotal information that, as a social scientist, includes an incredible number of weaknesses about making generalisations.

If I may just make a final point, what we need when we are talking about radicalisation and trying to

understand it is to understand all those individuals who may have shared many of the similar underlying background demographics or attitudes or experiences in their lives but did not go on to commit acts of violence or did not get involved in very problematic types of extremism. That requires a far greater evidence base. What we tend to do at the moment is make assumptions based on the very small sample that we have of individuals that have gone on to commit acts of terrorism. To truly understand what is driving it, we would need to compare those against a far greater dataset of individuals that did not.

Q348 Chair: Professor Neumann, could you also address the issue about whether or not current Government policy on Prevent has taken on board the research that you and others have undertaken in answering my initial question about the apparent lack of hard evidence?

Professor Neumann: Yes, Chairman, I think you are absolutely right. There is not as much evidence as in other fields of the social sciences. However, I would say, slightly disagreeing with my colleague here, that there are a number of studies that are drawing on substantial amounts of empirical evidence now. In fact, if you read across the different models and theories that are empirically based you see recurring themes. There is the theme of grievance, crisis, conflict; there is the theme of ideology that people have been touched by that takes a grievance and channels it into a particular direction; and there is, of course, the theme of mobilisation—the influence of radicalisers or small groups of people who radicalise collectively. I would describe them as ingredients of the process of radicalisation. I agree we do not know absolutely everything about how these ingredients fit together, how to cook the recipe. We don't have the recipe but we may have the ingredients.

Ms Stuart: I would only add that yes, I think in this area the work that we did that was cited by the Prevent Review drew on 138 convictions for Islamism-inspired terrorism between 1999 and 2010. So, compared to other types of crime, we are talking about an incredibly small evidence base. Just from those numbers, it would be incredibly difficult to draw something that you would call hard evidence. I would say again that the Intelligence and Security Committee inquiry into 7/7 did say that they were disappointed that what they called "such a simple, yet essential, piece of the evidence base"—the successful conviction of terrorists and basic information about

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

their background, where they grew up, their education—did not exist. That was something that we did, which, as you say, is not hard evidence to describe the drivers of radicalisation but it at least gives you the basic background information of people who have been convicted in this country.

Q349 Chair: Yes. A quick answer from each of you, starting with you, Ms Stuart: is it on the increase or decrease? I understand why we can't have hard facts, but you are in the field, you are in this area. Would you say it was increasing or decreasing?

Ms Stuart: Do you mean radicalisation? I think it is difficult to answer. Certainly we are not seeing a drop in convictions of Islamism-inspired terrorism in this country. There was a peak between 2005 and 2007 but there has not been a significant drop. Also there have been a number of plots thwarted recently that did not result in convictions but were ended a different way by, say, deportation. I would say that the level of radicalism has been fairly consistent, if not increasing, from the 1990s.

Professor Neumann: I would say it is definitely on the decrease. The reason for saying that is not by looking at convictions necessarily but by looking at extremist organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun, which were able to mobilise hundreds if not thousands of people in the late 1990s and now are able to mobilise maybe 100. So there is a very significant decrease.

Chair: That is a very significant decrease. Mr Bartlett, up or down?

Mr Bartlett: I agree, I think probably down or stabilising. I think there is potentially a growth in some types of non-violent extremism, particularly Salafi groups, and there are obviously potentially types of increases in other types. We are talking here predominantly about Islamic extremism but, as I am sure you are all aware, other types of extremism appear to be on the increase. Part of that may be what Professor Eatwell calls cumulative, that groups feed off each other. Classic examples are the English Defence League and Hizb ut-Tahrir, who require each other's presence in order to justify their continuing existence and just continually spur each other on.

Q350 Dr Huppert: If I could comment on Mr Bartlett's criticisms of taking anecdotal, and we would be very grateful if any of you do want to give us more evidence later in written form to justify things that you say. May I first ask all of you—I think we are now going from Mr Bartlett to the right—how do you respond to the Prevent Review and the new Prevent Strategy?

Mr Bartlett: I broadly welcomed the review. My original understanding of how I believed the review was going to go was that there would be a much clearer distinction than there was between violent terrorist activity and non-violent extremism, which at times appeared to be slightly confused when the final document came out. In principle the idea that counter-terrorism is the work of the Home Office and that is a security-related issue, and there are other types of extremism that are a concern but not necessarily a security one, is the right one. I think in respect of

where ideology plays a role, that is where I was less certain, but overall I think it was an improvement on the last one.

Professor Neumann: First of all, it is very good because it now addresses different kinds of extremism. Precisely because of what Jamie just said, we do have a problem of different kinds of extremism feeding off each other and that is now being addressed. Secondly, it more clearly separates counter-radicalisation and Prevent on the one hand from counter-terrorism on the other hand. It should be more difficult, at least in principle, to make the accusation that counter-radicalisation Prevent is about spying on communities, because it is more clearly separated. I do also—and that is my final point—in principle welcome the idea that you are no longer funding groups that are fundamentally opposed to the British constitution, if you want.

Ms Stuart: I would agree and broadly I also welcomed the review. What was particularly good was that even just in the foreword it was spelt out—we have had these kind of vague ideas about what our values are as a society and in the first paragraph it spelt out universal human rights, equality before the law, democracy and full participation in our society. The review also consistently said that the Government would no longer engage with or fund groups that fail to support these values. It is the first time we have had them defined. I know that some people would consider that maybe a knee-jerk or a right-wing reaction, and I would completely disagree. I think it is quite progressive; it respects the boundaries of our law. The review continually states that the Government will seek to uphold freedom of speech but that it is also vital to challenge apologists for terrorism. I think, very simply, it is saying that if groups run counter to these values, if they are engaging in activities that break our discrimination laws, then they have the right to exist, they have the right to say what they want to say, but they do not have the right to use a public platform, to have public money, or to be engaged with by Government. I think that was very important.

Q351 Dr Huppert: You have all indicated, I think, that you support the focus on looking at explicitly non-violent extremism as well as violent extremism. How far down the chain do you think that should continue? What counts as extremism? How radical does something have to be to cross that threshold?

Ms Stuart: I think it is spelt out in those four statements, universal human rights, equality before the law, democracy. It is not saying that you can't exist or you don't have the right to have those views. It is certainly not saying, for example, you don't have the right or the Government won't fund you if you disagree with foreign policy, but I think it is saying that if, as an organisation or as a university student union that is now a charity, you are going to consistently put people on a platform who break, for example, discrimination laws against homosexuals then you should not be surprised if your money and your state legitimacy is withdrawn. I think that is the right thing to do.

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

Professor Neumann: I broadly agree. I think that the ultimate test to apply is to ask, does a particular group broadly support the constitutional form of government, democracy, human rights, and is it unambiguous about violence? If it fails these tests then surely, while it should be allowed to exist and under freedom of speech they should be able to express their opinions, it should not be funded and empowered by the state.

Mr Bartlett: I slightly disagree. Firstly, I think it is obviously very difficult for the Government to defeat extremism, non-violent extremism. It is difficult to know where to start, it is difficult to know who to fund, and I think personally to defeat non-violent extremism the best way is probably funding projects that are not about extremism, that bring communities together for completely unrelated reasons to extremism. Secondly, my slight concern about the focus on not working with non-violent extremists is that there may be occasions particularly where the police do believe that working with these groups has a very clear and definite security benefit. So I think it is important to distinguish between those types of tactical alliances or tactical information sharing and the broader effort to empower Muslim communities or to put particular groups up as spokespeople for Muslim communities. That was part of the problem over the last four or five years—that we were dealing with new organisations that were arriving and springing up rather quickly. People did not know what they stood for very well and local authorities found it difficult to know precisely who to fund and who not to fund. I think improvements have been made but if it comes to a situation where groups that are doing very good and documented work in preventing terrorist activity are accused of being extremists, for whatever reason and from whoever, and that money is then withdrawn that could be a problem for everybody.

Q352 Mr Winnick: Mr Bartlett, one thing is certain: that the so-called English Defence League does not receive any Government money, but you have done a study, presumably the first study, of this organisation. Is it driven by hatred of Islam?

Mr Bartlett: The group is an interesting one for a number of reasons. It is predominantly online, most of its activity takes place online, and only a very small proportion of its support base goes out and demonstrates, which is what everybody sees on the news. You have individuals there who are genuinely concerned that Sharia law is being introduced, or is going to be introduced—is on the verge of being introduced in the UK. They care greatly about human rights and individual freedom and they believe that these things are under attack. Part of the reason they believe that is because they consume media that seems to tell them that is the case. But equally it draws other people who are known neo-Nazis, who are well documented, experienced BNP voters and members and people who are coming in.

The problem with the English Defence League is that there is no formal membership base. There is no way of controlling who joins the marches and who joins the groups online. As a result, you have a very wide

array of people, some of whom are certainly driven by hatred of Islam, some of whom are driven by a desire to protect English values, which they see as under threat, some of whom have concerns about their local housing, or are unemployed and angry about immigration. So it is a very interesting group and I think it is going to be characteristic of a number of groups that will emerge in the future.

Q353 Mr Winnick: If it draws in the sort of people that you are saying, it must inevitably be not only, first and foremost, anti-Islam but also anti-Semitic, even if one or two people who are Jewish are in it.

Mr Bartlett: There may be individuals there, particularly in the beginning of the English Defence League when they were attracting well known neo-Nazi groups, which they eventually expelled. There were some early anti-Semitic individuals involved but more recently they have tried to form various alliances with Jewish groups. They say they are on the side of Jewish groups. They have a Jewish wing in the English Defence League and they have a number of Jewish members. Certainly the official ideology of the group is not anti-Semitic.

Q354 Mr Winnick: Ms Stuart, what is your attitude toward extremist, non-terrorist organisations like the organisation we have just mentioned?

Ms Stuart: Do you mean Hizb ut-Tahrir?

Mr Winnick: The so-called English Defence League.

Ms Stuart: I am not an expert on the English Defence League in any way but I do see them as an aggressive reaction perhaps to the group Al-Muhajiroun more so than Hizb ut-Tahrir. There tend to be a lot of EDL marches and protests countering Al-Muhajiroun activity. I think one of the first instances was in Luton. But, again, I am not an expert on the EDL.

Q355 Mr Winnick: I am not suggesting you are an expert, but do I take it that the society that you are associated with, the Henry Jackson Society, totally condemns it?

Ms Stuart: Yes, of course.

Q356 Mr Winnick: Mr Neumann, it could be a pretty wide-ranging answer but, briefly, what should be the main emphasis of the British Government's policy in dealing with organisations that are not terrorist but have extreme views and extreme activities in some respects?

Professor Neumann: I strongly believe that, first of all, not all of the organisations need to be banned, and maybe this is something that we are going to talk about later on.

Chair: Yes, we are.

Professor Neumann: Not all of these organisations need to be banned but equally they should not necessarily be empowered. I don't think either the English Defence League or an equivalent organisation on the Islamist side should be given Government money or they should be graced with Ministers' presence at their conferences. However, they should be critically engaged and they should be challenged. Their arguments should be addressed because these arguments clearly play a role in certain circles. What

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

I would hope the new Prevent policy is going to bring is a more challenging attitude towards extremist attitudes, not banning groups but confronting the arguments.

Q357 Mr Winnick: Ms Stuart, does your organisation accept that once you start, as with anti-Semitism—and we know what that led to over 2,000 years—the hatred generated against Islam—as we know, only a tiny minority of that faith engage in terrorism and extremism, certainly in this country—inevitably leads to the kind of horror that we saw in Norway? That unless you stamp on it, as anti-Semitism was never stamped on effectively prior to 1945, anti-Islam will lead to the kind of atrocities as in Norway?

Ms Stuart: I think that is a big concern, yes. Certainly, I think we need to stamp down on groups like the EDL but, as Peter was saying, not necessarily by banning them, except perhaps banning marches in certain circumstances where we feel that is going to be a threat to public order, but by critically challenging them. For example, Jamie was just saying that one of their beliefs is what they perceive as an increasing level of Sharia in this country. Well, I think the Government need to be very clear that the law on Sharia since the 1996 Arbitration Act has been exactly the same: you can use Sharia in a court of arbitration and that is it. There is no creeping Shariaisation in this country. Their fears are unfounded and they should be engaged with and told very firmly that that is the case. These myths do need to be dispelled because what we saw in Norway, I would argue, is that when people feel that their main political parties or their normal avenues for protest or engagement are not open to them or are not receptive to their ideas they will seek even further radicalisation, like the situation in Norway.

Q358 Steve McCabe: I wanted to ask if we are a bit confused or ambivalent about our attitudes to the EDL. If we follow Mr Bartlett's line, some of the concerns of some of their adherents—housing, local services—are legitimate. You say you don't want them banned and you don't want them to have public money, but every time we permit them to demonstrate in the centre of Birmingham they are consuming huge volumes of public resource that could be better spent. Don't we have to be clear what we saying? Either there is a legitimate strand that we should develop or we should see this as unacceptable, but we seem to be stuck in the middle, paying for them indirectly.

Professor Neumann: Yes, and what I was referring to was direct Government funding, as happened with some Islamist groups in the past. But I completely agree with you, of course one has to consider also indirect funding or support for these groups. I just think on the general question it is probably not possible, nor is it effective, to ban these groups in the sense that the people and the ideas behind them will not necessarily go away.

Q359 Alun Michael: Mr Bartlett said that a lot of the activity—I think he said the majority of the activity—of the English Defence League is online,

which implies that there is more reach of their ideas beyond the numbers that we see in the demonstrations that take place. Could you give us some idea of the respective volumes of engagement there?

Mr Bartlett: I ran a survey of 1,500 members of their Facebook group, and their Facebook group is central to the organisation. They are one of the few organisations that was founded post Facebook and it is really critical as a way of organising, proselytising, recruiting. Their Facebook group size has shrunk recently. It was between 70,000 and 100,000; that collapsed. The site was, I think, probably hacked into, and they are building their membership base back up to, I think, currently between 30,000 and 40,000. A number of those people are trolls; they are people that don't really like the group. They are there intentionally to sow discord or they are journalists or researchers like us. I estimate that around 25,000 to 35,000 members of the English Defence League that would consider themselves members are active online, of whom only about a fifth have been on national demonstrations; their activity is diversifying quite quickly. They are doing a lot more local activity, legal challenges, but the majority of it still takes place online. As you will have seen, they have never really managed to get more than 2,000 people to a march or a demonstration and that broadly bears out the research that I did. I don't think that is increasing at all. It is not going to get much bigger than that.

Q360 Alun Michael: That is very helpful. Thanks very much. If there is more on that, I think it would be of interest to us. Hannah Stuart, in your submission you say that there was no reduction in Al-Muhajiroun involvement in terrorism following their proscription in 2010, but you also say the proscription of al-Shabaab and Tehrik-e-Taliban is likely to be effective. How do you reconcile those two statements?

Ms Stuart: It is because when a group is proscribed there are a number of offences that are then relevant to them and from our study of previous terrorism offences there were a number of convictions for people who were raising money for proscribed organisations or sending weapons to groups in Pakistan or in Afghanistan or seeking to travel to go to terrorist training camps. With the proscription of al-Shabaab and Tehrik-e-Taliban that means that those offences are now open to British citizens that intend to do that, and I think that will have a good effect on our counter-terrorism measures.

Q361 Alun Michael: What is the basis for that?

Ms Stuart: There have been individuals who have previously funded al-Shabaab who have been on trial in this country for other related terrorist offences and a conviction was not secured even though the individual did admit to funding al-Shabaab. Now that group is proscribed, were a similar situation to arise that would result in a conviction. But I think something that also strengthens the state would be the fact that there have previously been individuals who have attempted to travel, particularly to Somalia, and because the group was not proscribed the Government had no choice but to put them under control order. Obviously control orders are a very controversial part

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

of our counter-terrorism mechanisms and are not an ideal option. They can result in quite genuine grievances because individuals are put under control order but not given a fair trial whereas with, say, al-Shabaab being proscribed, were an individual intending to travel to a training camp there, they could have a fair trial under our terrorism legislation.

Q362 Alun Michael: You also say you are concerned that prohibition of Hizb ut-Tahrir would, and I quote, “Possibly give unnecessary legitimacy to their West versus Islam, West anti-Islam world view”. Do you think there is a danger that proscription may be effective from a law enforcement perspective but more risky from a radicalisation viewpoint?

Ms Stuart: I don't think it would be particularly effective from a law enforcement view either, simply because it is very difficult with groups to define who is and who is not a member. Also, some of the offences like attending a meeting, those often happen in individuals' homes or, for example, back rooms in mosques that would allow that to happen, and so from a law enforcement point of view it would be very difficult to secure those offences. But I think more worrying would be the giving of legitimacy. Hizb ut-Tahrir is quite an unusual group in that generally it has not had much support from any other Islamist or Muslim organisation in this country but after 7/7, when Tony Blair first said that he was looking into possibly proscribing Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun, there was a noticeable swell of support from Islamist organisations for Hizb ut-Tahrir and they were presenting Tony Blair's proposals as part of an ongoing oppression against Muslims rather than a genuine investigation into whether a group ought to be proscribed or not. That was a kind of knee-jerk reaction and I feel that if Hizb ut-Tahrir were to be proscribed we would see that more.

Q363 Alun Michael: Could I ask the other two witnesses to comment on those points, please?

Professor Neumann: I think that proscriptions are usually most effective if you have organisations that have some sort of formal organisation, that have bank accounts, that have offices. These things can be banned and made more difficult by the law. But when we are talking about organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun they don't have many of these formal structures anyway. So the expectations in terms of proscribing these organisations should be very limited. I think it can be a useful tool in terms of disrupting a group's activities, in terms of keeping them off balance, in terms of keeping them preoccupied with themselves; in that sense it perhaps does make sense. But one should not expect too much in terms of a tangible impact when you are dealing with an organisation that does not have much of a structure, does not have money in bank accounts, does not rent offices in the first place.

Mr Bartlett: Yes, of course it is a question of personal philosophy; never forget that. Just a couple of quick points. I do think that having the Sword of Damocles constantly hanging over groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir has been quite helpful in forcing them to moderate in many respects. Certainly over the last decade they

have become more moderate and they may continue to do so. I do not believe, even though I am not in favour of proscription, that proscribing groups would give justification to the concept that the West is at war with Islam or some of these individuals because I think they have plenty of evidence that they believe already justifies that assertion.

Q364 Chair: The Prime Minister is very much in favour of banning Hizb ut-Tahrir. He would not just be saying this for fun, would he? He must have legitimate concerns about it. You are saying that when a political statement is made of that kind, similarly with Tony Blair, just the threat of that is enough to try and get people to be more moderate or to moderate their behaviour?

Mr Bartlett: I think so, and I think it has. Over the last five or six years particularly, the Government have been trying to ban the group, looking for ways to ban the group, spending a lot of time peering into what they have been doing with far greater scrutiny, and I know that has—

Q365 Chair: That is just as effective or perhaps even more effective?

Mr Bartlett: I think it is something that needs to be factored in. It is very difficult to weigh the different measures of effectiveness of things like that.

Ms Stuart: I would disagree with that. I did a study on Hizb ut-Tahrir and after Tony Blair said what he said, on the group's British website I think there were something like 285 different postings of various fatwas or press releases, many of which explicitly called for violence.

Q366 Chair: As a result of the statement or before the statement?

Ms Stuart: No, this is before. After Tony Blair's statement, the majority of stuff came off the website. There were about 30 postings, none of which called for violence. After that they have been very careful publicly about what they have said, but I have spoken to former members who were still involved with the organisation following 2005 who say that the group deliberately adopted a “keep your ideology in your heart” strategy where their views were not moderated but their public promotion was.

Chair: Professor, very quickly because we have to move on.

Professor Neumann: Just reinforcing that, I think they have become more careful. I think there is very little evidence that suggests that they have genuinely moderated.

Mr Bartlett: That is quite important, though, because it means they are less able to spread and share their message beyond the existing members.

Q367 Chair: But does it not push them underground, Professor?

Professor Neumann: I think organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir already organise a lot like conspiratorial movements. I don't think it will make a big difference in that respect.

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

Q368 Nicola Blackwood: One of the findings of the Prevent Review was that universities are a particular locus for the radicalisation of vulnerable young people and that universities themselves should be playing a role in trying to prevent this. But we have received evidence from Universities UK and also the Federation of Student Islamic Societies who claim that, while they recognise that they do have a duty to try and manage the risks, there is no hard evidence to suggest that violent organisations do target students. I wonder if you could respond to that, perhaps starting with Jamie Bartlett.

Mr Bartlett: My understanding is that universities had traditionally been quite a hotbed, particularly for Hizb ut-Tahrir, partly because of the belief, and I think it is borne out by evidence, that one of the root causes here is a sense of failed aspirations. People who thought they would do much better in life than they did see that the doors of opportunity are closed to them as a result of their religion or their ethnicity and that is a particularly fertile breeding ground when you combine that with the sort of genuine radicalism that you have when you are a young person. Plus some of the technical skills that people have in engineering are, for obvious reasons, quite appealing. So I think historically that has been the case and I think, Hannah—you will know better than me—your work shows that quite a high proportion of people have been to university, although I think that has fallen over the last three or four years in particular.

Q369 Nicola Blackwood: What about your work on EDL and other groups—has that shown a similar propensity to target universities or not?

Mr Bartlett: No.

Professor Neumann: We did a study in 2007 for the European Commission and we came to the conclusion that, like prisons or like the internet, universities were places of vulnerability. They are places of vulnerability because you get people of a certain age, often away from home for the first time, often feeling quite lost and often experiencing a sort of crisis of identity and so on. That makes it easy for extremist groups to pick them up and to say to them, “Come along to our meeting, we are like you”. Of course, as Hannah’s centre has documented, there have been a lot of cases of people who were radicalised as a result of going to university. I am not doing myself any favours here because I am working for a university, but I do think that university administrations have been a little bit complacent about this in the past.

Ms Stuart: Our study of the convictions over the last 11 years did show that 30% of individuals involved in Islamism-related terrorism in the UK had at some point been at university, whether they had graduated or not. Now, that does not claim a causal connection; it is just simply stating of facts. I do understand that a group like FOSIS that purports to represent Muslim students will seek to respond whenever there is a media focus on Muslim students and terrorism, and there is at times. I can understand that but I think that they are lax in their duty because it is almost a knee-jerk reaction where they say there has never been a case of an ISOC member involved in terrorism, there is no problem with radicalisation whatsoever, and that

is simply not true. Abdulmutallab this year was the fifth senior member of a UK-based ISOC to be convicted for dangerous Islamist terrorist acts.¹

I think it is not just about the admittedly very small number of Muslim students who have gone on to commit terrorist acts but it is about the atmosphere that is created sometimes on campus by Islamic societies or other organisations who consistently invite a certain type of speaker that does not reflect the plurality of Islam in this country. They are often very narrow, politicised speakers, proponents of Hamas for example, or even Anwar Al-Awlaki.² In 2009 there was a university in London that invited him via a video link to address their ISOC annual conference.

As Peter said, this is often people’s first time away from home. If you are a Muslim student, you have come to university, you have joined the Islamic Society, and in the work we did a couple of years ago most people said they joined just to meet like-minded people, to engage in charity. So you join for that reason and if the culmination of your ISOC year is to have a lecture from Anwar Al-Awlaki that simply is not good enough. It has been pointed out to student unions, to ISOC representatives and to university vice-chancellors for a number of years and there does seem to be a level of complacency, or I am not sure if it is an unwillingness to act. I understand it is very difficult because these things are right on the boundaries of freedom of speech and security but I don’t think enough is being done.

Chair: Thank you. I cut you all short here because time is short but if there is anything else you want to add on universities in particular we are very keen to know about this. The Committee is holding a conference next Tuesday at De Montfort in Leicester on this very subject, so any additional information would be gratefully received.

Q370 Michael Ellis: Professor Neumann, if I could ask you first of all, the Government have made some progress, I would suggest to you, in connection with tackling online radicalisation. There is a report that you did called “Countering Online Radicalisation” published a couple of years ago. Do you think the Government have taken your recommendations from your report on board?

Professor Neumann: I think some of the recommendations were taken on board, not all of them. One of our recommendations was to bring strategic prosecutions—not necessarily taking down websites but to prosecute the people who are producing the content for the websites. That has happened, to some extent. There is also a mechanism that the Government have introduced for deciding what kind of content should be taken down and that has also been done. Most importantly, we believe that there is no technical solution to this problem and that

¹ The witness later clarified that, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was a former UCL student and ISOC president who was convicted in the US in October 2011 for a failed bomb attack on a Detroit-bound flight on Christmas Day 2009.

² The witness later clarified that, Anwar al-Awlaki was a former spiritual leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula who was killed in a US drone attack in Yemen in September 2011.

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

this problem needs to be addressed differently, and the Government have followed us there. It is very important to remember—and this is where I think the Government can do more—the internet is the indispensable infrastructure of the 21st century. It is nearly 100% in private hands, so the most profitable way for any Government to address this problem is to bring political pressure, in some cases, to bear on internet providers—big internet companies who are hosting extremist videos in places like YouTube, Google, Facebook.

Q371 Michael Ellis: Don't the Government already do that?

Professor Neumann: They do that to some extent but they could do it more consistently. I believe that, for example, all the measures that have been taken by YouTube to clean up its act have always been in response to political pressure, both from the United States and the United Kingdom. So it is very important that the Government keep that going.

Q372 Michael Ellis: Many of these internet service providers have acceptable behaviour codes, so even where there is not a breach in the law of the country where they may be host they can use these acceptable behaviour codes to take down these offensive websites if it is brought to their attention.

Professor Neumann: Absolutely. This is not about freedom of speech. All these websites, whether it is YouTube or Facebook, have their own rules. They have acceptable behaviours. They all say, "We are against hate speech" and they are very effective in removing sexual content or copyright content. Why can they not be equally effective at removing, for example, extremist Islamist or extremist right-wing content? Primarily, I believe it is because it is not in their commercial interest and that is why it is so important that politicians and Governments bring political pressure to bear so that these companies understand it is important.

Q373 Michael Ellis: Further to that, what does your research indicate is the role of the internet in far right and Al-Qaeda radicalisation—perhaps to Mr Bartlett as well on that? How important do you think the internet is?

Professor Neumann: I think it is becoming increasingly important because it is becoming increasingly important for all of us. There are three key functions: firstly, disseminating extremist content, imagery, video; secondly, it allows extremists to find each other and network; and thirdly, it can of course create a virtual echo chamber where quite extreme views are becoming normalised because very extreme people are allowed to interact with each other. All these functions are quite problematic.

Mr Bartlett: Those points are absolutely accurate. I would just add a couple more. The essential balkanisation of media content, which means people are able to access an incredible array of information now, some of it very good and accurate, some of it very bad, means that people are always able to find information that seems to corroborate their existing world view, whether it is that Sharia law is on the

verge of taking over the UK or that the Jews were behind 9/11 or whatever it happens to be, and that can be quickly shared and push the group in an increasingly polarised direction. That is one thing. The second thing is that there is alongside, as I said, this accurate, quality, niche journalism and good information at least an equal amount of misinformation, propaganda, lies and the rest of it. It is very difficult for young people to be able to negotiate that. A lot of the information that looks very trustworthy and accurate—and people tend to go on aesthetics of websites—is absolutely bogus but we are not taught this in schools because it has happened so quickly. People are not being taught in school how to critically evaluate internet-based content and I think that is one of the biggest weaknesses that we face at the moment. We learn about how libraries work or whatever but as soon as the kids come out of school it is YouTube and it is Facebook and it is link sharing and it is LinkedIn and it is Twitter, but none of that stuff is being taught and I think that needs to be done.

Q374 Michael Ellis: Did you want to add anything, Ms Stuart?

Ms Stuart: I would only add that I think the internet is of growing importance simply because of increased counter-terrorism surveillance techniques and the concerns about the rise of what we call lone wolf terrorism. I think there have been cases since 2008, 2009 and 2010 that all bear that out. That is all I would add.

Q375 Steve McCabe: This question is really for Mr Neumann and it is specifically about prisons. The National Offender Management Service say that prison policy on radicalisation has moved on considerably from your report in, I think it was, 2010. Are they right to say that?

Professor Neumann: When we published our report, NOMS was just starting to implement its strategy on countering extremism in prisons and I understand that a lot of the measures that were started then are now being implemented and that is a good thing. I do give them credit for following a lot of the recommendations that we made in our report and also for taking a lot of criticism on board. So I do believe that they have got the emphasis right. They emphasise staff training, they emphasise aftercare for prisoners, providing mainstream-based services. This is all very positive, but it is very important that committees like yours continue to monitor whether all these good intentions are translated into practice. For now it seems to be the case but it is very important to stay on the case.

Q376 Steve McCabe: Some of the evidence we have received seems to suggest there is very little radicalisation in prison. Is that a fair assumption?

Professor Neumann: I think it is very difficult to say and that is partly because organisations like NOMS, but also prison services in other countries, are not very forthcoming with numbers. So whatever number you read in reports, it is all plucked out of thin air; no one quite knows how many people radicalise in prisons. A lot of the examples that are always being given

6 December 2011 Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Stuart and Professor Peter Neumann

for prison radicalisation—like Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, who converted to Islam in prison but radicalised at Brixton mosque outside of prison—are not examples of prison radicalisation. If there is one request I would have of NOMS it would be to publish figures on this because no one quite knows.

Steve McCabe: That is very helpful.

Q377 Chair: We also found when we went to Belmarsh and spoke with Abu Hamza and the governor that there was no tracking system. Once people had left prison, nobody really knew what happened to them and that kind of joined-up approach was extremely important.

Professor Neumann: That is precisely because of people like Richard Reid who are coming out of

prison and who are often feeling lost and who may be vulnerable not inside prison but when they come out of it. That is why it is so important to have aftercare provisions that work.

Chair: Mr Bartlett, Professor Neumann, Ms Stuart, you have given us fascinating evidence today. We could carry on questioning you all morning but I am afraid we have other witnesses. If we have missed out anything, please feel free to write to us. We are hoping to conclude this report very shortly. Equally, if you would like to come to Leicester next Tuesday we would be very happy to have you contribute to one of the sessions in the afternoon. Thank you very much for coming.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **David Anderson, QC**, Independent Reviewer of Terrorist Legislation, gave evidence.

Q378 Chair: Mr Anderson, thank you very much for coming today. I begin by congratulating you on your appointment and welcoming you most warmly to your post. We ought really to have had you before the Committee before today but I am afraid our agenda has become very crowded indeed. But we are most grateful to you for coming today. We will be seeing you more regularly than once a year once we get into the swing of things.

You know what this inquiry is about and we are very keen to ask you a number of questions. I would like to start on the question of proscription. The Government are quite clear they believe that proscription is a way of disrupting organisations and preventing activity that is harmful. You have said that proscription has the ability to disrupt harmful organisations and to change behaviours. You were very clear that you believe that this is the proper approach in certain circumstances. Do you agree that Hizb ut-Tahrir should be proscribed—should be one of the 47 organisations or perhaps should become the 48th organisation to be proscribed?

Mr Anderson: You have thrown me in at the deep end, Chairman. No, I have never sought to make the case for the proscription of Hizb ut-Tahrir, nor would I necessarily accept that proscription is effective in every case. I think there are a number of very different types of groups that are proscribed and one rather rough and ready way of examining when proscription might be effective might be to look at the people who are most upset about it happening. From my perspective, in terms of the people I have spoken to and the people who have been very keen to speak to me, you are talking about people, for example, in the Kurdish community, Tamils, you are talking about people in the Baluch community, perhaps also Sikhs—in other words, people who may have sympathy with groups that have been proscribed largely because they represent a terrorist threat to other Governments, rather than because of the fact that they represent a threat to the United Kingdom Government or to UK nationals abroad. It is pretty clear to me that in cases such as that, proscription

does have an effect. Whether it is a good effect or a bad effect depends on where you are standing. I am not just thinking about prosecutions, which have always been relatively infrequent and which in very recent years have been almost non-existent, since 2008, although, incidentally, I would not bank on that necessarily continuing.

Q379 Chair: Let's stick with Hizb ut-Tahrir for a moment. Two serving Prime Ministers have said that they would like to ban this organisation, and therefore they must have evidence to support this view rather than just get up one morning and decide, "We would like to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir". Are you saying that just the mere mention—we have heard evidence, and you were sitting at the back, you heard what was being said—of a possible ban is almost as good as a ban in some cases because people then take care as to what they put on websites and how they approach this subject? Surely if David Cameron and Tony Blair believe these are organisations that ought to be proscribed, they ought to be proscribed?

Mr Anderson: My reading of the counter-terrorism review that this Government undertook when they came into office was that, yes, they were certainly considering that but that they took the view, reluctantly or otherwise, that in order to achieve that you would probably have to amend the law because organisations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and what one might call its mirror image, the English Defence League, probably don't go so far as to encourage terrorism in the sense that the Act requires. So you would need to extend the law in order to be able to proscribe it.

Q380 Chair: But you don't think it should be banned?

Mr Anderson: I think it is a very slippery slope. I don't have a public position on whether Hizb ut-Tahrir should be banned or not, but from what I know of the organisation I think it would be very difficult to ban it under the existing law. You have just heard from the Henry Jackson Society, and you will have seen their

6 December 2011 David Anderson, QC

very detailed report of 2009 concluding last year, that concluded that it would be counterproductive and ultimately undesirable to ban them.

Q381 Chair: I have here the list of proscribed terrorist organisations that I have just obtained and on there—you have mentioned the Tamils—is the LTTE. The LTTE have never operated in the United Kingdom. I don't recognise many of these names. I have heard of some of them, but I know the LTTE because I have a number of Tamils in my constituency. Now, they have never operated in the UK. They have been basically finished off by the Sri Lankan Government; the leader has been killed. Why does that remain on the list, for example? Shouldn't somebody be looking at this list on a regular basis and saying, "Well, in this particular case the group has never operated here, doesn't exist any more. Should it be banned?"

Mr Anderson: I entirely agree, Chairman, with the thrust of your question, as you will know if you have read my report. Of course there are reviews. Every organisation on the list is reviewed administratively every year but, because there is no necessary parliamentary input or judicial input and because listing doesn't lapse unless it is specifically renewed, as is the case, for example, under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010, it is very difficult to see why a Minister would ever want to take the initiative and de-proscribe any organisation at all. In fact no Minister since 2000 has done that in relation to any organisation. The only one that has been de-proscribed—

Q382 Chair: Do you think there ought to be a mechanism to allow some organisations, should they feel that they need to challenge the decision outside the courts—because, of course, there is a legal method of doing this—to, for example, petition Parliament about it, or should there be a new method of trying to get the Government to focus on some of these organisations?

Mr Anderson: I think something needs to be done. You might have seen in my report there is a reference to "difficult cases", which is a term of art in this world. As I understand a difficult case, what it means is a case in which the statutory test for proscription is, at least arguably, not satisfied but it is very difficult to know what to do about it because you might embarrass a foreign Government or open Pandora's box on Northern Ireland or whatever it might be. So at the end of the day the history of the last 10 years shows nothing happens in relation to these.

The suggestion I made in my report I thought was rather a modest suggestion. My understanding is it is being considered but what the outcome of that consideration will be I don't know. It is that these proscriptions should be time limited, rather like asset freezes under the 2010 Act—you could say rather like TPIMs under the forthcoming TPIM legislation—with the result that if after two years, or whatever it is, if the Minister decides that he really wants to renew the listing, he will have to come before Parliament with some good reasons why. It seems to me that, apart from anything else, that would make things easier for

the Minister, because if he is under pressure from a foreign Government to retain the listing of some organisation that appears not to have been active for years, he could say, "I am sorry, I would love to help you but—"

Q383 Chair: Is that where the push comes from? In effect it is not domestic pressure, it is the Government of Sri Lanka or one of the Arab Governments that are on to the Foreign Secretary to say, "This should be banned"?

Mr Anderson: Certainly not in every case but, as I said in my report, some of these organisations are listed, at least partly, in order to please foreign Governments. I have no doubt about that at all.

Q384 Dr Huppert: I welcome you rather belatedly to your role and wish you good luck in managing to avoid going native and keep your independence. It is a challenge. As I understand it, no non-Irish domestic group has ever been proscribed at all. Is that correct and why do you think that is? Does that say, as the Chair was suggesting, that it is really just that foreign Governments drive the proscription process?

Mr Anderson: No, I don't think it is just driven by foreign Governments. For example, I would be very surprised if the proscription of Al-Muhajiroun was driven by foreign Governments. Anjem Choudary's perspective is largely a UK perspective. The reason one usually sees for domestic groups not being proscribed is that these far right organisations in particular just are not of the size or degree of organisation of some of the organisations that are proscribed. I do wonder—and this might be worth exploring with the Minister—whether there may also be a disconnect in terms of the civil servants concerned with this matter. It is something one sees at the Home Office. It is something one sees at the Crown Prosecution Service. There will be a terrorist department, as it were, but far right extremism is in a slightly different box. Everyone accepts that it can, if it is violent, meet the statutory definition of terrorism but it is not always looked at by the same people or at the same time. So it may be that there is an element of that.

Q385 Dr Huppert: I think that is very helpful and I am interested in your description that it is a question of size and degree of the organisation. You argue the far right ones don't have that. Are you persuaded that all of the international groups on the list do have that level of size or degree? Do you think we are applying a balanced effect? If not, why not?

Mr Anderson: No. If one took something like the Abu Nidal Organisation, for example, I am not persuaded. I don't know whether it exists or how big it is but it is certainly not very big. So, no, I wouldn't say they were all large organisations.

Q386 Dr Huppert: So we are being inconsistent in our application of the proscription rules?

Mr Anderson: Well, possibly. I am not an expert on these far right groups and I can well understand that with the English Defence League you are looking at something like Hizb ut-Tahrir where arguably they

6 December 2011 David Anderson, QC

have been careful enough not to infringe the current statutory test. If you are looking at something like, say, the Aryan Strike Force, which is probably a rather more overtly violent organisation—two members of it were convicted last year, as you will know, of the Ricin plot—there one may be in that territory. But you would still have to ask, “Is that a sensible thing to do or are we just looking at half a dozen people here, proscribing whom is simply going to give them a status that they don’t currently possess?”

Q387 Nicola Blackwood: I wanted to ask you about the glorification sections of the Terrorism Act. Since that Act in 2006, groups who glorify terrorism have also been eligible for proscription. I wondered if you had any concerns whether the definition of glorification has any risks for free speech and whether that definition is too broad or vague. There were some concerns at the time.

Mr Anderson: I think when it originally came to Parliament after 7/7 there certainly were such concerns and there were questions about whether you could speak approvingly of Robert the Bruce or Nelson Mandela without glorifying terrorism. It seems to me that Parliament went quite a long way towards neutralising that particular risk by adding that it is only glorification if you are encouraging people to emulate that behaviour in the present or in the future. That is a test that is common both to section 1 and section 2 of the 2006 Act where you have the criminal offences. It is also common to the proscription condition.

I have read Professor Walker’s evidence, and I have the very highest regard for Professor Walker; indeed he does, on a very part-time basis, operate as my special adviser. He points out—it is perhaps a lawyer’s point—that there is a very subtle difference in the way in which glorification comes in, section 1 and 2 on the one hand, where it is limited only to the indirect encouragement of terrorism, and under proscription, on the other, where it is available to prove direct encouragement of terrorism. I can see the inconsistency. Whether it has much practical importance, I am not so sure. It seems to me if you are going to have, as a criminal offence, the encouragement of terrorism or the dissemination of terrorist material under section 1 and section 2, it is at least logical that an organisation that promotes such activity should itself be a proscribed organisation.

Q388 Nicola Blackwood: Do you have any concerns also about the problems where the words of an individual, perhaps glorifying terrorism under the definitions and which we would all agree would be inciting violence, would then be attributed to the group and would result in a proscription, which would perhaps be considered to be disproportionate?

Mr Anderson: I can’t say I have observed that problem in practice. With Hizb ut-Tahrir for example, those who would like to see it proscribed will sometimes put together scrapbooks of things that individuals all over the world who have at one time or another claimed some connection with Hizb ut-Tahrir have said, but it has not resulted in the case being made out for the proscription of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

So it is a real danger. But I believe the danger is anticipated in section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and in practice I am not aware of problems that it has caused.

Q389 Nicola Blackwood: Do you think there is a need to clarify section 3 in order to avoid this or do you think that in practice the precedent has removed that need?

Mr Anderson: Section 1 and section 2 of the 2006 Act are difficult, and this is a difficult section too. One is always wary of these very widely worded statutory powers because a great deal of emphasis is placed on the good sense of prosecutors and, in this case, the good sense of Ministers in deciding how to use those powers. I think all one can say is that I haven’t seen evidence of abuse at this stage.

Q390 Mr Winnick: In no way reflecting on your position, Mr Anderson, you are well known as a leading lawyer and so on—and you are wondering what I am now going to ask you—did the appointment come out of the blue, so to speak?

Mr Anderson: It came completely out of the blue. I could tell you how it happened if you are interested but time may be short.

Q391 Mr Winnick: One or two questions. You never hesitated in taking up the appointment?

Mr Anderson: It was indicated that a speedy answer would be appreciated and I said if I was the sort of person who would jump to that particular command then I was not the sort of independent person they needed to do the job, so I took my time. But, having thought about it, I accepted.

Q392 Mr Winnick: And why not. Can I ask you about your position? Your predecessor, equally distinguished—to some extent what Mr Huppert asked you about going native—without in any way criticising him as such, it is a free country, involved himself in the controversy over pre-charge detention, make it clear either 90 days or just leave it to the court. Is it your intention to give opinion that really is a matter for Parliament?

Mr Anderson: My predecessor was already a politician and I am not a politician. I have never had any political involvement and I don’t see it as part of my role to get into politics or to fancy myself as a politician.

Q393 Mr Winnick: I think that answers the question. Just one other question that is not related to your appointment, which I think I would be right in saying the Committee welcomes. On the question of changing names arising from banning, is there any real purpose in banning unless it is absolutely essential, because if an organisation is banned then presumably it changes its name within a matter of hours or days and we are back to square one?

Mr Anderson: I would not be quite as negative as that about it. There are some organisations, of course, that have a lot of what might in another context be called brand equity. Something as resonant as the UVF or the Red Hand Commando or the IRA is a very

6 December 2011 David Anderson, QC

powerful brand and it is not simply going to rename itself and re-form under another guise. I suspect the problem, so far at least, has been limited to Al-Muhajiroun and its various aliases, and I think there is an element probably of delight in outwitting the Government by dissolving one organisation and forming another as soon as it is proscribed. I can see the risk that the Government would look foolish by that happening. But I don't think that is a reason for not doing it. I think at least by doing it that way one prevents those organisations from building up a brand equity of their own, because if they can't use the name any more they have to find a new one.

The other thing to remember is that it is provided in the Act itself that if you can establish in a court that the organisation that someone is a part of is in substance the same as an organisation that is proscribed, all the consequences of proscription must follow.

Mr Winnick: So it is a safeguard.

Q394 Alun Michael: As my colleague David Winnick has raised the issue of your predecessor's comments on the 90-day requirement, my memory of that is that his comment was that any number of days was problematic and that an unjustified detention of a couple of days could be unduly onerous. So it was not about the 90 days in the political decision, it was about the legal problems involved with that process. In such circumstances, as a lawyer, would you feel able to comment on proposals, either in favour of them, against them or in pointing out difficulties?

Mr Anderson: I think we last saw each other at the Joint Committee that existed in order to consider these matters. What I said to the Joint Committee was that when Sue Hemming, perhaps the most experienced counter-terrorism prosecutor in Europe, says that she can't envisage a case that would require more than 28 days I could see no argument whatsoever for allowing more than 28 days. So that was my starting point.

Q395 Alun Michael: But your predecessor's point was that the use within any existing number of days also needs to be looked at very much on the basis of what is the evidence and therefore to follow the evidence because detention is onerous unless it is well justified.

Mr Anderson: Yes.

Q396 Alun Michael: Could you explain what you see as the main problems with the de-proscription process, what you have recommended and what the Government have indicated about their planned response?

Mr Anderson: The problem is that nobody ever gets de-proscribed. One group has been de-proscribed and that was a well-funded group that went to the expense of a seven-day hearing in front of the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission, special advocates, expert witnesses brought in from Iran, a full-dress hearing and at the end of the day for them a satisfactory result, although even that went up to the Court of Appeal. I am quite sure it must have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds—how many hundreds of thousands I would not like to say. What

is needed is a way of ensuring that pointless or redundant listings can be removed at an earlier stage. I think there are various ways of doing that. The way I suggested is that a sunset clause be put on any listing so that it expires within, say, two years unless the Minister is prepared to come to Parliament with the evidence for renewing it. My sense is that would operate quite effectively in concentrating the Minister's mind and perhaps emboldening the Minister, in a case where a foreign Government might like the idea of the proscription but we can't see that it satisfies the test any more, to bite the bullet and allow the proscription to lapse. In terms of what the Government—

Q397 Alun Michael: Are you sure it would work as intended? When you look at previous sunset clauses there has tended to be, irrespective of Government, a whipped vote to maintain what has become the status quo. I am thinking of things like terrorist legislation in relation to Northern Ireland.

Mr Anderson: Perhaps unusually for a lawyer, I am saying you don't need the courts to do this, you can trust Parliament to do a good job and you can trust the Minister to feel suitably intimidated by the thought of bringing a bad case to Parliament. I very much hope that is the case. If that is not the case one could easily imagine a more lawyerly solution. One could say that every time it is proposed to renew a proscription the matter must be brought before a court that will sift the evidence, no doubt hear some of it in secret, no doubt hear witnesses from some of these foreign countries, and then pronounce on what the group is doing and whether the belief advanced by the Secretary of State is a reasonable one. Indeed, that may be quite close to what Professor Walker is suggesting. There is certainly work for lawyers and as a lawyer one accepts there is obviously a self-interest in these sorts of procedures.

Q398 Alun Michael: It has quite often been suggested that we sometimes get muddled about procedures—indeed, that was one of the issues before the Joint Committee that you referred to earlier—and ask lawyers to take decisions that are essentially political and ask politicians to take decisions on the granular detail of legislation that, if they are legally qualified, is a coincidence to the role of the MP rather than a part of it. Can I probe a little more deeply as to why you think this is—

Mr Anderson: Yes, I very much agree. I think this is a borderline case between a case where it is appropriate for the courts and appropriate for Parliament to provide the safeguard. I think the reason why Parliament does have a role here is that if you look at the five factors that were identified in 2000 as informing the discretion to proscribe, the fifth of them is the need to support other members of the international community in the global fight against terrorism. My impression is that that is not just a makeweight; that is probably one of the more important of the five factors. I could understand why Parliament would want to have a view on that, always aware, of course, that there is the backstop of an

6 December 2011 David Anderson, QC

application to POAC if it can ever be got off the ground.

Q399 Mr Winnick: Without raking up too much—and I am probably responsible for raking up some of the past controversy—for the record, your predecessor did defend the 90 days and then argued some months afterwards that it should be left simply to the court. So should you want to look up the records and see what should perhaps be avoided, it might do some good.

Mr Anderson: I hope it is clear I am not expressing any view of my predecessor other than that he did a very distinguished job for a very long time.

Mr Winnick: I understand that. I am sure.

Chair: We will go and look up the record.

Q400 Michael Ellis: Mr Anderson, rather belated congratulations on your appointment earlier this year. On the review that this Government have undertaken of counter-terrorism powers and the subsequent legislation—I am thinking of replacing control orders and restrictions on the ability of police to stop and search without suspicion and the like—do you have any evidence that suggests that this legislation has mitigated a sense of grievance that is apparently felt by some members of the Muslim community?

Mr Anderson: My impression of the measures that cause grievance, at least the ones that I am told about time after time, is that section 44, the stop and search power, certainly used to be in that category. One might infer from the fact that it is not used any more that it no longer fuels grievance, though needless to say it is not the sort of thing people necessarily volunteer when you talk to them. But it was a power that was used, I think, almost a million times and not a single conviction for a terrorist offence resulted. Talking to the police now it is quite rare to find a police officer who says, “Yes, I wish we had section 44 back again.” It seems to have gone with rather little—

Michael Ellis: Is there—

Mr Anderson: The other one is Schedule 7 because that also, of course, affects a huge number of people. You see the figure for 80,000 a year, 60,000 a year, whatever it is, actually examined at ports but, of course, that is dwarfed by the number of people who are taken aside at a port and asked a few questions. I hear a lot about that from minority ethnic communities.

In terms of control orders, and the power to detain for 14 or 28 days—I suspect—and there will be others who know more about this than me—these matters were never a major source of radicalisation in the first place. They affect so few people that they were not really a rallying point in the way that perhaps internment was in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s.

Q401 Michael Ellis: Of the remaining powers, is there one that stands out that you hear and feel is causing most resentment in these affected communities?

Mr Anderson: I think Schedule 7 needs a review, and I said that in my report, even though it is a useful power. It is very unlike section 44 in that respect.

Q402 Michael Ellis: Don’t most countries retain some stop and search powers—or stop and question powers, I should say—at their ports and airports similar, if not even more stringent, than ours in the UK?

Mr Anderson: Of course countries in the Schengen area can do very much less than we can, at least at their internal European borders, and for many of those countries internal European borders are largely what they have. So in that sense, perhaps, we do stick out a bit. The power to stop and examine people at ports is a very useful one. But I think there are a number of problems with Schedule 7 and one of them, frankly, is database quality. One finds blameless pillars of the community being stopped time after time after time again. One can only assume that it must be on the basis that there is some duff information somewhere in the system that is not being cleaned out quickly enough.

Q403 Chair: What kind of co-operation are you getting with Charles Farr and the office that he heads? If you ask for information, do you get it readily?

Mr Anderson: I do. I find everybody very willing to talk, and I have not so far been refused a document that I have asked for. It doesn’t always mean that I know the right document to ask for, but the ones I have asked for I have always been shown. I think they know that if I am not shown a document I will record that fact in my next report to Parliament.

Q404 Chair: In respect of the recent case of Raed Salah, you had some comments to make to the effect that the border will never be absolutely secure, there is always the risk that someone who has been banned by the Home Secretary, notwithstanding measures that have been taken, will end up coming into this country. Is that what you said, or have I misquoted you?

Mr Anderson: Yes. I was asked by a journalist what the impact of the border control row was on terrorism, and I think one of the points I made is that regrettably zero risk is not attainable and, indeed, it is probably not even a very sensible objective. Jonathan Evans, the Director of MI5, said as much in a public talk last autumn, where he said that to go down the route of pursuing zero risk was counter-productive and would lead to a misallocation of resources.

Q405 Chair: Would you expect to be doing more of these independent reports? We know you have the power to present a report to Parliament on a case like Raed Salah, which was given to HMIC to deal with, Her Majesty’s Inspectors. Would you be in a position to take on individual cases of that kind? Is that part of your remit?

Mr Anderson: As you know, I am on my own. I don’t have a staff or an office, and where there are other reviewers, or inspectors, be it John Vine of UKBA or the HMIC, I think it would not only be tactless but a very poor use of my resources to try and duplicate ground that they are already covering. But I would very much hope to do more snapshot reports, yes.

Q406 Chair: But if you had those resources to do the work on this very crucial issue of monitoring and

6 December 2011 David Anderson, QC

reporting as an independent person, would you value those additional resources to do that? I am not saying you have come here with a begging bowl. This is my suggestion to you. In order to do your work more effectively, would it be helpful if you had an office like John Vine, maybe not as big as John Vine's office but a capacity to be supported in the work that you do? This is still a very hot issue in Parliament and among the public.

Mr Anderson: Yes. I have always been self-employed, I have always done everything on my own, I have always stood behind every word I have written, so those are my instincts and my desire is to make a go of this job, doing it as well as I can on my own, making my own judgments and standing or falling by them. I am conscious, of course, of the budgetary position as well as my own instincts when I say that. But there may come a point where the job is simply too big for one person. It has already got quite a lot bigger, even since I took it over, because I now have the asset-freezing function, and I have a report on that coming out shortly. I will also have to do reports on

people who are detained for more than 14 days, if there are any, and under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 I will have a completely new function about people in detention places in Northern Ireland and in Paddington Green and elsewhere.

Q407 Chair: As you say, there is an international dimension to all this. You can't be expected to be an expert in every single country.

Mr Anderson: One can do a certain amount by reading but there comes a time when, for example, a week in the Netherlands or a week in the United States or a week in Canada just to get to the bottom of how they do things there would be extremely useful.

Chair: Indeed. Mr Anderson, on behalf of the Committee may we wish you well in your new post? Sorry that it has taken so long to have you before us, but we will see you again in the not too distant future.

Mr Anderson: I look forward to that. Thank you very much indeed.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Examination of Witness

Witness: James Brokenshire, MP, Minister for Crime and Security, Home Office, gave evidence.

Q408 Chair: Minister, thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Committee, and can I begin by thanking you most warmly for agreeing to speak at the Committee's conference in Leicester next week? We look forward very much to your keynote address.

I start with a general question about the Prevent Strategy and the information that we have picked up. We obviously know that you are extremely busy, you can't read every single bit of evidence that a Select Committee has received, but we have picked up information that suggests that the traditional methods of radicalisation, such as prisons and universities, have given way to radicalisation in the home, that this is something that happens, in a sense, offline where people have a focus on it, though it may obviously be online on the internet. Is that your impression as well? Is some of this generally happening not in the traditional areas that we might expect but in the privacy of people's homes?

Mr Brokenshire: I think, as you will appreciate, Mr Chairman, this whole concept of radicalisation is a process and not an event. It is something that we underline quite clearly, and therefore looking at areas of vulnerability, either in individuals and also potentially areas, places where radicalisation can take place, I think we are detecting a change in behaviour, and that it is maybe partly drawn by the use of the Terrorism Act legislation and the radicalisation taking place outside of public areas, in people's homes, in more discreet areas. There is no simple picture that we can provide in connection with this. This is complex in terms of pathways and how individuals are different. If you look at things like the internet, that can be a factor but it normally would have some sort of personal contact to buttress or support that, but not always. So it is a complex picture that we are

having that greater understanding of now and how some of this radicalisation is taking place outside of those public spaces.

Q409 Chair: Do you think it is on the increase?

Mr Brokenshire: I think it is difficult to say that it is on the increase. Certainly the evidence that we have seen is that if you look at the number of people who have said in connection with, for example, the Citizenship Survey that in some way they support some sort of violent action to support their beliefs or their value set, it is a very, very small number. I think it was around 1% on the last Citizenship Survey. So I wouldn't say that I detect that there is some increase. It is assessing whether there are different communities that we are looking at.

Q410 Chair: So it is not on the increase?

Mr Brokenshire: I am not detecting that there is an increase in the overall numbers.

Q411 Chair: So is it on the decrease or is it stabilised?

Mr Brokenshire: I would say it is stable.

Q412 Chair: Is it an embarrassment for the Home Office that the Prime Minister wants to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir? He made that very clear as Leader of the Opposition, but it remains the case that what he regards as a terrorist organisation is still functioning without a ban. When he sees you at all these meetings, does he come up to you and say, "James, why is this not banned? I have been calling for this for two years"?

Mr Winnick: He knows his name, does he?

Mr Brokenshire: As you will appreciate, Mr Chairman, we don't give a running commentary on

6 December 2011 James Brokenshire, MP

organisations that may or may not be being considered for proscription.

Q413 Chair: No, but he has made a public statement, not a running commentary. He has said he wants this banned.

Mr Brokenshire: Well, we don't have a running commentary because, as you will appreciate, Mr Chairman, there is the law in relation to proscription that does exist, and therefore the relevant statutory test that needs to be applied in that way, and clearly—

Chair: So that is the problem?

Mr Brokenshire:—we will always ensure that the law is applied.

Q414 Chair: Well, of course. So the Prime Minister has said he wants it banned. Tony Blair said he wants Hizb ut-Tahrir banned. We don't wish for a running commentary, because we have a public commentary from the Prime Minister. The Home Office's view is, "Sorry, we can't do it because it doesn't come within the law. We are not able to do it." Is that basically the answer?

Mr Brokenshire: In terms of analysing any organisation and whether it should be proscribed or not, as this Committee will recognise the Home Secretary has to satisfy the statutory tests under the Terrorism Act 2000, which is having evidence that an organisation is concerned in terrorism. Therefore it is within that statutory framework that the Home Secretary will operate, rightly, within the framework of the law, and therefore it is in the application of the law that this obviously operates and the decisions that are taken.

Q415 Chair: So the Prime Minister would like Hizb ut-Tahrir banned, but the Home Secretary is not satisfied that the tests have been met?

Mr Brokenshire: As I say, I am not going to comment on individual organisations, but what I say is that any—

Q416 Chair: No, of course I am asking you to comment on it because the Prime Minister has mentioned this. It has been a source of our questions during this session. Is the fact that it is not banned that it has not achieved the tests necessary for the law?

Mr Brokenshire: I think that if an organisation—

Q417 Chair: Would you like to see it banned?

Mr Brokenshire: We keep organisations under close review, and Hizb ut-Tahrir is an organisation that has been identified as causing concern with potential links of some individuals who have been former members who have gone on to commit terrorist activity. But clearly the law provides the rules in terms of whether an organisation should be proscribed or not, and therefore Hizb ut-Tahrir has not been proscribed, in essence, while we continue to monitor, because of the requirements of the law.

Q418 Chair: That is very helpful. We have a list of the 47 organisations that have been proscribed. We have heard from the Independent Reviewer just now about what he feels should be an amendment to the

law. How often would you see this list and how often would Ministers review the 47? We have seen no organisations that have been de-proscribed. I used an example of the LTTE, which has never operated in the UK, as far as we can see, and has been completely destroyed by the Sri Lankan Government; that is what they claim anyway. Why, for example, does the LTTE still remain on the list?

Mr Brokenshire: All organisations that have been proscribed are kept under regular review. There is a Proscription Working Group, and in relation to the LTTE this was last considered by the cross-Government Proscription Working Group in May of this year, and the group concluded that the organisation remained concerned in terrorism and the proscription should be maintained. That was the assessment of the working group at that time. So there are regular reviews of organisations that are proscribed, but I am mindful of the recommendations of the Independent Reviewer, who you have heard just give evidence, and his suggestions on timelines and whether there should be a specified period. The Home Secretary has made clear that we will consider very carefully the recommendation that the Independent Reviewer has put forward in that regard.

Chair: Excellent, thank you.

Q419 Nicola Blackwood: The Prevent Review drew a close connection, I think, between non-violent extremism and violent extremism, which resulted in some changes of funding decisions, but it also decided to draw a greater distinction between dealing with non-violent extremism in the DCLG and dealing with terrorism in the Home Office as a result of some concerns about Prevent being seen as spy activities and so on. Could you explain how those two strands of thought came about a little bit?

Mr Brokenshire: I think that there was a lot of careful consideration as to where Prevent and broader integration strategies sat alongside each other. Our analysis—and this was something that came out through the consultation very strongly—was the perception that combining Prevent and work on cohesion created the impression that the Government were supporting cohesion projects only for security reasons, only for counter-terrorism reasons. In some ways this was, I think, leading to confusion, and so we would find that by combining the two that the wider integration work may not be effective because it would be seen from the prism of counter-terrorism, and indeed, from a Prevent perspective, if it is then channelled through broader cohesion funding, might not achieve its objectives in relation to stopping terrorist incidents. So it was felt very clearly that separating them was important so that there was greater focus in relation to the work of Prevent stopping terrorism, and then the broader work in relation to integration, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government, on the community cohesion and integration issues in that way. But they do sit alongside each other. I wouldn't say that they are separated in terms of a big gap between them, but they are alongside rather than overlapping and being confused in that sense, and I

6 December 2011 James Brokenshire, MP

think that having that greater clarity aids the delivery of both of those objectives.

Q420 Nicola Blackwood: One of the concerns that was reported by the previous Communities and Local Government Committee was that there was poor communication between Departments on Prevent work under the previous Prevent Strategy, and obviously there will be work between Departments on this new Prevent strategy. I wonder if there are some new working patterns that will be put in place to try and improve working between Departments on this.

Mr Brokenshire: I have certainly met with colleagues from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department of Health, and those Departments are charged with the responsibility for their various different workings. The Department for Education also has its roles and responsibilities in connection with schools. We are very clear of the need for good join-up across Government and I believe that that is what is being achieved, recognising the clear Prevent objectives, but how they need to be responded to and reflected within those different Departments as well. So, for example, the Department of Health has just published guidance to healthcare professionals in terms of how Prevent operates, how it fits within the broad safeguarding arena, because so much of this is about safeguarding vulnerability, picking up on those factors that may point to vulnerability and people being exploited in that way. So I think we are seeing this much broader connection between the work of the Home Office as well as other Departments in this arena.

Q421 Nicola Blackwood: Does the National Security Council have any role in co-ordination for this?

Mr Brokenshire: The National Security Council has ultimate oversight over the delivery of the content, of which Prevent is one pillar of the overall strategy. So, yes, the National Security Council does have ultimate oversight and then the Prevent board sits underneath that in terms of monitoring the performance and the objectives.

Q422 Nicola Blackwood: One of the particular areas of concern that I have, representing a university seat, is the role of universities in Prevent, and you mentioned the Department for Education and the Department of Health. I wonder if you have been meeting with higher education colleagues to discuss the response of universities to some of their responsibilities within Prevent?

Mr Brokenshire: Of course, and I have met with David Willetts in relation to this, and the role that universities play as a potential area where radicalisation may occur. Radicalisation may take place off campus in more private areas, but it is recognised that this is a location where there are potential risks and potential opportunities for intervening to stop radicalisation progressing, recognising that I think around a third, around 30% of those who have been convicted of terrorist-related offences for Al-Qaeda Islamist-related terrorism have been through universities, and so it is looking at it in that connection.

Q423 Nicola Blackwood: We have received evidence from Universities UK and other student societies that, while they recognise that they have a duty to manage risk, they don't believe that there is much hard evidence that violent groups target universities. Is that the standard response that you have had from universities or has there been a more positive response from universities to the proposals within Prevent?

Mr Brokenshire: What I can say is that I think there has been some good work that has been under way in higher education and further education colleges, with further guidance. The NUS, I think, has produced, with support from Prevent, some very good guidance on identifying potential issues—the risk associated, for example, with external speakers and providing training—how that can be best operated. So there is continual dialogue. I think that there is more work to be done in that arena, but I think that there is also the recognition of universities and colleges being a potential area of risk, of—as I have already highlighted—the proportion of those who have been convicted of these types of offences having passed through universities. But as I have said, it is not a simple picture. There are different areas, different locations, different vulnerabilities, but I think it is right that the Prevent Strategy picks up on those potential locations, spaces where radicalisation may occur, whether that be universities or healthcare settings or other settings as well, and that we seek to address this important issue in that context.

Q424 Michael Ellis: Minister, can I just ask you about Channel, which as you know is a multi-agency programme co-ordinated by the police and set up to identify and help and protect people who are at risk of radicalisation and provide support for them. The Prevent Review states that the Government are considering possible changes to the governance of Channel, but it doesn't elaborate further. I would like to ask you about the funding decisions concerning this Channel organisation, because at the moment, as I understand it, funding decisions about Channel providers are taken by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism.

Mr Brokenshire: Yes.

Michael Ellis: Do you think that there is some rationale in devolving those decisions to local police on the ground who might, after all, know organisations and the communities they serve better than the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, Minister?

Mr Brokenshire: The Channel project, as I think you will be aware, Mr Ellis, is where there are referrals from different organisations, whether that be education, whether that be health, whether that be the police themselves, where elements of vulnerability linked to pathways to terrorism have been identified, and therefore referrals for interventions that may obviously stop and prevent that progress. I think Channel has been a very successful programme to date and what we want to do is to ensure that that is harnessed further. Channel is currently funded in 12 police force areas, and all of these areas have interventions provided by statutory partners. In

6 December 2011 James Brokenshire, MP

addition, there are eight community intervention providers based in three force areas, in London, in the West Midlands and also in Derbyshire. I suppose in that way there is the funding that is provided to police force areas, and so there is decision-making that is taken in that way. So I wouldn't characterise it as micromanagement in that sort of top-down sense, that there is that devolution in that way.

Q425 Michael Ellis: You don't think it is over-centralised?

Mr Brokenshire: No, I don't think it is. What we are focused on is ensuring that, for example, referrals to Channel are appropriate. We are seeking to, for example, introduce a new case management system to better handle the referrals once they are made, and also ensure that vulnerability itself isn't then confused with perhaps some sort of indication of terrorism, and simply because a person is vulnerable or is showing factors of vulnerability, that does not mean automatically that they are in need of support or in need of assistance from the Channel providers. So if I look at the indicators, these include opinions expressed, such as support for violence and terrorism, possession of materials that support extremism, including online material, behavioural changes, such as withdrawal from family and peers, and personal history, such as claims of involvement in extremist organisations. So there are indicators that are there, and I think it is ensuring that those are understood and people are using professional judgment on the referrals so that, again, it is working in the appropriate way, that the support services are there and also the referrals are as appropriate as can be.

Q426 Michael Ellis: So the changes that are envisaged to the governance of Channel are ones along those lines in terms of making it more efficient and working better?

Mr Brokenshire: Yes. Obviously we are looking very much at the principles of the new Prevent strategy, how we may address variation of performance perhaps between regions as well, and also the extension of providing coverage across the rest of England and Wales, and the Channel co-ordinators are going to be focused on the 25 priority areas, but how their expertise can be available to all areas through regional co-ordination of their activities. So it is about how we can reach out and use the expertise that is there in a further advanced way.

Q427 Mr Winnick: I want to ask you very briefly—because I am trying to get into a Westminster Hall debate on police closures, but we won't go into that at the moment—about two or three years ago the head of MI5 said there were 2,000 individuals in Britain who could present a danger to the security of our country. Would you stand by that particular figure or around it now, Minister?

Mr Brokenshire: You are right, the Director General of the Security Service said in 2007 that there was a number of around 2,000. I think that this does give a sense of the scale of the number of individuals in the UK who currently act in support of violent extremist ideology, and so I think that what—

Q428 Mr Winnick: The figure hasn't changed much?

Mr Brokenshire: I think it is very difficult to be precise. I think in many ways, coming back to the question—

Q429 Chair: Well, 2,000 sounds very precise to me. It even has a round figure at the end.

Mr Brokenshire: It is a round number, I agree with you, Mr Chairman. But I think that in many ways, coming back to the Chair's question to me earlier on, it does give a sense of the scale and nature of the challenge that is there, and the number that was indicated by the Director General four years ago now is, I think, a good indication of the continuing challenge that we face.

Q430 Alun Michael: It is a fairly obvious point that the views of UK foreign policy have on occasions been a driver of disillusionment, and sometimes that leads to radicalisation. On the other hand, we have had a number of things, like the British Government support for ordinary Muslims in the Arab Spring, and we have seen the campaign in Libya. Is there any evidence that that has led to a more positive image among disaffected British Muslims?

Mr Brokenshire: I think you are right, Mr Michael, to fasten on this. As you were asking the question, I was just looking at the Prevent strategy and the propositions that are perhaps used in the narrative by Al-Qaeda and how they claim that obviously the West is at war with Islam and that Muslims in Western countries cannot associate or link with non-Muslims in a democratic process. Therefore, I think foreign policy is relevant in this context, very relevant, and what we have sought to do is very much externally to project a positive image of British Muslims overseas. There has been a programme of visits by prominent British Muslims to Muslim majority countries and countries with a significant Muslim minority to again paint that clear picture and to challenge misconceptions as to the reality of life.

Q431 Alun Michael: I think that is true, but if you look at the intervention in Bosnia, for instance, very much a situation in which there was defence of the rights of the lives of individual Muslims, that didn't seem to act as a counterbalance to some of the other events. Do we need to learn lessons about the way we portray what we do abroad to a domestic audience?

Mr Brokenshire: I think that is one part of it, the projection externally, but again there is the important part of the outreach work on challenging misconceptions and perceptions here. I was quite struck by an example of some work that is being undertaken on organising for the MOD to brief the Pashtun community in Birmingham ahead of the deployment to Afghanistan to explain what their purpose and role and function was, to again challenge potential misconceptions as to what their activity was for. I think that it is through elements like that that we can seek to challenge, that we can seek to address this narrative of the West in some way having some conflicts against Islam, which is wholly false. It is not the case and I utterly reject that. I think the

6 December 2011 James Brokenshire, MP

programmes have been well received, but we need to continue to make that challenge, to continue to address that narrative that points in that different direction, that in many ways the terrorist organisations feed upon to radicalise and to support their activity, which is why I think that whole piece of work within Prevent is just so essential.

Q432 Alun Michael: Another thing on to which they can latch, of course, is the way that the newspapers and the media cover international events and international policy, which can range from the gung-ho to the very narrow in terms of the agenda being dealt with. That is presumably a challenge for Ministers as well, isn't it? Do you think it is appropriate for the Government perhaps to encourage reporting that is a little more objective, shall we say?

Mr Brokenshire: I think there are obviously other inquiries and investigations in relation to press and other items at the moment, but I think that it is incumbent on us as Ministers to do all we can to challenge that narrative, to challenge that perception across Government and use opportunities where we can to do that. In many ways the inquiry that you are holding is an important way for Government, and other participants and other organisations as well, to underline what the programme is about, which is providing safety to all communities in this country, and challenge some of that narrative that might otherwise suggest that that isn't the case.

Q433 Chair: Thank you. Two quick questions about things that have happened in the last 24 hours. One is that the Olympic security bill has now reached £1 billion. That is £7 an hour for the whole of the Olympic period. As Security Minister, are you confident that that is enough or do you need more?

Mr Brokenshire: Mr Chairman, we are confident with the work that has been ongoing in relation to the Olympic security plan, that this is now being tested and there are exercises that are ongoing to ensure that this will deliver the safe and secure Games that we are committed to. We are confident that the overall plan can be delivered within the £9.3 billion overall envelope for the Olympics. Yes, there have been changes and the NAO report this morning underlines that and the briefing that was provided by colleagues in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport yesterday. I think that that is as a consequence of the development of that work, development of the planning around individual events, and I think it shows the real work that has gone in around all of this.

Q434 Chair: Yes, but is it still the case that the Metropolitan Police would like a little bit more time and more officers before you remove the relocation powers in TPIMs? Have they asked you for more time?

Mr Brokenshire: I have seen a letter that Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, has sent to the Committee underlining that there was a request to extend the time period to 42 days from 28 days to manage the Christmas period, to aid the transition to TPIMs from control orders, which we acceded to. I think the Commissioner also

underlines that the Metropolitan Police have received all of the financial support that they had requested and have made clear that effective arrangements will be in place to transition from control orders to TPIMs when the new regime comes into effect.

Q435 Chair: Finally, you made a speech yesterday to missing people when you talked about the difficulties that families face with the loss of some 200,000 people going missing every year, which is an astonishing figure. Do we know how many of the 200,000 are children?

Mr Brokenshire: Of the 200,000, it is around two-thirds that represent children. It is in many ways why I was very clear about the need to support our work, why we felt that CEOP going into the National Crime Agency would be strengthened there, how the Missing Persons Bureau will now also sit within the NCA and I think that will strengthen activity here. As you may well be aware, CEOP launched some very practical guidance, a new website yesterday, to be able to help direct those loved ones who are left behind to know where to get help and guidance, as well as the educational programme that CEOP do so well on child protection and how that now will be extended to missing as well.

Q436 Chair: We accept all that and the structural changes, which we support for the moment, that CEOP should go into the NCA, but are you confident that individual police forces—that is where the problem seems to be—are going to react quickly enough when a parent rings and says, "My child has gone missing"?

Mr Brokenshire: There are a number of things that we are doing around this. One of the commitments in the strategy that was launched yesterday was in relation to loved ones, that they should be signposted and directed to support, which I think is an important step, and we are now taking that forward with ACPO in terms of implementation. One other element that is contained in there was the urgent work that CEOP are undertaking around child rescue alerts and the missing kids website. I think they are facilities that are there that for whatever reason have not been harnessed effectively to date, they have not really been used that much, and I want to understand properly how we can harness them, because if you have a young person who disappears then sometimes getting that message out quite quickly is important.

But the other important factor that has become quite clear over the course of the last few months is young runaways who run away regularly, that you don't know where they have gone, that that may be a pointer to child exploitation, either that they are running away from exploitation or, sadly, that they may be running towards exploitation. Therefore, the missing strategy does complement and fit alongside the separate strategy on child sexual exploitation, recognising that missing can be a very important element in identifying that exploitation may be taking place, and also why ACPO are piloting two schemes in two parts of the country at the moment to better respond to reports of missing, to better risk-assess vulnerability. I think

6 December 2011 James Brokenshire, MP

there are a number of important practical factors as well as the strategy that fits in from that.

Chair: We will look at this again. Before Mr Winnick runs away to save his police station, he has a very quick supplementary on that.

Q437 Mr Winnick: Minister, are you satisfied that the police are sufficiently strengthened in being able to deal with what is described as honour killings, the very opposite of the report that has recently come out, of people—particularly females, not exclusively—being brutalised and indeed, as we know only too well, murdered as a result of refusing to agree to what is required of them in terms of marriage?

Chair: This is a big subject, but a very brief answer and we will pursue it later.

Mr Brokenshire: Hate crime is something that we do take extraordinarily seriously and I have certainly been appalled by some of the shocking cases that we

have seen over a number of years. It is something that my colleague, Lynne Featherstone, is taking forward with her responsibilities in relation to hate crime and violence against women and girls, but please be assured—

Mr Winnick: So-called honour crimes.

Mr Brokenshire: Yes. I appreciate the important distinction in relation to honour crime, that certain communities are more affected, and that shining a light on some of this is a challenge in its own right. That is something that we are cognisant of and that the Home Office is taking forward.

Chair: We will have Lynne Featherstone before us. Minister, thank you very much.

Mr Brokenshire: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Chair: We look forward to seeing you next week in Leicester.

Mr Brokenshire: I look forward to it.

Tuesday 13 December 2011

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)

Dr Julian Huppert

Alun Michael

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Ian Paisley Jr MP, Democratic Unionist Party, Mike Whine, Christian Cullen, Imam Sikander Pathan, Feltham, Young Offenders Institution Dr Richard Hall, De Montfort University, gave evidence.

Q438 Chair: May I call this conference and the Committee to order? We are now in the formal session, so when we hear from people, what they say will be put down as evidence to the Committee and the only people who can ask questions will be members of the Committee. We are going to start by going through each of the workshops and we have five minutes from each of the rapporteurs to tell us what was discussed there and then there will be questions from members of the Committee to those who have participated. We start with workshop1, chaired by Patrick Mercer on Northern Ireland. Can the rapporteur tell us what the conclusions were?

Ian Paisley: First of all, our group obviously had three main presentations, with one from Sarah, which dealt with Irish and Muslim terrorism and did a comparison study. Brian Gormley made a presentation and talked about the human rights-based approach to addressing all forms of terrorism, and I talked about balance. We concluded that the media use of Muslim—in terms of labelling people as Muslim terrorists or Protestant terrorists or Catholic terrorists—can be and is extremely damaging. The example of Northern Ireland was described and how it could be a shining example of how you address radicalism and get rid of the problems that radicalism causes.

Human rights abuses by any section of society—whether it is the state or individuals—ought to be investigated and apologised for. The visit by Her Majesty the Queen marked a watershed moment in how both the Republic and Northern Ireland viewed each other and that has opened a gate on how Ireland can mark some of its forthcoming anniversaries over the next 10 years. An example involving the President of Ireland was also cited as a very positive example for dealing with bringing communities together.

Nowadays, engagement with communities is much more likely than it was at the height of the Irish terrorism campaign. Local work on the Prevent strategy and work on community cohesion is incredibly difficult to reconcile—and this was a very important point made by one of the members of the Committee—as the Government has to be careful that it has raised expectations to a particular level and then followed through with massive support and the encouragement to deliver what the community has asked for and what it wants, and that includes community trust. But all of that has to be set against a background that all is not solved in Northern Ireland, there is ongoing balance, there is on-going, indeed, extreme terrorism still operating and one of the biggest threats in our society still comes from

Irish-based terrorism groups that are not affected by the Prevent strategy.

Q439 Chair: Thank you, that was very helpful. Could Mike Whine give us the report from his workshop on the far-right?

Michael Whine: We began with a presentation by Dr Matthew Feldman from Northampton University who began by saying that in his opinion it is a propitious time for the far-right in that it is reconfiguring. He then asked what exactly do we mean by the far-right and what type of threat is it that we are facing that comes from them? He made the point that there are other groups that are far more extreme than the EDL, such as the Aryan Strike Force, four members of which have been convicted of various acts of preparation for terrorism, including the building of a ricin bomb, which suggested that the far-right has a capacity for terrorism and that it appears to be growing.

He mentioned the danger of lone wolf attacks and that he himself had advised the CPS on a couple of cases which involved far-right terrorism. His last point was that there is a development towards what he refers to as broadband terrorism—in other words, the use of the internet both to radicalise and to exchange information among people within the far-right and that as the 21st century progresses, this is a problem that is likely to get worse.

My own presentation looked at the threat of terrorism from the far-right to the Jewish community, and I made the point that the primary focus of the far-right in Britain is not the Jewish community but rather the Muslim community. Jews do face a very real threat of terrorism but it comes primarily from global Jihad movements and from the Iranians and their surrogates. But, nevertheless, there had been 17 people convicted of terrorism charges in the UK and I also mentioned the Aryan Strike Force which was believed to have been targeting the Jewish community, as was David Copeland, who it was subsequently discovered after his arrest, in addition to targeting the Asian, black and LGBT communities, may also have been planning to attack the Jewish community.

I ended with some notes. There are some points about what the Jewish community is doing to protect themselves against terrorism in terms of strengthening and hardening potential targets within the community, partly with Government financial assistance and partly funded by ourselves.

Gerry Gable, giving Searchlight's presentation, began by mentioning the book on far-right terrorism that had been commissioned by John Denham when he was

13 December 2011 Ian Paisley Jr MP, Mike Whine, Christian Cullen, Imam Sikander Pathan and Dr Richard Hall

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and suggesting that Parliament requires a committee that focuses on racism and extremism. In particular, he also felt that the police have been downplaying its evidence to the Home Affairs Committee in terms of a threat from the far-right and went on to talk about the connections that are gradually emerging between the EDL, its membership, some of its leaders and the people that have been funding it—as shown by *The Sunday Times* article two days ago—and also the fact that across Europe there are increasing contacts between far-right activists, including the group known as the Doner Bombers in Germany who had this reign of terrorist attacks in Germany over a number of years, who may possibly also have been travelling to Scandinavia. Professor Nigel Copsey's presentation looked at the EDL itself and he asked, “Do we include the EDL in our assessment from the far-right?” He made the point that the Prevent strategy had made no mention of the EDL, but an examination of its website would suggest that it has some liberal humanistic ideologies but in fact its press releases and its activities on the streets suggest otherwise. In particular its concentration on the white ethnic element of the culture that it is purportedly defending places it very firmly within a far-right ideology.

He also made the point that while the EDL's official line is that terrorism can never be excused—particularly in reference to Anders Breivik in Norway—the comments on its Facebook site suggest that there are a number of EDL supporters who expressed support for his actions. The targets of the EDL are particularly the Muslim community and left-wing anti-racist organisations and that there is a danger of a spiralling of violence, with each side working the other up into ever more violent positions. There were a number of questions which I will leave for the moment.

Q440 Chair: Thank you very much, Mike. The third workshop was on the police and it was chaired by Alun Michael. I invite Christian Cullen to report on it.

Mr Cullen: Our workshop asked what are the key challenges facing the police in delivering Prevent? Chief Constable Cole from the Leicestershire Constabulary started us off, suggesting that although the threat level is substantial there have been recent events. There is, for example, a very mixed demography in Leicester, which is a perfect microcosm and the perfect place to be holding this particular debate. There is the reputation or legacy around the brand of Prevent and there is the issue of community suspicion and stereotyping. People are looking for something which might be AQ or far-right et cetera, and there is this challenge of who actually owns what. Police are task-driven but they are still the enforcement agency, so perhaps should they be Prevent? There is the political buy-in aspect whereby for some people this is difficult, which can hinder development of wider partnership.

One case of good practice is where individuals, who are identified as vulnerable under Prevent, are dealt with through the same vulnerability assessments and interventions as those vulnerable in other ways. The

point was made that day-to-day interactions with the police are the way in which trust is built, but there remains the question of how we ensure that intelligence brought back to the station by community police officers is used effectively? There are indeed community safety partnerships but the question is how will we be affected by introduction of police? For example, they won't be vetted but what can we share with them?

We followed on with that with Dr Colin Roberts from Cardiff University, who discussed the numerous policy analyses of Prevent. He suggested that there are far too few fieldwork studies, and this is something that he considered ought to increase. He identified two types of Prevent police engagements: we have internal engagement with other police and security services staff who are not visible to the public but are covert; we then have the external engagement with the public. The level of resistance from the Muslim community should not be overstated and he believes it has been deliberately overstated.

Muslim attitudes to police are broadly comparable with the general population. Young Muslim men have slightly lower confidence; older Muslim women also have the same because of exposure of their sons to Prevent policing, quite often. How is the concept of being a suspect in the community played out? It is real. The Birmingham spy cameras removal is one example and their removal was just as serious as their original inception.

The police face difficulty in getting intelligence through other means however, and it does not mean that communities will not talk to the police, even if the relationship is strained. There are many examples of community work with police that do not make the media and it is also important to assess how the police organise themselves. Seeing the Muslim community as one single entity is obviously wrong. Police officers should be chosen for this work based on their skill sets rather than their job title. Replacing tick-box quantity assessment of community engagement exercises with qualitative assessment was one particular recommendation. Police have to understand when it may be of national risk to the individuals when providing information whereby a relationship of trust is to develop. That trust is absolutely key and must be preserved.

There are a number of key investments to make. Skilled natural communicators must be out there as much as possible. The remaining value of those connections has to be clear, and a signposting of how those connections remain and are continued has to be created. At the moment we feel it is quite an ambiguous process. This needs to be a management decision that the police are not the only relevant party in town. It needs to be a protective element that is initiated by police. They need to be mobilised and initiated through the community itself. The community must be made to feel that they are their own stakeholders and are investing in their own future.

Then it was the turn of SIRS Consultancy, my company, and all four of us spoke incredibly quickly to squeeze ourselves in there and we identified a number of key issues. Firstly, we looked at the police

13 December 2011 Ian Paisley Jr MP, Mike Whine, Christian Cullen, Imam Sikander Pathan and Dr Richard Hall

national database as a solution and not just the problem that it has been rumoured to be. In addition, we looked at regional fusion centres in some detail and we suggested they should be adopted to improve intelligence sharing and they would be a bottom-up process rather than top-down, which is something that has occurred in America, which has shown itself to be quite successful, but we believe that it is the way in which there could be holistic solutions and holistic is obviously the word of the day.

Q441 Chair: Thank you, that is very helpful. Could I have the fourth workshop on prisons, which was chaired by Khalid Mahmood.

Imam Sikander Pathan: We talked on how to counteract the radicalisation in prisons with myself, Imam Sikander Pathan and Professor Peter Neumann from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, and from Centri we had Rashad Ali. We summarised everything into bullet points and we first talked about the population. About 12% of the prisoners are Muslims, according to the stats of 2010. Of these only 0.1% are tracked offenders. AQ are the largest single group, but not forgetting we also have animal rights activists, right-wing extremists and others that the prison service holds.

Occasionally the men are faced at a very low emotional point and when they come to the prisons they don't claim to be from a specific faith community, due to the embarrassment that they have caused their faith community. We talked about gangs and the fact that particular types of religious culture emerge in the prisons which are used to justify offending. We also said that some cases of radical rhetoric cannot be challenged. However, there was also a belief that gangs are formed in the community and then it is the individual or the gang members that are convicted then brought into the prison, and chaplains and prison officers and many staff do quite a lot of mediation with the people affiliated with gangs in the outside community.

We talked in particular about chaplaincy, where the place of worship—the mosque, the church or where the Sikhs or the Hindus would pray—would only be one area and prisoners from different gangs will need to get together, so there's a lot of mediation that chaplaincy does. Talking on faith in the prison, as much as it is looked at as a negative we also looked at it as a positive, because in solitude there is time for reflection and prisoners come closer to their faith and that is the time when we really need to educate them and guide them about their faith. So their faith should not be frowned upon; it is the faith that will help remove any misunderstanding about the faith.

Then we talked about the chaplains that come from the faith communities or those Muslims that are working with the Government. It is interesting where the community would sometimes disown those people that are working with the Government, and people in the Government or the police would question the trust and the honesty of the Muslims that are working with them, so it is really the “damned if you do, damned if you don't” syndrome.

We talked about the de-radicalisation and the fact that Government-sanctioned interventions focus on

containment but that more radical approaches challenge the individual and seek to understand their viewpoint. On prisoner-based radicalisation there was a discussion: as much as there is a clear potential problem in principle, there is no reliable or hard evidence that this exists. From what one of the people from our group—a youth worker—was saying, it seems like there was a bigger problem in the youth clubs than there is in the prison service.

There was also a discussion that no one should record and publish the figures of those prisoners that are radicalised. Then followed a conversation about it being a social process and being a radical is not an event. One of the speakers talked of four main areas; the outcome of the first was that there really is no agreed definition of an extremist, so it is very difficult to put people down just because they are practising their faith.

There was a discussion where the speaker talked about the four main areas that a prison should cover. First, of course, prisons should be decent orderly places which should not be overcrowded, which makes recognising radicalisation a bit easier when the prison populations are stable and the staff have the ability to work with all the prisoners. The second one we talked about was training and educating the frontline staff to help them differentiate between a person who becomes close to faith and starts growing a beard or expressing the need to perform the five daily prayers and to understand behaviours which cannot be misunderstood. Then there was discussion on the third point. From the main faith providers we should ensure that there is cover so that there is an ability to educate the people of the right path of their faith. The fourth point the speaker made was about a decent aftercare: when the prisoners are in prison they receive a lot of care and support but when they go back in the community there's a lack of resettlement projects or community-led projects that would help them keep on the straight and narrow.

Q442 Chair: Thank you, that is very helpful. Could I move on to the final workshop, chaired by Dr Julian Huppert, which was the universities' workshop.

Mr Hall: We spoke about university as a crucial site for discussion and that it is stuck inside a broader political context, so we had three brief talks. I spoke about trying to reconnect more deeply to the radical historical tradition of the university as a site for the discussion of what is legitimate, what is marginalised and about power and how we might learn from current student occupations.

We had an intervention from Gordon Head, who spoke about the role of social media and about technology, in particular about how technologies for interception, technologies for the managing or monitoring are available but need to be defined. We need socio-cultural rules to be discussed in that space. Hannah Stewart spoke on trying to connect us to a global space, a global set of conditions and interpretations and labels and provide us with some evidence from work that had been done across UK campuses around those who had already committed to violent radicalisation and those who are radicalised at universities and those who are attracted and influenced and therefore became violent beyond the university

13 December 2011 Ian Paisley Jr MP, Mike Whine, Christian Cullen, Imam Sikander Pathan and Dr Richard Hall

and what might be done in that space in the balance of civil liberties and security.

Some of the solutions that emerged were around how we work and live and do our work within university in public—we do that very explicitly in public and we do not outsource solutions beyond the institutions, so we engage with a range of communities in trying to find solutions; how we might engage with technologies in order to define the rules for their application and how we might, therefore, come to some broad sense of understanding of what is appropriate in terms of monitoring extremism. Also, there needs to be some realism about what universities can do and what is achievable within the context of the rule of law.

Some of the questions from the floor were particularly interesting in connecting into that socio-cultural understanding of how universities would enable us to contest definitions and labels of who will be labelled as an extremist or a radical, and how that would enable us to move beyond sensationalism. We heard very specific points made about how we can engage with how our students are thinking and feeling while they are at university. Is radicalisation simply synonymous with Islam and Muslims, and whose word becomes law and how do we contest that? Who is scrutinised? It is easier to scrutinise some communities than others and how is technology then to be used, for whom is it being used and why? Finally, how do we work on the responsibility of the university and its duty of care to manage risk and to manage its broader engagements with a set of communities in order that it might become more resilient?

Chair: Thank you. Alun Michael has a question.

Q443 Alun Michael: This is probably more a comment. I am a little concerned that we heard the presentations and certainly in my group there was a very interesting discussion; they were very good presentations, but the discussion went on to different territory. So, for instance—I make no apologies for saying this because I have spent the whole of my career trying to build partnership—but the idea of a fusion centre is an American response to an American problem. I have seen the one in Los Angeles, which is the second most important in the US, and it is very impressive but it is suited to its circumstances and I am not sure that transplanting is the right approach.

There was the comment about communities feeling that they have ownership and, of course, feeling only really follows on genuinely having ownership, so there is a challenge there. The Chief Constable suggested that sometimes the police response is about structure and science, or at least having the appearance of being structured and science—that was my addition to what he said—when this is really about organic and art. The key is shared ownership, connection, communication, confidence—which has to be mutual confidence—and at the end of the day it comes down to relationships.

So I suppose my question back to the wider conference would be “Is it right that relationships are the things that are at the core of all of this and how do we build the right relationships, the right listening, the right

understanding in order to achieve the right mutual confidence?”

Chair: Yes. Pete was very helpful in his presentation this morning. I don’t know if he is still here but he talked about the use of the word “prevent”. I feel very strongly, having sat through a great deal of evidence over the last three months, that we should just get rid of this word and instead call it “engage”. If we engage with communities it is better than preventing. How can we—as the Reverend Jackson said in his address—stop people doing things? It is very difficult to do so.

Q444 Dr Huppert: I think we need to find a word that means engage that starts with a P, if I understand the naming system correctly but—

Chair: I don’t think we should go there.

Dr Huppert: I do not envy the rapporteurs having to summarise fairly large wide-ranging discussions into a short presentation but I am going to make it even harder for them. Ultimately, we are going to have to come up with a few, hopefully short, crisp recommendations for what we think the Government ought to do, and I would be really grateful to hear from the five rapporteurs what are the two short things that you think are the key things that we should be taking out, so that we know what to say? I realise this is getting us to digest even further.

Mr Paisley: I think the P, apart from Paisley, is partnership—a partnership approach. That has been the lesson that I think we learned in Northern Ireland; that it is about a true partnership with the community and the community being regarded as an element of the partnership or being key partners in the partnership with policing and the police, a partnership with them. In terms of getting down to your main questions, I think one of the key issues is that there is still an awful lot of work left to do. We have the strategy; a lot of people feel that they do not understand how it works in their community yet; they feel disengaged from it, but the strategy has to come from the grassroots up, to a large degree. The sooner we get to that point where there is a grassroots engagement with it and they feel ownership of it, then and only then, will it really start to work in a functioning way and in a practical way and in the partnership way that we probably all aspire to.

Chair: Thank you very much. What is going to happen now is that everything that everyone has said—in the workshops and at this session—we are going to note, as part of our inquiry. We are going to produce a report, probably in January of next year. Our timetable was slightly skewed because of the riots in August; we made the decision to have an inquiry into the riots, the Prime Minister then asked us to produce the report as quickly as possible, so we have that report. We also have another inquiry into the UKBA going on, so our agenda has been taken in a different direction since we started this inquiry, but we hope to conclude very shortly and we will have a report by the end of January. I have just been reminded if the reporters/rapporteurs—are we allowed to use French words these days, I’m not sure? If the rapporteurs could let us have their notes of what was discussed, that would be extremely helpful.

Written evidence

Written evidence submitted by the Home Office

This paper sets out the Home Office evidence to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the roots of violent radicalisation.

The concept of radicalisation underpins the new *Prevent* strategy, which was recently published following an extensive review. *Prevent* will address all forms of terrorism, including Al Qa'ida related terrorism, extreme right wing terrorism and terrorism linked to domestic extremism, according to the threat posed to our national security. The allocation of resources will be proportionate to the threats we face. At present the greatest threat to the UK is from Al Qa'ida and the groups and individuals that share the ideology associated with it.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for dealing with the threat from Northern Ireland-related terrorism in Northern Ireland. *Prevent* does not deal directly with the threat from Northern Ireland-related terrorism but many of the issues dealt with under *Prevent* are relevant to countering this threat. We continue to co-operate closely with the devolved administration in Northern Ireland which is responsible for most relevant policy areas.

In our response to the committee areas of interest we have drawn from the review and use terms as defined in the new *Prevent* strategy.

In the first section we have summarised the major drivers of radicalisation, based on the available research and intelligence. Much of this knowledge is based on Al Qa'ida influenced individuals and groups but also draws from what is known about other types of violence, including other form of terrorism, gang activity and cults.

In the second section, we consider the sectors and institutions identified by the committee as places where radicalisation may take place. The third section describes the *Prevent* strategy and how it is being implemented.

The last section sets out the process for proscribing terrorist groups. This was considered recently as part of the Home Secretary's review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers. This section also notes the work being taken forward by the Department for Communities and Local Government on integration, which is relevant to groups that are not involved in terrorism but nevertheless give cause for concern.

SECTION 1

Major drivers and risk factors for recruitment to terrorist movements

1.1 All terrorist groups need to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. The *Prevent* strategy is based on our understanding of radicalisation processes and the factors that encourage individuals to support terrorism and engage in terrorist related activity.

1.2 Recent academic, intelligence and social research work has illuminated the drivers of radicalisation; the characteristics of those people who have been radicalised and who have joined terrorist groups; and the pathways that may lead individuals into support for, and participation in, terrorist acts.

1.3 There is no standard profile of a terrorist and no single pathway or route that an individual takes to becoming involved in a terrorist organisation. Not all drivers will play a role in every instance of radicalisation. Rather, drivers and risk factors appear to be inter-connected and mutually reinforcing but exert influence on individuals to varying extents.

1.4 The recent *Prevent* review found that our earlier analysis of the key drivers of and risk factors for recruitment to Al Qa'ida-related terrorist movements in this country remains largely valid. The three key drivers for Al Qa'ida-related terrorism in this country are outlined below.

(a) Ideology and ideologues

1.5 Central to the development of any movement or group is the construction of an ideological framework and its promotion. Ideology offers a coherent set of ideas that can provide the basis for organised political action. Ideology may also serve to bring coherence to activity in the absence of leadership or a command structure.

1.6 Ideology is a key driver of radicalisation. People who accept and are motivated by an ideology which states that violence is an acceptable course of action are more likely to engage in terrorism-related activity. People who come to believe in such an ideology may be not only willing to kill but also to sacrifice their own lives. Challenging that ideology is therefore an essential part of a preventative counter-terrorism programme.

1.7 Some terrorist groups, such as Al Qa'ida, use religion as both a basis for their ideology and as a means of justifying their actions. Understanding the connection between ideology and theology and how the first can masquerade as the second is important.

1.8 Ideology depends on ideologues, people who promote that ideology and encourage others to subscribe to it. Who the ideologues are (their background and life history) and how they behave is as central to their appeal as what they say. Challenging ideology also means identifying such people, ensuring they cannot take advantage of the freedoms in this country to promote their messages without debate or rebuttal, prosecuting them where they have broken the law and restricting their access to this country where appropriate.

(b) Individual vulnerability

1.9 Radicalisation is a process not an event. Specific personal characteristics, exposure to terrorist ideology and local circumstances can combine to create individual vulnerability to radicalisation.

1.10 Personal vulnerabilities can include uncertainty about identity, a weak sense of belonging in this country, underachievement in education and employment; social isolation; and underdeveloped or confused religious understanding. Involvement in crime can also expose individuals to radicalising influences. However, these factors are not definitive nor always present—individuals who do not have these vulnerabilities have also engaged in terrorism.

1.11 Programmes to support individuals to resist and reverse radicalisation have been developed in this country and overseas. These are comparatively new and their effectiveness has not yet been verified.

1.12 Radicalisation is also a social process, prevalent in small groups—it is about “who you know” as well as “who you are”. Group bonding, peer pressure and indoctrination can encourage individuals to regard violence as a legitimate response to perceived injustice. Through group dynamics and strong interpersonal bonds these views can become progressively more extreme and violent.

(c) Sectors and institutions where radicalisation takes place

1.13 In the UK, evidence suggests that radicalisation tends to occur in places where terrorist ideologies, and those that promote them, go uncontested and are not exposed to free, open and balanced debate and challenge.

1.14 Prisons, faith institutions, higher and further educational establishments (including universities) and the internet are all sectors identified in the *Prevent* strategy. Each institution and sector needs to be assessed in its own right. Some of these places are the responsibility of Government, some are Government-funded but have considerable autonomy and others are both privately owned and run (but still may be subject to Government regulation).

1.15 The role played by sectors and institutions is considered within Section 2 of this paper.

Northern Irish terrorism and extreme right wing terrorism

1.16 There is evidence that elements of the drivers outlined above are also present within other forms of terrorism.

1.17 Historically, the principle threat from terrorist organisations in the UK came from Northern Ireland-related terrorist groups. This declined following implementation of the 1998 Belfast (“Good Friday”) agreement but has increased significantly over the past two years. Ideology is a key driver for recruitment to and support for Northern Ireland-related terrorist groups. Northern Ireland-related terrorist groups may justify terrorism using the constitutional position of Ireland and in particular the ongoing British presence in Ireland.

1.18 Extreme right-wing terrorism has been much less widespread, systematic or organised than terrorism associated with Al Qa’ida. Seventeen people are serving sentences in this country for terrorism-related offences who are known to be associated with extreme right-wing groups. Extreme right-wing terrorism may be driven by a supremacist ideology, which sanctions the use of extreme violence as a response to perceived social injustice and dysfunction.

SECTION 2

Prisons, religious premises, universities and the internet as settings for radicalisation

Prisons

2.1 We know that some people who have been convicted and imprisoned for terrorist-related offences, and some who have been convicted for non-terrorism-related offences but have previously been associated with extremist or terrorist networks, have sought to radicalise and recruit other prisoners. The extent to which these efforts are successful and the extent to which radicalisation and recruitment that take place in prison endures beyond the confines of the prison environment is not yet clear.

2.2 Prisons hold high profile and influential TACT offenders, some with a track record and continuing intention of radicalisation and recruitment. As of 30 September 2010, there were 116 prisoners held in relation to terrorism or terrorism related offences.

2.3 Prisons also hold individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation. Would-be radicalisers may seek support for their ideology or to strengthen their personal influence through bullying or other means. This may include attempting to impose their distorted version of Islam on vulnerable individuals.

2.4 The formation of temporary and opportunistic alliances between offenders is a commonly observed behaviour in prisons, and not necessarily indicative of radicalisation. Prisoners may form alliances as a coping mechanism, protection from bullying, or to create hierarchies and power bases.

2.5 The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has already undertaken action in prisons to address radicalisation, including training of prison staff about violent extremism. Information and intelligence gathering and sharing is now better able to identify the challenges posed by terrorist and extremist prisoners, including radicalisation. NOMS has developed three interventions to support staff work with radicalised offenders. Two interventions address issues of identity and motivation. The third targets beliefs and ideologies related to Al Qa'ida influenced terrorism. Chaplains, who operate in a multi-faith, multi-disciplinary, context are important in providing authoritative spiritual and pastoral support to prisoners and have received significant support and training in addressing the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation.

Religious premises

2.6 Faith institutions and organisations can play a key role in challenging ideology that purports to provide theological justification for terrorism. They will often have authority and credibility not available to Government. They can provide more specific and direct challenge to those who claim religious expertise and use what appear to be religious arguments to draw others into terrorism. They can also play a wider and no less vital role in helping create a society which recognises the rights and the contributions of different faith groups, endorses tolerance and the rule of law and encourages participation and interaction. People who subscribe to these values and principles are unlikely to turn to terrorism.

2.7 Mosques have faced a particular challenge from organisations whose views we now associate with Al Qa'ida. Such groups have tried to infiltrate mosques in this country and sometimes even to set up mosques of their own. Where that has not been possible—very often because mosques have resisted these efforts—individual extremist preachers have sought to develop what amounts to their own “brand” of Islam. Some have created extremist organisations and institutions to disseminate their views.

2.8 Since 2005, the police and local authorities have sought a much closer (albeit low profile) dialogue with mosques and their governing bodies and, in many cases, also with the national or regional faith groups of which they are members. The police now talk regularly to mosques in a way that was rare before 2005, advising about the terrorist threat and taking advice on the perspectives of the local community.

2.9 Community resistance has also reduced the open operation of radical preachers: this is encouraging. Some extremist preachers have been arrested and prosecuted; others are awaiting deportation or have been refused entry to this country.

2.10 Few mosques now openly and knowingly promote extremist or terrorist views. In some areas, groups and individuals continue their attempts to subvert mosques, to use them for extremist purposes or to encourage violence and to raise funds for groups in this country or overseas engaged in terrorist-related activity. Elsewhere, activity has been displaced to areas and venues which are less public and, in particular, to study groups which operate in private premises or on the internet.

Universities

2.11 Universities and colleges have an important role to play in *Prevent*, particularly in ensuring balanced debate as well as freedom of speech. They also have a clear responsibility to exercise their duty of care and to protect the welfare of their students. We have seen that people may be radicalised at different points in their life. Whether radicalisation occurs on campus or elsewhere, staff in higher and further education institutions can identify and offer support to people who may be drawn into extremism and terrorism.

2.12 Universities and colleges promote and facilitate the exchange of opinion and ideas, and enable debate as well as learning. Although there has been no systematic attempt to recruit or radicalise people in full-time education in this country, universities and colleges can offer opportunities for radicalisation.

2.13 These institutions are attended by large numbers of young people who may be distanced from their familiar support networks at a time of personal development, search for identity and increased independence.

2.14 There is evidence that in the past some extremist organisations have targeted specific universities and colleges with the objective of radicalising and recruiting students. The Al Muhajiroun organisation, which has now been proscribed under counter-terrorism legislation, is one example. Some groups, notably Hizb-ut-Tahrir, continue to operate within the law but give cause for concern.

2.15 Some extremist preachers from this country and from overseas, not connected to specific extremist groups, have also sought repeatedly to reach out to selected universities and to Muslim students.

2.16 There is evidence to suggest that some people associated with some Islamic student societies have facilitated this activity and that it has largely gone unchallenged. Five former senior members of university Islamic Societies have been convicted of terrorism-related offences.

2.17 Action already taken by universities to address radicalisation includes the provision of advice, guidance and support to help institutions manage the risk of radicalisation on campus. Guidance for all higher education institutions was issued in 2008 in conjunction with the police, the Home Office and the National Union of Students. The Department for Business Innovation and Science (BIS) has supported a number of projects designed to help key members of staff to identify vulnerability when they see it and offer appropriate support.

The Internet

2.18 The internet has enabled a wider range of terrorist organisations to reach a much larger audience with a broader and more dynamic series of messages and narratives. It encourages interaction and facilitates recruitment.

2.19 The internet plays a role in terms of sustaining and reinforcing terrorist ideological messages and enabling individuals to find and communicate with like-minded individuals and groups.

2.20 The role of the internet in the radicalisation process remains the subject of debate. Apart from a small number of cases, real world interaction is still the most important factor in the radicalisation process. But, to some extent, the internet mirrors the dynamics of a social group, producing an environment where extreme views and ideas receive encouragement and support.

2.21 Action already taken in this area to address radicalisation includes the launch of a Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU)—a dedicated police unit intended to assess and investigate internet-based content which may be illegal under UK law and to take appropriate action against it, whether through the criminal justice system or by making representations to internet service providers. The CTIRU has removed material from the internet on 156 occasions over the last 15 months.

Other important settings

2.22 In addition to the settings identified by the committee inquiry brief, we consider the health services, higher and further education colleges and schools to be important sectors where there are risks of radicalisation or opportunities to prevent it.

2.23 Section 3 of this paper includes brief descriptions of *Prevent* work being undertaken or planned within sectors and institutions.

SECTION 3

The Prevent strategy

3.1 The *Prevent* strategy is firmly rooted in our understanding of radicalisation and of the settings and spaces where radicalisation can take place.

3.2 *Prevent* is part of our counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

3.3 *Prevent* will address all forms of terrorism but continue to prioritise according to the threat they pose to our national security. This includes Al Qa'ida related terrorism, extreme right wing terrorism and terrorism linked to domestic extremism. At present, the majority of our resources and efforts will continue to be devoted to preventing people from joining or supporting Al Qa'ida, its affiliates or related groups.

3.4 The three objectives of the *Prevent* strategy are:

- Challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those that promote it.
- Protecting vulnerable people.
- Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

3.5 The new strategy has a broader scope—addressing all forms of terrorism—but also a tighter focus on the most at risk people and places. *Prevent* is a national programme but will be prioritised at local level according to the risks we face. Twenty five areas have been selected as the focus of local *Prevent* work.

Challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those that promote it

3.6 The *Prevent* strategy sets out the Government's approach to challenging terrorist ideology and those you promote it. Terrorist ideology has a number of components—theological, political and social. Government can take the lead in some of these areas. In others, Government is better placed to facilitate work by communities in this country and overseas.

3.7 We will take action against people who have broken the law and who glorify violence, excluding people who wish to come to this country to promote violence or extremist views. We will ensure that extremists do

not take advantage of public spaces and that their activities are restricted. We will publicly challenge people who for too long have been able to get away with propaganda activity here.

3.8 Much of our work will focus on challenging ideology within local areas and key sectors and institutions. It will aim to enable those on the frontline to challenge terrorist ideology more effectively.

3.9 We will support the efforts of theologians, academics and communities by providing information on the texts which are being used to radicalise people in this country.

3.10 We will work to increase the confidence of civil society activists to challenge online extremist content effectively and to provide credible alternatives and ensure robust application of the unacceptable behaviors exclusion criteria, taking steps to improve the processes that support identification and assessment of potential exclusion cases and the implementation of decisions to exclude foreign nationals where it is in the public interest.

Protecting vulnerable people

3.11 Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are identified assessed and offered appropriate support is central to *Prevent*.

3.12 Future developments in this area will build on the previous work with vulnerable people, including Channel—the existing multi-agency programme to identify and provide support to people at risk of radicalisation.

3.13 Channel currently operates across 12 police force areas. During the coming year we will implement a new delivery model which will provide all local areas with access to Channel capability. This will allow for national coverage with greater flexibility to respond to varying levels of threat.

3.14 There will be no change in how the process is delivered: Channel will continue to operate on a partnership model with risk assessment and the development of support packages being led by local multi-agency panels. But we will ensure that in future all individual cases go through Channel and are subject to more consistent case management.

3.15 Channel resources will be allocated according to level of risk. Areas of higher risk will have dedicated resources; areas of lower risk will have access to Channel on a needs basis.

Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation

3.16 Work is already underway with Government departments and other bodies to develop the national programmes with the key sectors and institutions identified by the committee. These programmes will support the development of local *Prevent* delivery plans in the 25 priority areas. Examples of the steps being taken at national level within each sector are set out below.

Prisons

3.17 NOMS will continue to develop, commission and significantly upscale targeted counter radicalisation and de-radicalisation interventions based on risk assessment to address extremist offending and radicalisation, in cooperation with partner agencies. Training and support will be provided to operational staff to help them distinguish recognisable criminal behaviours from genuine radicalisation; and to confidently and appropriately report, challenge and intervene in cases where behaviours are linked to violent extremism and radicalisation.

Faith institutions and organisations

3.18 OSCT will engage with faith organisations and leaders to encourage them to play a full role in local *Prevent* groups and support such organisations in reaching out to vulnerable people. We will seek dialogue on security issues and, where appropriate, support capacity-building. We will take law enforcement action when faith groups or other organisations support terrorism and ensure that when they are expressing views we regard as extremist those views are subject to challenge and debate.

Universities and colleges

3.19 BIS will work with universities and colleges to help them better understand the risk of radicalisation on and off campus and to secure wider and more consistent support from institutions where there is most concern.

Internet

3.20 OSCT will take forward the recently reviewed the programme of activities to reduce assess to harmful content online in specific sectors and premises, such as schools and other public buildings; and ensure action is taken to remove unlawful content, working closely with the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU).

Schools

3.21 DfE will establish a set of standards for teachers which clarify obligations regarding extremism. DfE will also introduce a range of measures to safeguard children and young people in England from extremists and extremist views in schools.

Health

3.22 DH will provide clearer guidance and procedures for healthcare managers and workers on how to identify cases of radicalisation and also how to refer such individuals, supported by awareness raising and the provision of tailored training products.

3.23 The new *Prevent* strategy includes a fuller description of the actions and measures being taken across key sectors and institutions in support of this agenda.

Improving performance management, evaluation and value for money

3.24 The OSCT *Prevent* Unit is responsible for delivery of the *Prevent* strategy. The Unit has taken significant steps to address concerns in the *Prevent* Review about performance monitoring, evaluation and value for money.

3.25 Home Office project and programme management (PPM) tools and techniques are in place. We have introduced project charters for *Prevent* projects, detailing project aims and objectives, key deliverables and milestones, benefits, risks, interdependencies, costs and resources. This process is improving the quality of project data and management information, and is mandatory for all *Prevent* projects in 2011–12.

3.26 A *Prevent* Knowledge Team is being established and will include social scientists who are professionally overseen by the Government Social Research (GSR) service. *Prevent* research and evaluation adheres to good evaluation methodology consistent with the HM Treasury's Magenta book, and all research and evaluation designs are quality assured through GSR before commissioning.

3.27 *Prevent* progress and performance will also be assessed according to the principles of the Government's Public Service Transparency Framework (PSTF) and appropriate *Prevent* input and impact indicators are under development.

SECTION 4

Operation and impact of the current process for proscribing terrorist groups

4.1 The Home Affairs Committee are considering the operation and impact of the current process for proscribing terrorist groups. The framework set out below is complemented by work to challenge extremism and promote integration being led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Proscription

4.2 As set out in the Terrorism Act 2000, the Home Secretary can proscribe any organisation which she believes "is concerned in terrorism". An organisation "is concerned in terrorism" if it commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes or encourages terrorism (including unlawful glorification) or is otherwise concerned in terrorism.

4.3 If the statutory test is met, the Home Secretary must consider whether, as a matter of discretion, the organisation should be proscribed on policy grounds. The five policy criteria, which were announced during the passage of the 2000 Act, are:

- the nature and scale of the organisation's activities;
- the specific threat that it poses to the UK;
- the specific threat that it poses to British nationals overseas;
- the extent of the organisation's presence in the UK; and
- the need to support other members of the international community in the global fight against terrorism.

4.4 New candidates for proscription are considered by a cross-Government group, which also reviews all currently proscribed organisations on a rolling annual basis and makes recommendations to the Home Secretary. Parliament decides whether to agree any changes to the list of proscribed organisations by approving an affirmative order. The organisation or any person affected by its proscription can make an application to the Home Secretary for deproscription, with a right of appeal to the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission.

4.5 Proscribed organisations are outlawed in the UK. It is a criminal offence to be a member of a proscribed organisation, to provide support (financial or otherwise) for one or to wear the uniform of a proscribed organisation. Between 2001 and March 2010, 31 people were charged with proscription-related offences in Great Britain, and 15 convicted.

4.6 Forty seven international terrorist organisations are proscribed in the UK in addition to 14 organisations related to Northern Ireland. The most recent proscription order was made in January 2011 against Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan—a prolific terrorist organisation which has carried out a high number of mass casualty attacks in Pakistan and threatens British and allied interests overseas.

4.7 Proscription sends a strong message that terrorist organisations are not tolerated in the UK and deters them from operating here. Although many proscribed organisations operate mainly overseas, proscription is also used to ban organisations such as Al Muhajiroun which promote, encourage and glorify terrorism in the UK.

4.8 The Home Secretary's review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers (the outcome of which was announced to Parliament in January) carefully considered whether to extend the scope of the proscription regime (or other legislation) to ban groups which espouse or incite violence or hatred. The review concluded that such a change would "have unintended consequences for the basic principles of freedom of expression" and that the focus for tackling these groups should continue to be the use of existing laws, including public order and hate crime legislation, and work to tackle intolerance and non-violent extremism.

Tackling groups that stay within the law

4.9 A significant challenge is groups which are not acting illegally but still give rise to concern. We will encourage participation in shared interests across communities and target our efforts where most needed. We will not fund or meet any groups where it is not in the public interest to do so.

4.10 Tackling domestic extremism depends on a successful and distinct approach to integration. Groups which are not proscribed and act within the law may still give cause for concern. In these cases, they will be challenged as part of the Government's work to tackle extremism.

4.11 Consideration of the Government's engagement (including funding) with groups who do not believe in universal human rights, equality of all before the law, democracy and integration, is led by the Department of Communities and Local Government with input from across Government.

4.12 We will continue to work closely with communities facing the most significant threats in order to marginalise all types of extremists. In developing our approach to integration, we will also be looking at what more we can do to tackle extremists and intolerance.

July 2011

Joint written evidence submitted by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Community Security Trust

1. This submission is made by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the representative body of the Jewish community in the UK, and the Community Security Trust, which provides defence and security advice for the community.

We have given written and oral evidence to previous inquiries by the Home Affairs and other select committees on terrorism and related issues.

2. In making this submission and for the sake of brevity, we do not explain basic concepts but assume knowledge of them. Nor do we provide references for the points made, but they are available on request.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Jewish communities are the potential victims of terrorism twice over: as members of the general public we are at risk in the same way as others; as Jews, we are especially targeted by Islamist and far right terrorists.

4. We have pointed out in our other submissions that previous counter terrorism strategies have failed to recognise that non violent Islamists and *Salafi jihadi* terrorists have broadly the same ultimate aims; they differ only on the means by which they seek to attain their goals.

All strands of government must consolidate their stand against political and religious extremism and their link to violent extremism.

5. The long term activities of some Islamist organisations, which hitherto have been regarded as moderate and representative, have created a climate whereby radical Islamism is regarded as normative in the UK.

6. Universities should accept their duty of care to all students, and provide better oversight of radicalisation within.

DRIVERS AND RISK FACTORS

7. The recruitment drivers for Islamism, Irish dissident republicanism and domestic extremism are not necessarily the same, although they may share common characteristics.

8. Islamism is a revolutionary ideology which seeks to return the Muslim world to the state that its followers believe existed at the time of the Prophet. It teaches that for Muslims, and ultimately, the rest of the world, the only form of governance is *Shariah* law. It promotes conflict within the Muslim world, by alleging that Muslim states or governments are insufficiently Muslim, and at the same time routinely avows that the world is against Islam. It thereby encourages a reactionary attitude among those it seeks to influence.

9. Islamism is successfully penetrating hitherto moderate or non-Islamist Muslim communities, driven in the case of the UK, by the presence of individuals and organisations that promote the ideologies of the *Jamaat e Islami*, *Ikhwan al Islami* and *Tablighi Jamaat*.

However, at the same time, support for terrorism is not widespread and may be diminishing, especially as the majority of victims of its terrorism have been other Muslims.

10. Islamists and jihadists seek similar long term aims: the former pursue these through political and cultural activity; the latter through violence. A democracy must embrace and permit wide political debate, but when radicalisation promotes or encourages violence, it is criminal activity.

11. The UK has provided refuge to Islamist political and religious activists including *Salafi* leaders and former Afghan War fighters who were unable to return home.

All have used the freedoms that the UK affords to advance their beliefs. Small but significant numbers of British Muslims visiting the Middle East and South East Asia have trained in terrorist camps and returned to the UK to carry out terrorist attacks here, and to recruit others, thereby pursuing Abu Musab Al Suri's strategy of decentralised global jihad.

12. All the opposition trends within Muslim-majority countries are active within the UK, and have their supporters here.

Among the most active groups are *Al Muhajiroun* and its successor groups, members of which have become terrorists; *Hizb ut Tahrir*, which advocates the return of the Caliphate; and *Tablighi Jamaat*, a pietistic and secessionist evangelical movement. The latter two organisations maintain administrative and communication centres in the UK.

13. Increasingly, planned terrorist operations are made possible through the use of radical Islamist "starter cells" not directly linked to *Al Qaeda*'s core leadership, although material discovered after the assassination of Osama Bin Laden suggests that he continued to play a central role in strategy and operations even after 2001.

Jihadi terrorism has for the most part, been characterised by amateurishness and sometimes, incompetence.

14. The conveyor belt process of radicalisation is a group process, in which both social dynamics (Marc Sageman's "bunch of guys" analogy) and the Internet play an important part, but it is the physical intervention of terrorist recruiters that turn radical Muslims, who are not generally well versed in Islamic theology, and may include converts and the socially isolated, into terrorists.

15. The UK Muslim community is therefore the target for many radicalising forces, although only a small number support or engage in terrorism. The focus of Prevent counter terrorism efforts should therefore be to combat non violent radicalisation.

16. Irish dissident republicanism disavows the peace process, aims to disrupt normalisation and foment instability. As with Islamists, negotiation is not feasible. They have the intention and capability to undertake attacks in Northern Ireland and the UK mainland, and the dissolution of the Provisional IRA and the retirement of many police officers after the Good Friday Agreement, created political and practical space, and a skills gap within the law enforcement and security establishments.

The current dissident groups favour tactical and intermittent use of terrorism rather than a return to the wide-scale terrorism employed during the "Troubles".

The continuing segregation of the Protestant and Catholic communities, including the walls that separate them in the main cities, and separate schooling, maintain the distrust, although they may impart a sense of security in the short term. However, the reduction in government spending in an economy which relies to a large extent on state spending will exacerbate the high levels of deprivation and unemployment.

17. Domestic extremists now are mainly extreme right wing activists: animal rights and environmental violent extremists are numerically insignificant and the ideologies they promote attract few supporters, although there is widespread support for the (non violent) concerns they promote. They primarily pose a public order, rather than a terrorist, threat.

18. Seventeen far right activists are currently serving prison sentences for acts of terrorism. Their plots involved the use of military explosives, biological warfare and firearms, indicating a capability not hitherto used by Islamist terrorism in the UK.

Far right terrorists have not received terrorism training, in the UK or abroad, nor do they currently aspire to conduct large-scale terrorist operations.

There is a European dimension to far right violence insofar as known extremists maintain strong ideological and organisational connections abroad, which are facilitated by the Internet and the ease of European travel.

The Jewish community is particularly concerned by far right terrorism. It was the target of the plots in a significant minority of the cases referred to above.

The Jewish community is also concerned by the emergence of the English Defence League, and notes its increasingly racist and violent statements.

The government should be better equipped to understand the reason for the EDL's popularity and do more to combat it.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PRISONS, CRIMINAL NETWORKS, RELIGIOUS PREMISES AND UNIVERSITIES

19. Research, including that commissioned by the Home Office, shows that Muslims in British prisons often suffer from profound discrimination, yet it is also known that radicalisation is carried out in prisons and that the oversight and regulatory regime has hitherto been weak. We note the statement in June 2011 by the National Association of Probation Officers, that up to 70 convicted terrorists are due to be released from jail over the next 12 months and that high risk convicts will require intensive supervision, putting huge pressure on resources. We also note the statement by the Director of the Security Service that some of those due to be released are likely to return to terrorist activities.

20. The US Congress Homeland Security Committee hearings on "The Threat of Muslim-American Radicalization in US Prisons" in June 2011, heard evidence that some Muslim prison chaplains preached radical interpretations of Islam, but in only a few cases of radicalisation within prisons had former inmates committed terrorist acts on their release.

21. In 1997, the Committee of Vice Chancellors, since renamed Universities UK, drew attention to the malign activities of religious extremists in its Report on Extremism and Intolerance on Campus, but the lessons have not been learned. Indeed, on occasion, today's university heads have sought to avoid responsibility for the intimidation suffered by Jewish and other students, on the grounds of free speech.

22. Reports by the Union of Jewish Students and others have highlighted the malign effect that anti Israel and anti Zionist campaigners have on their lives and freedom to speak, and that universities provide an arena for radicalisation. We have accordingly cooperated in several substantive reviews on recruitment by extremist groups within British universities and colleges.

Since 1989, approximately 70 British students have been involved in terrorist attacks around the world. This includes carrying out, or attempting to carry out attacks as well as planning or preparing attacks.

Recent examples include Waheed Zahman (transatlantic bomb plot), a student at London Metropolitan University, and Umar Farok Abdulmutalab (Christmas Day bomb plot), a student at University College London.

23. The Board of Deputies and CST have raised these concerns on numerous occasions and have held meetings with university vice chancellors, as well as Universities UK. In early June 2011, the President of the Board of Deputies wrote to all UK university heads. These concerns have recently been discussed with both secretaries of state concerned with education.

24. It is clear to us that oversight by universities and protection for all university students has been weak.

PROSCRIPTION

25. The proscription regime serves several purposes. It allows society to define the parameters of unacceptable activity or support for terrorism; it demonstrates support for allies who may be targeted by terrorist groups that maintain fundraising or other infrastructures in the UK; it allows the investigation of covert financing and support structures for terrorist groups.

It has to be accepted however, that banned organisations can evade the proscription regime by, for example, changing names or establishing parallel infrastructures.

26. The Al Muhajiroun successor groups continue activity despite successive proscriptions. Islam4UK as well as Al Muhajiroun itself, were banned in 2010, and two other offshoots, Al Ghurabaa and The Saved Sect had previously been banned. However, in late 2010, the core of activists formed two more groups, Call2Islam and Muslims Against Crusades, which continue their activities.

27. In 1995, the United States designated the Union for Good umbrella network as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation. Its UK member, Interpal, was designated by the United States as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Organisation in 2003. Despite successive investigations by the Charities Commission, it continues in operation, albeit under some restrictions as to where it sends the charitable funds it raises in the UK. However, in recent years, the Union for Good has established parallel structures, which operate in the UK.

28. The Pakistan based *Lashkar e Taiba* terrorist group, proscribed by Pakistan in 2002 and by the United Nations in 2008, now raises charitable funds through its parent body, *Jamaat ud Dawah*, which is not proscribed, including within the UK.

29. It should be noted that UK registered charities which fund terrorist groups abroad potentially commit offences under the Terrorism Act (2000) and the Charities Act 2006. Additionally, they deprive the Exchequer of revenue.

30. We believe therefore that supervision of the proscription regime needs to be strengthened. In particular, the Charities Commission, which has on occasion admitted its inability to do no more than supervise charities' governance, needs to be significantly strengthened and required to investigate to a higher standard. To do so will require adequate resourcing.

PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES

31. As noted in our submission to the Home Office Prevent Review in January 2011, the focus of preventative approaches must be on combating radicalisation, and should not concern itself with enhancing social cohesion or encouraging community growth. Confusion between these different aims led to justifiable criticism of the Prevent strategy.

32. Government should continue its search for workable, practical and affordable strategies to engage with and counter radical Islamism, without demonising Muslim communities. This requires a thorough understanding of the ideology of Islamism.

Within the Prevent context, funding for all organisations must be contingent upon agreed and monitored criteria for combating extremism. This was not the case under earlier Prevent models. It is appreciated that local authorities may not have the knowledge or capacity to check the ideologies of those to whom they are giving money. This should be the work of specialised central government agencies.

33. On occasion, some Muslim communities disagree with aspects of British foreign policy, and allege that it is motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment. There should therefore be clarity that policy is conducted in the interests of the UK as a whole, and not to promote or undermine any religious or ethnic minority. Grievances should be answered by government in the same manner as any other, by reference to parliament, the democratic process and the rule of law.

34. Recent empirical research suggests that the institutionalisation of Prevent policing has addressed "individual and community level risks in a predictive and pre-emptive fashion", and distils traditional counter-terrorism policing with best practice derived from neighbourhood policing. It also notes that the policies have matured and evolved in terms of key processes and practices; that there is greater awareness of the key risks, threats and vulnerabilities but that it has increased capacity and capability to respond proactively and reactively to the risks, threats and vulnerabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. The government should supervise more closely out of school hours instruction and independent religious schools within all communities to ensure they conform to the National Curriculum.

36. OSCT need better oversight and control of Prevent spending. Organisations should not receive funding unless they can demonstrate their moderate views and positive benefit to society as a whole.

37. The government must communicate security and foreign policies more effectively, demonstrate support for its allies, and rebut the grievance claims that are frequently a basis for Islamism.

38. The government must continue to exclude foreign nationals, including EU nationals, who promote violence or hatred.

39. Groups which declare that they oppose violence in the UK, but support violence abroad, must be opposed more effectively.

40. The government's surveillance regime must focus more closely on activists who radicalise and recruit for terrorism, while maintaining its general oversight of Islamist organisations, but not target minority communities as a whole.

41. Universities and schools must understand that extremists seek to influence young people, and counter them, while supporting free speech, and demonstrating a duty of care for all students.

42. In addition to promoting democracy and freedom of speech, publicly and privately funded schools especially, should seek to impart a sense of belonging, and tolerance and understanding of other religions.

43. The Charities Commission should be given enhanced investigatory powers to investigate the end use of money raised by UK based charities.

44. The government should recognise that the English Defence League acts as a radicalising force and threat to community cohesion, and should not be treated as an ad hoc public order issue.

Supplementary evidence submitted by the Community Security Trust

1. This is the second submission by the Community Security Trust, made in response to the Committee Members' request for further information following Michael Whine's oral testimony on 1 November 2011.

2. We are asked for our views on the following:

- Whether the Government is placing appropriate emphasis on tackling the threat from the far right; where and how the police and other agencies should focus their efforts.
- How much of a danger foreign individuals preaching extremist messages pose to the UK, and whether the UK's proscription and exclusion regime are effective.

3. The far right poses different, but interconnected threats. They are:

- from far right extremist political parties, of neo-Nazi origin, such as the British National Party (BNP) and National Front (NF);
- from Populist Extremist Parties (PEPs), such as the English Defence League (EDL); and
- from far-right terrorists.

4. The BNP, the largest far-right political party, has lost considerable support over the past two years. This can be seen in a number of ways.

For example, by its reduction in electoral activity. In May 2011, it stood 323 candidates in the local elections, compared with 739 candidates in 2010, and 877 candidates for the same seats in 2007.

In the 2010 local elections, the BNP lost almost half their sitting councillors nationally and were wiped out in their former stronghold of Barking and Dagenham.

In the May 2010 general election, the BNP stood 338 candidates in England, Scotland and Wales, the highest number ever put forward in a general election by a far-right party. This was a significant increase on the 119 BNP candidates in the 2005 general election.

Overall, the BNP polled 563,743 votes nationally, or 1.9% of the national vote, and an increase on the 192,746 votes they polled in the 2005 general election.

However, the average BNP vote fell from 4.2% in 2005 to 3.7% in 2010, and only 71 of their 338 candidates retained their deposits, whereas in 2005, 34 of their 119 candidates had retained their deposits.

In neither general election were any BNP candidates elected.¹

Members are increasingly disenchanted by BNP leader Nick Griffin's impetuous and autocratic leadership, and as a consequence are leaving for other groups.

In the May 2011 local elections, 36 former BNP candidates stood for a range of other smaller groups, including the National Front, England First Party, Democratic Nationalists, English Peoples Party, British Peoples Party and as Independents.²

Other candidates have since defected from the BNP to these smaller parties.

In June 2011, Griffin faced a strongly supported leadership challenge from Andrew Brons, the other BNP member elected to the European Parliament.

Some of its loss of support may be ascribed to a move away from public activity such as demonstrations, to political activity, for which it has little capacity or experienced personnel.

Media publicity about the number of BNP members and leaders who have been convicted of crimes in recent years is growing. This, together with reports of the possibility of bankruptcy proceedings and criminal prosecutions of one or more leaders for failing to submit accounts, is harming their organisational capacity.

5. Populist Extremist Parties (PEPs) or Far-Right Social Movements are not new in Europe, but the English Defence League was only established in 2009, and therefore the phenomenon is comparatively new in the UK.

The government and the police still have much to learn therefore about what motivates its members, and how they operate.

¹ Elections Report, Thursday 6 May 2010, Community Security Trust, London.

² Elections Report, Thursday 5 May 2011, Community Security Trust, London.

Four recently published reports shed some light. They are:

- The EDL—Britain’s “New Far Right” Social Movement;*³
- Inside the EDL—populist politics in a digital age;*⁴
- The New Face of Digital Populism;*⁵
- Right Response—Understanding and Countering Populist Extremism in Europe.*⁶

6. The authors of these reports agree on some key findings about the EDL, which may be summarised as follows:

- The overriding grievance of EDL members is over continued immigration into the UK, and particularly Muslim immigration.
- EDL supporters express growing dissatisfaction with government and its ability to improve the economic situation.
- EDL supporters are significantly more likely to hold pessimistic views about their economic prospects than non-EDL members.
- EDL supporters are “ultra-patriotic”, and some may disavow racist ideologies.
- While the BNP is the most popular political party amongst EDL supporters, the majority of members state that they are democrats.
- EDL supporters are, for the most part, 18–24 year old males.

7. The reports note that the EDL has no political programme, and few self-declared leaders. Its main activity is the holding of street demonstrations and marches, which are organised via Facebook and other social media.

These may be used to intimidate Muslim communities and their institutions, or to protest against Muslim and Islamist public activities. They are often violent, and print and electronic media reports refer to their racist chanting and the giving of Nazi salutes by some members.

The EDL has Afro Caribbean, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish members, but they constitute a tiny and insignificant minority, although their presence has allowed the leadership to disavow racism.

One EDL sub-group, the NE Infidels, is however more openly racist and violent. (see Appendix 1).

Although some leaders and members have also been members of the BNP, the EDL is most accurately understood as a new populist social movement, rather than a traditional political party or group of the far-right. The threat that it poses is, at the moment, to public order, and beyond that to community cohesion.

8. The Swedish academic, Dr Tore Bjorgo, who has studied Europe’s far-right movements for over twenty five years, noted in 1995 that increasing support for xenophobic and far-right parties enabled the growth of militant neo-Nazi organisations and networks which target asylum seekers and visible minorities in Europe. He further observed that groups perceived as “right wing” or “racist” frequently turned out to have no connections with extreme political organisations, and had only a rudimentary idea of any ideology.

He suggested that theirs “is an anger against perceived outsiders, or the state, which could take a violent path”.⁷

This analysis, and that of the four recent reports referred to above, supports the view that within Europe as a whole, there is a growing political reaction to continued migration, and especially Muslim migration, which is perceived as a challenge to European culture. This may arise because of genuine concern over the future rather than as a by-product of racist or neo-Nazi ideology.

9. In 2007, the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) Report published by Europol, noted that:

“Although violent acts perpetrated by right-wing extremists may appear mainly sporadic and situational, right-wing extremist activities are organised and transnational”. Also that ‘Right-wing violence is partly driven by the agenda of their perceived opponents’.

In 2008, the TE-SAT report noted that “Activities from right-wing extremist groups are increasing”, and in 2009 that “several right-wing extremists were acting alone without links to an extremist organisation” and that “Individual members of the WPM (White Power Movement) scene have exhibited their readiness to use violence, threats or coercion to reach their political goals. In 2010, it observed that ‘far right activists are engaging in paramilitary training in EU Member States … and that individuals who act alone continue to pose a threat’, and in 2011, that “right wing extremist groups are becoming more professional in their manifestations” and that they “still pose a threat in EU Member States”.⁸

³ *The EDL—Britain’s “New Far Right” Social Movement*, Dr Paul Jackson, Radicalism and New Media Research Group, University of Northampton, Northampton, 2011.

⁴ *Inside the EDL—Populist Politics in a Digital Age*, Jamie Bartlett and Mark Littler, DEMOS, London, 2011.

⁵ *The New Face of Digital Populism*, Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell and Mark Littler, DEMOS, London, 2011.

⁶ *Right Response—Understanding and Countering Populist Extremism in Europe*, Matthew Goodwin, Chatham House, London, 2011.

⁷ Tore Bjorgo, *Terror from the Extreme Right*, Frank Cass, London, 1995.

⁸ *EU Terrorism and Situation (TE-SAT) Report*, Europol, The Hague, Netherlands, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.

The ACPO National Community Tension Team noted in 2008, with reference to far-right terrorism in the UK, that:

“The unorganised nature of such activity makes it difficult to police but individuals within known Right Wing Extremist groups are the subject of covert operations locally, regionally and nationally” and that “Lone Wolf operatives in the UK have primarily targeted Muslims whereas there is more evidence of an anti-Semitic focus in continental Europe”.⁹

9. An important underlying philosophy for right-wing terrorism is that of “leaderless resistance” as proposed by an American Ku Klux Klan leader Louis Beam, in his online journal, *The Seditious*, and the messages contained in the novels of National Alliance founder, William Pierce, writing under the name of Andrew McDonald. In *The Turner Diaries*, Pierce depicted a violent revolution in the USA that leads to the overthrow of the federal government, and the extermination of all Jews and non-Whites. His other book, *Hunter*, describes a campaign of targeted assassinations of couples in inter-racial marriages and civil rights activists carried out by a Vietnam War veteran who gets drawn into a white supremacist group planning insurrection.¹⁰

These two novels were a formative influence on both Timothy McVeigh, who bombed the Alfred P Murrah Federal Government Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, and David Copeland, the London Nail Bomber in 1999.

The philosophy proposes that individuals, or small groups, who are radicalised act out their beliefs without either participating in the political movement itself or without being part of a command structure.

10. Within Europe, parallel ideological developments included those promoted by the American-born Francis Parker Yockey, author of *Imperium*, who campaigned for a transatlantic and trans-European alliance; Jean Thiriart, a Belgian former Nazi collaborator, who established the Jeune Europe Movement, and who advocated abandoning the trappings of Nazism and who campaigned for a wider European collaboration from the Atlantic to the Urals; and Povl Riis Knudsen and Michael Kuhnen who adopted elements of leftist theory into their violent far-right ideologies. Kuhnen was among the earliest far-right terrorists in Europe, who was convicted in 1979 of organising an armed assault on a NATO establishment.

11. Targets for far-right terrorists have been Muslim communities, state institutions and Jewish communities.

It is no coincidence that the Norwegian Anders Breivik bombed the Norwegian Prime Minister’s Office in Oslo. He had been preceded by a Swedish neo-Nazi group, who in 2005, planned to bomb the Swedish Parliament and murder large numbers of young people. The four members of the Kameradschaft-Sud, a neo Nazi group, were convicted of a plot to bomb the rededication ceremony of a synagogue in Munich in 2003 which was to have been attended by the German federal president, Johannes Rau and members of the Cabinet. Had the plot succeeded, the German government would have been decapitated.

12. Far-right political parties and groups provide the arena in which radicalisation occurs, even if the number who go on to commit acts of terrorism has remained small. But there is little public support for terrorism, and interdiction of plots by effective law enforcement counterterrorist operations has resulted in a number of significant arrests and convictions in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

The number of far-right activists who plot acts of terrorism may be small, but the latest version of Prevent refers to 17 far right activists convicted of terrorist offences.

It is worth noting that, while the far right activists convicted of terrorist offences in the UK mostly followed a traditional neo-Nazi ideology, Breivik presented an ideological worldview more reflective of the attitudes of Europe’s new PEPs.

Far right terrorism is committed by very small groups and lone operators or “Lone Wolves”.

Far right groups lack cohesion, and have a low degree of overall coordination, but it should be noted that support for their views has risen historically in times of high unemployment and economic distress.

13. The police should focus their efforts on the specific nature of the far right and the different threats that each grouping presents. The BNP and the smaller extremist political groups may revert to street activities such as demonstrations or even violence. The EDL, for the present, presents a public order threat, although their activities should be continuously scrutinised for evidence of any move toward violence. Recent statements by some members suggest a shift towards more openly violent, and anti-state rhetoric. (Appendix 2)

The police should be on the alert for evidence of individuals and small groups moving towards violence and terrorism.

A more pro active policing policy of the EDL is now apparent. The arrest of EDL supporters by the Metropolitan Police Service on 11 November in the Whitehall area to forestall violent clashes with Islamists is evidence of this, as is the re-configuration of the specific police units that monitor domestic extremism.

⁹ *Lone Wolves Briefing Document*, NCTT, Association of Chief Police Officers, London, April 2008.

¹⁰ *The Turner Diaries*, Andrew Macdonald, National Vanguard Books, Arlington, VA; 1978; *Hunter*, Andrew Macdonald, National Vanguard Books, Arlington, VA, 1989.

14. Radicalisation occurs via a variety of methods, of which the influences of foreign preachers is one. Others may be via the Internet and video tapes and cassettes. In all known cases, however, with the possible exception of Roshonara Choudhry, there was also some human intervention. In other words, the intervention and guidance of a mentor is normally required to turn someone who has been radicalised into a potential terrorist.

Foreign preachers and extremist activists are known to have had a radicalising effect on some British Muslims.

Among the more prominent have been:

Abdullah el-Faisal (aka Sheikh Faisal, born Trevor William Forest) who was sentenced to nine years imprisonment in 2003, for soliciting to murder and incitement to racial hatred, of which he served four years before being deported to Jamaica. Between 1991 and 1993, he preached at the Brixton Mosque before being dismissed because of his radical views.

Mohammed Sidique Khan and Germaine Lindsay, two of the 7 July bombers, were known to possess copies of Faisal's tapes, and are believed to have been radicalised by them.

Abu Qatada al-Filistini (aka Abu Omar, born Omar Mahmoud Othman), a Jordanian national deported from Kuwait for radical activities who arrived in the UK in 1993. He was arrested in 2002 and, despite a succession of appeals, remains in prison pending his deportation. He was convicted in absentia by a Jordanian court in 2000 for involvement in 'The Millennium conspiracy', and sentenced to life imprisonment. He is listed as an al Qaeda affiliate by the United Nations Security Council, and was described in testimony given in February 2001 in a New York court as a member of al Qaeda's "Fatwa Committee".

He was a known associate, and influence on, terrorists convicted in the British and US courts, including Zacarias Moussaoui, Rachid Ramda, Nizar Trabelsi, Richard Reid and Abdullah el-Faisal.

Abu Hamza al-Masri (born Mustafa Kamel Mustafa) an Egyptian national who came to the UK in 1979 and was arrested in 2004. In 2006, he was convicted of various terrorism and public order offences and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. His appeal against an extradition request to the USA has been the subject of a lengthy appeal process.

Together with the 'Supporters of Sharia' group, which he founded and led, al-Masri took control of the North London Central Mosque at Finsbury Park, and used this as a base to preach violent jihad, until ejected following a legal challenge by the Charity Commission in 2003.

Omar Bakri Mohammed (born Omar Bakri Fostock) a Syrian national developed the Islamist political party Hizb ut Tahrir in the UK between 1986 and 1996, following which he established Al-Muhajiroun, which worked to re-establish the Muslim caliphate (like all other Islamist groups) and supported terrorism.

Mohammed is among the most significant preachers of extremism, and reliable media reports note that several terrorists were radicalised by meeting him, including Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan, Bilal Mohammed and Asif Hanif.

He remains active from his home in Lebanon, to which he fled in 2005.

Sheikh Anwar Al Awlaqi a Yemeni American engineer and educator, the operations leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsular, is regarded as one of the originators of the contemporary anti Western jihadi movement. He was assassinated by US forces in Yemen, in September 2011.

While living in the UK between 2002 and 2004, he may have radicalised people who went on to commit acts of terrorism, but both before 2002 and after 2004, he is known to have had a radicalising influence on some of the 9/11 bombers, Roshonaura Choudri, who attempted to murder Steven Timms MP, and Umar Farouk Abdulmutalab, the 'Underpants bomber'.

Numerous other Islamist preachers have been convicted of incitement and or terrorism offences, and an extensive list of these, and those they are known to have influenced and who went on to commit terrorist offences in the UK and abroad, has been published in *Islamist Terrorism*.¹¹

15.acial, religious and other forms of hatred against minority groups is increasing in Europe. Economic and political strains in societies have historically led to tension, and in many cases a search for scapegoats on whom to blame societies' troubles. Historically this has often been the Jews, but other contemporary victim groups may include Muslims, Roma and Sinti.

Inter-governmental human rights agencies have commented on this in increasingly alarming terms in recent years.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has noted that:

"9 of the 12 (EU) Member States which collect sufficient criminal justice data on racist crime experienced an upward trend in recorded racist crime"¹²

¹¹ *Islamist Terrorism—The British Connections*, The Henry Jackson Society, London, 2011.

¹² Annual Report 2010, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, p 36, Vienna, 2011.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recently noted that: ‘the Committee expressed its concerns—often continuing from previous observations—about the prevalence of violent racist incidents in several States.’ It went on to list EU Member States where it had particular concerns about racist violence.¹³

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe recently noted that ‘The OSCE has long recognised the threat to international security posed by racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance ... Hate crimes do not happen in a vacuum. Participating States have acknowledged that “hate crimes can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda” and have repeatedly expressed their concern regarding “racist, xenophobic and discriminatory public discourse.”¹⁴

16. It is clear that the presence of foreign extremist preachers and political activists can have a significant radicalising effect on some UK citizens. As a consequence of their activities, UK citizens have gone on to commit acts of terrorism here and abroad.

If the government is to take its role of protecting society, and of combating hatred against sexual, religious and racial minorities seriously, it should seek to bar the presence of foreign extremists.

The views of those excluded ranges widely, but the exclusion process has been used judiciously over the years, and individual exclusions are reviewed in order to determine if those excluded no longer present a threat.

It is right that the Home Secretary, acting on advice, should have the power to exclude those whose presence here is not conducive to the public good, but the strengthened powers, provided by the Prevent Strategy, are both also proportionate and necessary.

APPENDIX 1

Northeast Mark > NWI Fightback
For every poppy burnt by Islamic scum on Friday, a mosque goes up. End of discussion.
Like · Comment · 19 hours ago · 6 people like this.
Ste Latimer Anyone wanna light?
18 hours ago · Like
NWI Fightback I've got matches.
18 hours ago · Like · 1

APPENDIX 2

The English Defence League published following statement on 17 November on its Facebook page.

A screenshot of the EDL’s statement is displayed below:

English Defence League EDL
In the last 66 years we as a nation, as a race have had our national identity stolen from us by politicians who have forced us to accept multiculturalism. They have and still are practicing cultural genocide on their own people, despite warnings that we will not accept it. They have forced us to accept the dilution of our heritage and history by the implementation of laws which will stop us from rising up, even if that's just to voice an opinion. Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving us of our integrity as distinct peoples, or of our cultural values or ethnic identities. Any form of population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of the rights of the native or indigenous people. Any form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed on us by legislative, administrative or other measures is cultural genocide. And unless we find our backbone and stand up to the ones who are committing crimes against the English people we shall continue to be subjected to slavery by a British elite aided by outside influences whose only intention is to destroy us from within and wipe us out as a race.
Share · about an hour ago

¹³ Protection Against Racial Discrimination in Europe, Europe Regional Report, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. P 25, Geneva, 2011.

¹⁴ Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region—Incidents and Responses, Annual Report for 2010, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw, November 2011.

TRANSCRIPT

In the last 66 years we as a nation, as a race have had our national identity stolen from us by politicians who have forced us to accept multiculturalism. They have and still are practicing cultural genocide on their own people, despite warnings that we will not accept it. They have forced us to accept the dilution of our heritage and history by the implementation of laws which will stop us from rising up, even if that's just to voice an opinion.

Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving us of our integrity as distinct peoples, or of our cultural values or ethnic identities. Any form of population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of the rights of the native or indigenous people. Any form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed on us by legislative, administrative or other measures is cultural genocide.

And unless we find our backbone and stand up to the ones who are committing crimes against the English people we shall continue to be subjected to slavery by a British elite aided by outside influences whose only intention is to destroy us from within and wipe us out as a race.

Written evidence submitted by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies

INTRODUCTION

1. The focus of our response is in relation to the terms of reference of the inquiry concerning the impact that counter-terrorism (CT) activities are having on communities, in this case on university campuses and students.

2. Understanding the process of radicalisation is still in infancy and, as ever, we reiterate calls for an open and critical debate into the causes and drivers of terrorism. We also reiterate the need for such a debate to be evidence-based and one which steers clear of the sensationalist and ideologically motivated claims made over recent years. It is important that this debate seeks a cross-party consensus on violent radicalisation and brings together a range of terrorism experts and university stakeholders including senior university management, students' unions and the students themselves.

3. We begin by emphasising the fact that there is still no evidence to suggest that universities are "hotbeds of extremism" or any terrorist related activities. Therefore, where any incidents may occur that involve alumni of British universities, this is in no way representative of university campuses and their students as a whole, particularly given that over two-thirds of those convicted of the terrorism-related offences in question had not even been to a British university.¹⁵

4. Nonetheless in March 2011, FOSIS, in conjunction with UCL Union Islamic Society, held the "*Radical Thinking*" Conference to explore the discourses surrounding freedom of speech and extremism on campus, to hear grassroots experiences and generate informed debate.¹⁶ In doing so the conference brought together various stakeholders from senior university management, academia, students' unions, the security sector and ordinary university students. The fact that Muslim students and staff from higher education institutions across Britain engaged so enthusiastically with the event shows how open minded and mature both Muslim and non-Muslim students are and it shows how they are taking the lead in addressing these issues.

5. Freedom of expression is a key pillar of British society and one which sets us above authoritarian regimes across the world. At a time when people around the world are fighting for freedom of expression and greater control over their own destiny, it has never been more important to reaffirm our values of open debate and free speech. Universities play an important and leading role in upholding our core values by continuing to provide a platform for constructive debate and positive change; therefore they should be supported and not undermined or made to feel that their autonomy and reputation is threatened.

THE PREVENT STRATEGY

6. From the start, the Prevent strategy has been viewed with a great deal of suspicion. This is unsurprising given that a disproportionate focus has been on policing even though it has always claimed to seek positive engagement with communities. The revised Prevent strategy threatens to exacerbate this perception as made clear throughout the document, eg:

11.28—"...policing has a central role to play..."

11.29—"...policing has a key role in the delivery of aspects of all three of the objectives set out..."

7. The revised strategy document reveals that the Prevent budget for 2010–11 is £37 million with £24 million being devoted to policing.¹⁷

¹⁵ Paragraph 5.30 of the revised Prevent strategy. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary>

¹⁶ FOSIS press release for Radical Thinking Conference: <http://media.fosis.org.uk/press-releases/1317-fosis-and-uclu-islamic-society-to-hold-radical-thinking-conference>

¹⁷ See paragraphs 11.33–11.34 of the revised Prevent strategy.

8. Whilst there may be a sincere intention to engage with communities constructively, we believe that this continues to confuse Pursue with Prevent and that any positive partnership will be strongly undermined by the strategy's overwhelming focus on policing. If the Government wishes the Prevent strategy to be successful then there must be a greater focus on empowering citizens and giving them open platforms for positive engagement and debate, such as that facilitated by universities, rather than on yet another police-led initiative.

9. We are also concerned at the evident targeting of the Muslim population, in a manner that could constitute spying. These concerns are summarised succinctly in the following paragraph from a report by the *Guardian* Newspaper:¹⁸

“The government programme aimed at preventing Muslims from being lured into violent extremism is being used to gather intelligence about innocent people who are not suspected of involvement in terrorism, the *Guardian* has learned.

The information the authorities are trying to find out includes political and religious views, information on mental health, sexual activity and associates, and other sensitive information, according to documents seen by the *Guardian*.¹⁹

10. The previous regime allocated funding to local authorities based on their Muslim population exceeding 2,000 which sent the dangerous and erroneous message that the risk and likelihood of terrorism was directly linked to the number of Muslims residing within a local authority. This was investigated by an inquiry carried out by the previous Communities and Local Government Select Committee into the Prevent strategy. Their final report stated: “any programme which focuses on a single community risks alienating that community, and ignores the fact that no section of a population exists in isolation from others.”²⁰ This also applies to the student population or subsections of it.

11. The revised strategy states that “simple demographics will not be used as the basis for prioritising Prevent work”.²¹ This is to be welcomed but we remain concerned over what new indicators will be used to allocate Prevent funding to local authorities. The revised strategy does not make clear what these indicators are and this will only fuel speculation about whether or not this Government has moved away from the destructive approach of the previous Government. All indicators should be based on credible intelligence and adopt an evidence-based approach to measuring success.

12. We are gravely concerned over the impact the revised strategy will have on freedom of expression on campuses across the UK. All higher education stakeholders, including the Government, universities, students’ unions and FOSIS are obliged by Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights to allow the expression of opinions as long as they do not compromise public safety. Universities play a key role in challenging prevalent “wisdom” as well as debating and researching controversial topics. The “values-led” approach to the revised strategy risks harming legitimate grievances being aired on campuses and could have a significant damage on intellectual debate and research as well as the international reputation of British universities.

13. In relation to students’ unions, guidance from the Charities Commission clearly states:

“Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 requires universities and colleges to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure freedom of speech within the law for students, employees and visiting speakers. This involves seeing that the use of premises (including students’ union premises) is not denied to anyone because of their beliefs or politics.”²²

14. The report by the previous CLG Select Committee specifically recommended that, “holding extreme views is not illegal and Prevent should clearly focus on violent extremism” and that “no organisation- unless proscribed- should be excluded from debate and discussions”.²³ FOSIS supports this position as the most effective way of challenging extremist and terrorist ideas rather than causing them to go underground or hardening their views by proscribing groups.

15. University campuses provide one of the best places to challenge extremist views. Even where these views do not exist on a particular campus, open and transparent debates provide the safe and conducive environment for people to air legitimate grievances, debate with people from various socio-political backgrounds, have their own views challenged and become engaged in mainstream socio-political campaigns; thus preventing people from taking the path of violent extremism in the first place. This point appears to be acknowledged by the revised strategy, where paragraph 10.56 states that “universities and colleges promote and facilitate the exchange of opinion and ideas as well as learning”. Having acknowledged this, we hope that the Government will translate this into a practical approach towards university and college campuses.

16. Furthermore, the Local Government Association, in evidence for the previous CLG Select Committee’s inquiry, stated that “Government needs to be more confident in its dealings with those with whom it does not

¹⁸ Vikram Dodd (2009) “Government anti-terrorism strategy ‘spies’ on innocent”. Data on politics, sexual activity and religion gathered by government. The *Guardian* Newspaper, 16 October 2009.

¹⁹ Page 62, paragraph 168, “Preventing Violent Extremism”, Sixth Report of Session 2009–10, House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee.

²⁰ See paragraph 11.15 of the revised Prevent Strategy.

²¹ Students’ Union: A Guide (OG 48 C3)
http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/About_us/OGs/g048c003.aspx

²² Page 41, point 98, above report.

agree, especially when they have broad support from within communities or in academic circles.”²³ University campuses have mastered this approach towards debate and discussion and should remain supported in this regard.

17. There has been a haphazard approach in the way that counter-terrorism officers approach university students and staff, both on and off campuses, often resulting in a deeply negative student experience, a breakdown in police-community trust and strains what is usually a very positive relationship between many universities and their students.

18. The heavy handedness of counter-terrorism activities experienced so far by students from counter terrorism activities has already resulted in students and staff viewing the police with suspicion.

19. It seems clear that counter-terrorism officers are under-trained and under-prepared. They are often unaware of the campus culture that exists and how different each campus is to another. It is unsurprising then that counter-terrorism officers, particularly those with no recent experience of higher education, seem to be overwhelmed by the vibrancy of campus life and are therefore unable to adapt to university life and/or misjudge certain behaviours on campus as posing a threat to national security. For example, terms such as “radical” carries a negative connotation in the security world and is interpreted by them as meaning the process by which people come to support or carry acts of terrorism. However, on campus, this term is often applied to anyone who challenges the status-quo and is able to think creatively about problems and solutions and may or may not use forms of direct (but non criminal) action to arrive at a solution, eg demonstrations, “occupations”, petitions, etc. In fact, being “radical” is usually deemed to be a positive characteristic and academic staff on campuses across the UK self-define as being “radical” due to holding views uncommon in wider society. Also, it is only natural that students play devil’s advocate or experience with ideas. Student may, as part of this natural academic process, become particularly challenging but this process should not be confused with violent radicalisation.

20. Heavy-handed approaches to students, like that of the police investigation into the Detroit bomb incident in December 2009 where, contrary to the wishes of the students, the police sought the membership data of the entire Islamic Society of the students’ union without a warrant left many students, who were previously open minded and willing to talk to the police, feeling “betrayed” or criminalised by the lack of respect shown to them by the police.

21. In this case, many students felt that the police went beyond what could be deemed reasonable by their obtaining of all membership data, even the data of students who had never met the alleged bomber- including those who either studied at a separate institute to the main UCL campus or those who started university the year after Umar Farouk AbdulMutallab had graduated. In particular, there remain huge concerns over whether the police are sharing that data with security services around the world and the dangers that this association to the incident would pose to the lives of international students, many of whom come from countries with poor humanitarian rights records.²⁴

22. Finally, where students and staff have in the past been approached by counter-terrorism officers, this has often been without them knowing of their identity and many have felt that those officers were attempting to recruit them or solicit information from them about their colleagues. This has led to feelings of insecurity and being targeted.

23. What this shows is how many students are not automatically or ideologically against the police but that there are certain standards expected from the police which they must be abide by but so far remain to be seen.

24. Pressuring students and staff into becoming informants or making them feel targeted is no way to counter terrorism. Resources used for such activities are better invested perusing real terrorists.

25. Finally, some students and their student societies, notably Islamic societies, are unfortunately only ever approached by police officers when in relation to counter-terrorism and not on issues that ordinary students feel are more relevant to them or the issues they face on a daily basis such as Islamophobia. This has meant that students feel that they are seen from the prism of counter-terrorism and this does nothing to break down existing barriers.

26. In light of the points we have made in our submission, FOSIS proposes the following recommendations to ensure a more constructive implementation of the Government’s revised Prevent strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

27. The Government adopts an open, evidence-based approach to addressing the causes of violent radicalisation.

28. The autonomy of universities as places of free speech and expression should be preserved.

29. A quality impact assessment should be conducted, looking at the impact that the revised strategy will have on the quality of education and free speech.

²³ Page 229, Ev 149, above report.

²⁴ Robert Verkaik (2010). “CIA given details of British Muslim students”. The Independent Newspaper. 01.04.2010.

30. For the purposes of transparency and avoiding further suspicion, the Government should publish the new indicators that will be used to allocate and evaluate Prevent funding, based on an evidence-based approach.

31. The Home Office should ensure that counter-terrorism officers are correctly trained to adapt to campus life and avoid heavy-handed approaches.

32. Officers should only take the proper channels of communications (ie meet students, student societies, university management openly and to clearly identify themselves) and avoid any actions that constitute “spying”.

33. Local police forces should speak to students and help them to address issues more relevant to their everyday lives, beyond counter-terrorism, to repair the damaged relationship with communities.

34. In the spirit of engagement sought by all stakeholders on the issue of violent radicalisation, FOSIS should be a member of the independent board being created to look at local implementation of the Prevent strategy.

July 2011

Written evidence submitted by The Henry Jackson Society

SUMMARY

- 30% of individuals involved in Islamist-related terrorism in the UK (1999–2010) were educated to degree level or higher.
- There is evidence of students being radicalised on UK campuses or meeting individuals who facilitate their involvement in terrorism.
- Proscription of Tehrik-e-Taliban and al-Shabaab will strengthen the state’s ability stop individuals raising money or sending weapons to the groups or travelling abroad with the intention of training and fighting for them.
- Proscription of al-Muhajiroun is ineffective: the group’s activities and online presence continues as has members’ involvement in Islamism-inspired terrorism.
- Proscription of Hizb ut-Tahrir is not viable under current anti-terrorism legislation and would likely prove impractical and ineffective.
- The Henry Jackson Society welcomes the Prevent Review’s effort to seriously engage with the threat posed by Islamist organisations which run counter to British values.
- There are internal inconsistencies in the review regarding the future role of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, the Charity Commission and Ofsted, who are not fit for Prevent-related purposes.

1. The Henry Jackson Society (HJS) is a London-based think-tank founded on the global promotion of the rule of law, liberal democracy and civil rights. Through its 2011 merger with the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC), HJS research includes the study of Islamism-related terrorism and campus radicalisation in the UK.

UNIVERSITIES

2. A significant number of students and graduates from UK universities have committed acts of terrorism or have been convicted for terrorism related offences, in the UK and abroad. HJS’s *Islamist Terrorism; The British Connections*²⁵ shows that 30% of individuals involved in Islamist-related terrorism in the UK were educated to degree level or higher. Of these, 21 studied at a UK university; 16 were graduates; three were postgraduate students and one had achieved a postgraduate qualification.

3. A 2008 CSC survey, *Islam on Campus*, discovered that students who are active in their university Islamic society (ISOC) were twice as likely as non-members to hold extreme views, including that killing in the name of their religion is justified. At least four individuals involved in acts of terrorism in the UK were senior ISOC members. Kafeel Ahmed of the Glasgow airport suicide attack was on the executive of Queen’s University Belfast ISOC. Waseem Mughal, convicted of inciting murder for terrorist purposes, ran the University of Leicester ISOC website. Yassin Nassari, convicted of possession for terrorist purposes, was president of the University of Westminster Harrow campus ISOC. Waheed Zaman, convicted for his role in the transatlantic liquid bomb plot was formerly the president of London Metropolitan University’s ISOC.

4. In a number of terrorism cases the individuals were either radicalised on campus or met individuals there who facilitated their involvement in terrorism. Omar Sharif, a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv in 2003, was radicalised during his first year at King’s College London after he attended Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) meetings on campus. Anthony Garcia, convicted for his role in the 2004 “fertiliser” bomb plot, attended religious talks in the late 1990s at the University of East London ISOC, and became radicalised after seeing a video at the ISOC showing alleged atrocities in Kashmir. He went on to join al-Muhajiroun.

5. Other individuals met facilitators of terrorism at university. Mohammed Naveed Bhatti, convicted for his role in Dhiren Barot’s 2004 “dirty bomb” plot, was studying at Brunel University and met Barot in the

²⁵ The first edition published by the CSC in 2010 was cited in the Prevent Review.

university's prayer room, despite the fact that Barot had fraudulently enrolled. Brunel University was further implicated by Omar Khyam, the head of the fertiliser bomb plot cell, in surveillance tapes after an associate was recorded asking him, "How many brothers are there active in this country? How many are actually planning things, and doing them here?" Khyam responded with: "There's a lot of people who agree with it now, especially at, you know, Brunel University at Friday prayer. There, yeah, just blatant bro, in the sermon in front of hundreds of students bro. And you could see that people were like, they were agreeing with everything you know."

6. While cases such as these are relatively isolated, the conditions which allow for them to occur are not. Muslim students are increasingly being exposed to an intolerant, politicised, and in some cases violent, interpretation of their faith with extremist speakers regularly invited to address students on UK campuses. Since 7/7 a wide range of Islamist speakers have either regularly addressed students, or have been otherwise promoted by ISOCs. In the vast majority of cases, these guests are given open and unchallenged platforms, and are presented as mainstream representatives of Islam. Speakers include supporters of the proscribed terrorist group Hamas and members of HT (despite a National Union of Students (NUS) ban) as well as those who: publicly support armed jihad and the Taliban; warn Muslims not to integrate into western societies; promote domestic violence and; advocate the destruction of Israel.²⁶

PROSCRIPTION

7. Somalia's al-Shabaab was proscribed in March 2010 and Pakistan's Tehrik-e-Taliban in January 2011. The proscription of these organisations, both linked to al-Qaeda and based in volatile states of concern to UK counter-terrorism efforts—will likely be effective. Proscription strengthens the state's ability to safeguard against individuals raising money and sending weapons to the groups or travelling to Pakistan or Somalia with the intention of training and fighting for the groups. Aside from membership, offences that can now be specifically applied are: fundraising for terrorist purposes; engaging in conduct with the intention of assisting in the commission of acts of terrorism; and attendance at or conspiracy to attend a place used for terrorist training.

8. Al-Muhajiroun (AM) disbanded in October 2004. After the 7/7 London bombings, founder Omar Bakri Mohammed fled the UK and leading members reformed under successor groups, al-Ghurabaa (AG), Saved Sect (SS) and later Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jamma'ah (ASWJ). AG and SS were proscribed in July 2006 for glorifying terrorism. Leading members of ASWJ were convicted of terrorism-related offences in April 2008. Following their release in May 2009, AM re-launched under the leadership of Anjem Choudary. AM (aka Islam4UK) was proscribed in January 2010. Proscription appears to have had little effect on the group's activities, its online presence or its connections to Islamism-inspired terrorism in the UK. AM operates as Muslims Against Crusades under the leadership of Anjem Choudary.²⁷ *Islamist Terrorism* shows AM's connections to all Islamism-inspired terrorism in the UK between 1999 and 2010. AM is the most prevalent proscribed organisation, linked to 18% of all offences. Members of AM or individuals with known links were involved in offences relating to: the 2004 "fertiliser bomb" plot; membership of al-Qaeda; terrorist fundraising; soliciting or inciting murder; arson; racial hatred; and harassment. There was no decline in AM involvement following the 2010 proscription: five members were convicted of public order offences that year.

9. HT is a revolutionary Islamist party that ideologically legitimises acts of terrorism. However, since the Terrorism Act 2006, HT does not appear to have explicitly and publicly supported suicide bombings or terrorist organisations. Any government wishing to proscribe HT would have to amend current terrorism legislation, as prohibiting the glorification of terrorism is not retroactive. While proscription would send a strong message, it would likely prove impractical and ineffective. Furthermore, it could engender strong opposition and possibly give unnecessary legitimacy to HT's West vs. Islam worldview.²⁸

APPROPRIATENESS OF CURRENT APPROACHES AND ORGANISATIONS

10. HJS welcomes the government's Prevent Review, in particular the efforts to seriously engage with the threat posed by Islamist organisations which run counter to British values. Importantly, the Review unequivocally defines what those values are: "universal human rights, equality before the law, democracy and full participation in our society". The Review affirms that it will no longer engage with or fund groups that fail to support these values. It also clearly identifies the problem of Islamist ideology as one that "sets Muslim against non-Muslim, highlights the alleged oppression of the global Muslim community and which both obliges and legitimises violence in its defence". However, there are internal inconsistencies, specifically regarding the future role of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), the Charity Commission and Ofsted.

11. The Prevent Review recommends that MINAB be involved in training faith leaders to tackle extremism. MINAB is an alliance of four Muslim groups, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), British Muslim Forum and al-Khoei Foundation, who have directly appointed 16 of the 50

²⁶ For information on all of the above see *Radical Islam on UK Campuses: A Comprehensive List of Extremist Speakers at UK Universities*, The Centre for Social Cohesion, 2010 available at http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/files/1292336866_1.pdf; John Thorne and Hannah Stuart, *Islam on Campus: A survey of UK student opinions*, Centre for Social Cohesion 2008, available at http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/files/1231525079_1.pdf

²⁷ <http://www.muslimsagainstcrusades.com/>

²⁸ For more information see Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy (Centre for Social Cohesion; October 2009).

members of MINAB's Executive Board.²⁹ The MCB and MAB fail to meet the government's new standards for engagement. In December 2010, MAB was identified in the House of Commons as "the Brotherhood's representative in the UK".³⁰ In February 2010, Kamal el-Helbawy, the founder of MAB,³¹ appeared on British television as a representative from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB).³² The MCB is closely aligned to the South Asian Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), founded by the Islamist theorist Syed Maulana Maududi. According to a Communities and Local Government document (CLG) from March 2009: "The JI helped to create and subsequently dominate the leadership of the MCB".³³ Both MCB and MAB espouse a narrow form of political Islam inspired by the Islamist parties JI and MB and senior members have refused to unequivocally condemn suicide bombings in Israel.³⁴

12. The Prevent Review fails to recognise the bureaucratic failures of the Charity Commission and Ofsted. The Review stated that the regulatory body Ofsted is "fit for purpose".³⁵ However, repeated Ofsted inspections of an educational charity, the Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation (ISF), failed to recognise its links to the extreme Islamist group HT or that the schools' curriculum taught key tenets of the group's ideology.

13. Two of the ISF's four founding trustees—Yusra Hamilton and Farah Ahmed—were HT members at the time the charity was established in 2005 as well as during the financial year 2007/2008 when the ISF received £113,411 in government grants. Yusra Hamilton, a member of HT and the wife of HT media spokesperson Taji Mustafa, was listed as the Slough school's proprietor in that school's 2009 Ofsted inspection, but resigned from ISF after the *Sunday Telegraph* reported her connection to HT in October 2009. Farah Ahmed, author of the ISF religious curriculum and Head teacher of the Slough school, was also a member of HT, but resigned from HT following revelations of the links during Prime Minister's Questions in November 2009.³⁶ The Charity Commission then conducted a regulatory case review into the ISF. The review stated: "the Commission was aware that one of the current trustees [Farah Ahmed] was formerly a member [...] the trustees confirmed that Yusra Hamilton remains a volunteer at the Charity, they reported that she was no longer a trustee, having formally resigned on 18 November 2009". Astonishingly, the case review concludes: "Whilst Mrs Hamilton had been a trustee on the date the concerns were raised publicly, as she had already resigned it was not necessary for the Commission to examine further, the impact of her being a trustee and issues it may have raised."³⁷

14. An emergency Ofsted inspection in 2007 stated: "the curriculum, based on the Halaqah curriculum for Muslims in Britain, meets pupils' need and prepares them well for life in 21st century Britain".³⁸ A copy of the curriculum written by Farah Ahmed (obtained from the ISF in 2006) shows that it mirrors key HT texts and includes lessons on: the need to establish an Islamist state, or Caliphate and its pre-requisites; jihad, fighting in the path of Allah, as a form of worship; how democracy differs from 'our laws' ie HT's ideology; and the rulings systems of Islam, as defined by HT, including strict gender segregation.³⁹ In this case, therefore, neither Ofsted nor the Charity Commission was equipped to identify and tackle extremism within ISF.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. *Criteria for engagement:* Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) should circulate centralised criteria to all Prevent partners for identifying group's whose ideology, trustees, senior members or previous speaker record would disqualify it from engagement.

16. *Civic institutions:* A "No Platform" policy for the groups identified by RICU should be established across publicly-funded institutions. Local authorities should also establish mechanisms to limit civic institutions inadvertently funding or hosting such groups.

²⁹ "The MINAB General Council which met on 10 May elected the Executive Board", MINAB website, available at <http://www.minab.org.uk/news/news/85-the-minab-general-council-which-met-in-birmingham-on-10-may-elected-the-executive-board>

³⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhänsrd/cm101122/text/101122w0003.htm#10112234000037>

³¹ <https://www.csidonline.org/annual-conference/10th-annual-conference/speakers/125-speakers/500-kamal-helbawy-centre-for-the-study-of-terrorism-london-uk>

³² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJcIo5hv2Yk>

³³ The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities in England, CLG, 17 April 2009, available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/pakistaniMuslimCommunity>

³⁴ For details on the MCB's connections to Jamaat-e-Islami, see "Radical links of UK's 'moderate' Muslim group", *Observer*, 14 August 2005; see also comments made by leading MAB member Azzam Tamimi during a BBC *Hardtalk* interview, 5 November 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/hardtalk/3985403.stm>

³⁵ The Prevent Strategy, Home Office, June 2011, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary

³⁶ See *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy* (Centre for Social Cohesion; October 2009) pp. 87–88; see also "Schools are run by Islamic group Blair pledged to ban", *Sunday Times*, 5 August 2007. HTB wrote to the *Sunday Times* denying any involvement with the schools, but did not refute allegations that Hamilton and Ahmed were HTB members. See "Corrections: Hizb ut-Tahrir", 22 August 2007, available at www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/global/article2306117.ece; see also "Islamists who want to destroy the state get £100,000 funding", *Sunday Telegraph*, 25 October 2009.

³⁷ Charity Commission publishes report on Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation, 7 June, 2010, available at http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_isf.aspx

³⁸ Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation, 4 October 2007 (URN 134085).

³⁹ Haringey Council Whitewashes Hizb ut-Tahrir Schools Centre for Social Cohesion Press Release 11 December 2009, available at http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/files/1260791158_1.pdf; scanned copy of the curriculum available at http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/uploads/126054937isf_curriculum.pdf

17. *Universities:* Authorities should share information regarding speakers who: may break the law; may contravene anti-harassment and bullying guidelines; or those whose opinions, while not illegal, are intolerant and should not be given an unopposed platform.

18. *MINAB:* the government must reconsider if it is appropriate for MINAB to take the lead in training Imams to combat extremism.

19. *Registered mosques and Islamic charities:* The Charity Commission should support mosques combating the influence of an Islamist ideology which the Prevent Review identifies as one that “sets Muslim against non-Muslim, highlights the alleged oppression of the global Muslim community and which both obliges and legitimises violence in its defence”. Charitable status and public funding should be withdrawn for registered mosques and other Islamic charities which either repeatedly host visiting speakers who fail to meet the Prevent Review standards or allow such individuals to become trustees.

July 2011

Written evidence submitted by Universities UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As civil institutions, universities have a responsibility to confront violent radicalisation within the framework of the law. This is a responsibility which institutions take extremely seriously and there are many examples of good practice within the sector. Universities acknowledge that as institutions where large groups of predominantly young adults live, study and socialise, they are a potential target for those who seek to convert vulnerable individuals to violent extremism. This is a risk that institutions recognise and are actively seeking to address. In fulfilling their duties, institutions also have an opportunity to engage with their student bodies more closely in order to support those who may be vulnerable to a range of negative influences including violent radicalisation. Many universities have already seized upon this opportunity.

2. Universities must take account of a wide range of legislative duties including the legal obligation to promote and protect freedom of speech as enshrined within the Education (No 2) Act 1986, legislation to protect academic freedom (Education Reform Act 1988) duties to protect students and staff from harassment (Protection from Harassment Act 1997), safeguarding public order on campus (Public Order Act 1986), the requirements of the Terrorism Acts (2000 and 2006), charity law including the Charities Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010. This requires universities to balance a number of competing rights and to develop effective processes and procedures to facilitate this.

3. Universities need to ensure that potentially aberrant behaviour is challenged and communicated to the police where appropriate. However, the presence of controversial and extremist speakers on some university campuses has left the sector vulnerable to accusations of complacency and of giving extremists a platform to recruit. This accusation frequently ignores the competing rights that universities must balance, as well as overlooking the fact that exposing students to extreme views equips them with the skills to critically assess, challenge and reject violent ideologies.

4. Universities do not operate in isolation but form a part of a much wider community network, within which students take an active role. Universities and local communities are closely entwined. In recent years substantial attention has been focused on the fact that a proportion of individuals who have committed acts of violent extremism have been to university within the UK. Simplistic linkages have been made between violent radicalisation and the fact an individual has attended university without acknowledgement that the radicalisation process is far more nuanced and difficult to predict. There needs to be a better understanding of the process by which individuals are violently radicalised.

5. There are concerns that the debate around the role of universities in violent radicalisation has been hampered by selective media reporting and reliance on an evidence base that frequently ignores the positive work universities have undertaken in addressing this issue. This has resulted in universities being disproportionately targeted in the broader debate. This is impeding the potential for a sensible, rational and balanced discussion to take place on the role that universities can play in preventing violent radicalisation. Universities need to be seen as part of the solution not the problem.

UNIVERSITIES UK

6. Universities UK is the representative body for universities in the UK and has 133 members across the UK. The current President is Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, and the Chief Executive is Nicola Dandridge. Any queries about this submission should be directed to Jo Attwooll, Policy Adviser—jo.attwooll@universitiesuk.ac.uk

Existing good practice within the university sector

7. The university sector has been engaged with the issue of violent extremism for a number of years and as such has produced a variety of practical resources to assist institutions with fulfilling their obligations and preventing its spread. One of the first guidance documents produced was *Extremism and intolerance on campus*

published in 1998 by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (now Universities UK). Subsequent publications have included *Promoting Good Campus Relations: dealing with hate crime and intolerance* (2005) and the 2011 Universities UK (UUK) report *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*.

8. This latest report from UUK, written in the wake of the attempted bombing of a plane in Detroit on Christmas Day 2009, highlighted a number of examples of good practice within the sector and set out the legal framework within which institutions must operate. The results of a survey conducted by UUK during the drafting of the report show that universities take very seriously their responsibilities in relation to the safety and security of their staff and students. Violent radicalisation is not an issue that institutions can be complacent about and in recognition of this, a number of universities have spent considerable time and resources in fostering good relations on campus, in developing protocols for external speakers and in building relationships with community groups, the police and security forces.⁴⁰

9. The survey highlighted many examples of how universities are engaging with the extremism agenda. The survey showed that almost all respondents reported regular contact with the police; two thirds reported having engaged with the Prevent agenda; just over half reported regular contact with the local Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU); around half reported contact with special branch and one quarter with security services. Some universities have created dedicated liaison roles to work with the local police counter terrorist security adviser and a number reported involvement with local Prevent steering groups.

10. The survey also demonstrated that many universities have taken comprehensive measures to try and manage the booking of external speakers on campus through Codes of Practice to promote freedom of speech, the formation of independent committees to consider objections to specific speakers, the introduction of notice periods for the planning of events on campus, policies on the display of notices and regular communication between university management and student union officers.

11. The UUK report built on pre-existing guidance. Using relevant case studies, it gave institutions valuable advice on how to manage a range of difficult situations. Almost all institutions that responded to the survey reported that they were aware of and had used sector guidance such as *Promoting good campus relations*. The availability of such resources has facilitated the development of good practice across the university sector and will in future help to safeguard and expand upon this.

12. However, despite the many examples of good practice, the sector acknowledges that universities can and should do more. The UUK report made a number of recommendations for universities and other relevant stakeholders to act upon. These recommendations included the identification of an appropriate senior person to lead on issues of campus security, the development of a mechanism for regular dialogue with external organisations such as the police and community groups and the review of protocols on speaker meetings. There also remain issues surrounding the engagement of universities with their student societies, a situation which is complicated by the autonomous and independent status of such societies.

13. It is of vital importance that universities critically reflect upon existing practice and continue to work together as a sector to develop, share and learn from examples of good practice and the recommendations of the UUK report will provide a structure upon which to do this.

The legislative framework governing universities

14. Universities operate within a complex legal structure. One key area of legislation is that which facilitates the role of universities as important arenas for debate and discussion. This role is underpinned by the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and the Education Reform Act 1988, which give universities a legally defined role to secure freedom of speech and promote academic freedom. These legal principles reflect the fundamental belief in universities as places where open and uncensored debate can and must take place, not least as a way of encouraging students to learn to think for themselves and develop their own opinions. In this context, views within universities may sometimes appear to be extreme or even offensive. However, unless views can be expressed they cannot also be challenged.

15. Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act enshrines a positive and proactive duty to promote and protect freedom of speech. It imposes a duty on university governing bodies to issue, and keep updated, a code of practice setting out the procedures to be followed by the institution in relation to the organisation of meetings and other activities on the university's premises.

16. In recent years there have been some well-documented examples of unpalatable and offensive views being expressed on university campuses. Universities have been accused of hiding behind a smokescreen of academic freedom and freedom of speech but little has been offered in the form of constructive proposals as to how they could have acted any differently in responding to these incidents. Furthermore, the analyses of such occurrences has consistently failed to differentiate between views that might be distasteful and offensive to many and those views which are illegal and indicate a serious intent to commit violence. There has been a

⁴⁰ See the Universities UK report *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities* (2011) for examples of good practice. Report available at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Freedomofspeechoncampus.aspx>

tendency to conflate the presence of extremist speakers on campus with the security and counter-terrorism agenda.

17. Within universities extremist views can be subjected to censure. There are concerns about the Government's intention to disengage with organisations whose ideologies do not fit with "British values" and the impact of this on universities in promoting freedom of speech. Universities perform a vital role in challenging the ideologies of organisations and individuals through open debate. Attempts to actively disengage with specific groups may well drive challenging and extreme viewpoints underground and out of sight where they may be allowed to prosper unchallenged and develop into more violent ideologies.

18. In fulfilling their obligations to safeguard freedom of speech universities must take into account at all times other relevant legislation to ensure that individuals are not given a platform to promote views outside the boundaries of legality. This is a difficult balancing act to perform and one which has necessitated the development of formal protocols to manage the use of university premises and resources and to scrutinise wherever possible the booking of external speakers.

19. Universities must consider not only their legal obligations in relation to the promotion of freedom of speech and academic freedom but consider these in line with a complex range of additional legislation. They must balance the requirements of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and the Education Reform Act 1988 with duties to protect students and staff from harassment (Protection from Harassment Act 1997), to safeguard public order on campus (Public Order Act 1986), to prevent the planning and committing of acts of terror (Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006), and to act in compliance with charity law (Charities Act 2006) and equalities legislation (Equality Act 2010). This legislative framework is not an easy one to navigate but institutions continue to develop and improve formal processes to manage each of these legal obligations in a balanced and consistent manner.

Universities and the wider community

20. Universities have a duty of care in ensuring that campuses remain places of safety for students, staff and visitors. As such universities offer many services to their students to support their academic and personal well-being and to foster a shared sense of community and belonging. Initiatives such as this can help counter peer and family isolation which are believed to be factors in making individuals more vulnerable to recruitment into violent extremism.⁴¹

21. This pastoral support runs in tandem with more formal processes to manage campus relations, to subject invitations issued to external speakers to objective scrutiny, and to treat different and sometimes conflicting groups on campus in a fair and consistent manner. Institutions have an obligation to safeguard and facilitate the academic development of students by equipping them with the tools to critically challenge their own perceptions as well as those of others through debate and discussion. Facilitating the development of these skills will necessitate exposing students to extreme, radical, controversial and challenging viewpoints. This may include exposing them to views that many would find offensive but which nonetheless do not fall outside of the law.

22. Whilst recognising the vital role that universities can and must play as civil institutions, there must also be a realistic and fair assessment of the role they can play in preventing violent radicalisation. Universities are substantial institutions at which many thousands of adults undertake their studies. In many cases they are disparate entities operating across multiple locations, buildings and departments. Unlike schools, universities do not operate *in loco parentis* and as such their students are entitled to organise themselves independently. Universities must take reasonable steps to ensure that their campuses remain places of safety and security for staff and students, and to facilitate this, protocols to manage external speakers and the use of university resources and facilities are commonplace. Given the huge volume of events organised on university campuses by students, staff and external organisations, this can be a complex and labour intensive task.⁴²

23. University employees predominantly have contact with students within an academic context as opposed to interaction that will expose them to intimate details of students' personal lives and religious and political beliefs. Universities do not exist in isolation but are embedded within wider, complex local communities. Students regularly engage in these communities outside of the parameters of the university campus, participating in social, community and faith based activities. The permeability of the boundaries between universities and local communities limits the extent to which universities can realistically influence the activities of students off campus.

24. The role of universities cannot and should not extend into the monitoring of the private lives of their students. Thus, whilst control can be exercised over the use of university facilities and resources, universities neither have the capacity to extend their reach beyond campus-based activity nor should they be expected to do so. There must be good communication between universities and other relevant stakeholders including community groups and the local police on issues, groups or individuals of concern, but universities cannot be expected to have knowledge of the minutiae of students' lives outside of campus parameters. Evidently, if an

⁴¹ Cole J, Alison E, Cole B, Alison L, *Guidance for Identifying People Vulnerable to Recruitment into Violent Extremism*, University of Liverpool. Available at http://www.liv.ac.uk/psychology/extremism/TVP_Guidance_Draft_v0.3_web_version.pdf

⁴² One London based university recently reported that it manages over 6000 events per year.

institution does become aware of activity taking place off-campus that might indicate that an individual is becoming violently radicalised, then it has a clear duty to respond to this.

25. Current theories on the drivers or causes of radicalisation rarely prove more than the exception and never the rule.⁴³ As such it remains difficult to ascertain whether specific factors have been instrumental in radicalising individuals or if they were merely present but not causal. Despite this, in those incidents where an individual has been radicalised to commit violent acts and they are known to have attended university, their radicalisation is often linked to the university experience irrespective of whether there is evidence to suggest a causal relationship between them.

26. University educated individuals who have committed acts of violent extremism may have been radicalised either before or after their university studies. Alternatively, they may have been radicalised whilst at university but influenced by factors off-campus or they may have been radicalised by factors present on-campus. There is no hard and fast rule and no conveyor belt theory to catalogue the path to violent extremism. Whilst it would be foolhardy to deduce that a relationship could never exist between radicalisation and the university experience, it is also misleading to confuse correlation with causation and simply assume that the university experience was a causal factor in an individual's radicalisation. As such there needs to be a better understanding of the risks and factors influencing violent radicalisation.

27. Universities do not operate in isolation. The university experience is just one of a multitude of complex and interconnected factors influencing students including friends, family members, religion, faith and community representatives, personal experiences, the media, the internet and local, national and international events. Universities cannot be held responsible for the experiences that students have had before and after their university studies or for all the experiences they have during their studies. Despite this the fact that an individual has attended university is frequently assumed to be a defining factor in their radicalisation, when research would suggest that vulnerability to violent radicalisation is far more complicated, nuanced and unpredictable.⁴⁴ Adopting a simplistic approach to such a critically important topic detracts from serious engagement with the most salient issues.

Universities in the public narrative about radicalisation

28. There is concern that the debate on violent radicalisation and the role of universities is being hampered by a reliance on evidence which does not give the full picture, is frequently anecdotal, and regularly used in such a way as to give a misleading representation of the actual situation. This means that misconceptions are likely and that attempts to solve the issue of violent radicalisation may be hampered.

29. A brief critique of some of the sources of evidence cited within the recent Prevent review bear testament to this. Whilst alluding to some of the positive work undertaken by universities to counteract the radicalisation of students, the review ignores some notable sources of sector guidance and overlooks the extent to which universities have engaged with this issue for a number of years. The review references several research studies including a report by the Centre for Social Cohesion within which it is stated that 31% [40] of those who committed suicide attacks or were convicted of Islam-related terrorist offences in the UK between 1999 and 2009 had at some point attended university or a higher education institute⁴⁵. What is not taken into account is that the proportion of young men now participating in higher education stands at 41%, a fact that indicates that attending university may actually reduce the risk of vulnerability to violent radicalisation.⁴⁶

30. The findings of a survey conducted by the Institute for Community Cohesion demonstrated that only 45% of universities were engaging with the Government's Prevent strategy but due to its response rate of 17% this was not deemed to be representative of the sector.⁴⁷ However, despite this the survey findings are being used as evidence that the sector is failing to engage with the Prevent strategy.

31. The recent inaugural report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Homeland Security⁴⁸ attracted significant attention, with particular focus on its assertions that there is a serious problem of radicalisation in UK universities which needs to be tackled urgently. However, in writing the report and seeking evidence on this issue not a single university vice-chancellor was asked to contribute, nor were any sector bodies consulted.

32. Universities understand the seriousness of the threat posed by violent radicalisation and recognise that they have a strong role to play in remaining vigilant and responsive to this threat. There is evidence of good practice within the sector, and whilst this cannot be used as justification for complacency, it is often ignored in the broader debate. A failure to look at all the evidence is damaging to universities and more importantly means that the issue of how to tackle violent extremism is being considered on the basis of misconception.

⁴³ Briggs, R & Birdwell, J *Radicalisation among Muslims in the UK*, Microcon Policy Working Paper 7, 2009.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Simcox, R, Stuart H and Ahmed, H *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections*, London: The Centre for Social Cohesion, 2010.

⁴⁶ 41% of young men between the ages of 17 and 30 and 47% of young people (men and women) between the ages of 17 and 30 participated in Higher Education 2009–10. Figures taken from *Participation Rates in Higher Education: Academic Years 2006/2007–2009/2010 (Provisional)*, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011.

⁴⁷ Beider, H & Briggs, R *Promoting Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism in Higher and Further Education*, Institute for Community Cohesion, 2010.

⁴⁸ All Party Parliamentary Group on Homeland Security, Keeping Britain Safe: An Assessment of UK Homeland Security Strategy, 2011.

CONCLUSION

33. Universities should be viewed as a vital part of the solution to violent radicalisation, not the problem. They have a crucial role in developing understanding of the process that leads to violent radicalisation, in analysing how radicalising groups operate, and in assessing the effectiveness of interventions to prevent radicalisation through research and through widening and enhancing the evidence base upon which future policy can be determined.

34. They play a vital role in protecting and supporting vulnerable students, in facilitating good campus relations, in fostering debate and equipping students with the capacity to think for themselves, challenge and reject violent ideologies.

35. The issue of violent radicalisation is of crucial importance and it necessitates informed and rational debate drawing upon a broad and reliable evidence base. Universities take this agenda extremely seriously and whilst there are many examples of good practice within the sector, these must be shared and expanded upon.

July 2011

Supplementary written evidence submitted by Universities UK

Roots of Violent Radicalisation: Universities UK evidence, 15 November 2011 I am writing following the oral evidence given of Professor Geoffrey Petts, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Westminster, on behalf of Universities UK on 15 November 2011. During the course of his evidence Professor Petts referred to various documents and activities. We thought it would be useful to send to you further details to assist the work of the Committee.

1. In his evidence, Professor Petts briefly outlined the processes by which the University of Westminster seeks to prevent activities which might lead to the violent radicalisation of individuals on university premises. At his request I attach a short note setting out, in greater detail, the guidance which is available to university staff (Appendix 1). For context, I also provide copies of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech at the University of Essex, and the University of Roehampton's Guidelines for Engaging with Sensitive Issues (Appendix 2). I also attach two examples of speaker booking forms, one from Leeds University Union (incorporating guidelines produced by the University itself) (Appendix 3), and an example of guidance for external speakers, issued by St George's, University of London (Appendix 4).

2. Professor Petts also referred to the conference hosted by Universities UK in July 2011 on the theme of "Security on Campus and Freedom of Speech". We thought the Committee might find it helpful to have a copy of the programme of that event, which was attended by 70 representatives from 34 universities, including 11 from the Greater London area. Attendees ranged from directors of student services, heads of student affairs, academic registrars, heads of security, interfaith coordinators and a vice-president for welfare (Appendix 5).

3. Professor Petts undertook to send copies of Universities UK's recent report *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*, which I now enclose (Appendix 6).

4. Following on from the publication of the report, Universities UK has also undertaken a variety of activities following up the recommendations made in the report as well as those made in the Prevent review:

- (i) The Universities UK conference in July was designed to facilitate the sharing of good practice across the sector in relation to speaker meetings; maintaining *effective* dialogue with external organisations such as the police, local authorities and community groups; and ensuring institutions are fully conversant with the legal requirements operating in relation to campus security, academic freedom, free speech and equality rights.
- (ii) Since the release of the Prevent review in June, Universities UK has met regularly with officials from the Home Office and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to discuss how best the recommendations relating to higher education institutions can be progressed. The initial focus of these discussions has been on the establishment of a central point of information to share good practice across the sector and the proposed appointment of regional coordinators to lead on Prevent-related activity. Whilst no formal agreement has been reached on these proposals, good progress is being made.
- (iii) Outside of these discussions with government officials, Universities UK is considering the development of further guidance for the sector on external speakers. This will complement the commitment made within the Prevent review to ensure that student societies and university and college staff *have* the right information and guidance to enable them to make decisions about external speakers.

5. During the evidence session Professor Petts was asked to comment on what changes could be made to the Prevent strategy. There is one area where Universities UK does *have* concerns, reflecting concerns in the sector about the Government's intention to disengage with organisations whose ideologies do not fit with "British values" and the impact of this on universities' promotion of free speech. Universities perform a vital role in challenging the ideologies of organisations and individuals through open debate. Attempts to actively disengage with specific groups may well drive challenging and extreme viewpoints underground and out of

sight where they may be allowed to prosper unchallenged and thereby develop into more violent ideologies than would otherwise be the case.

6. Finally, the opening question asked of Professor Petts by the Committee was, in our view, a most important one. I thought it would be useful to reinforce Professor Petts' response on this point. Professor Petts was asked whether the university experience results in radicalisation. Although the Prevent strategy states that 30% of individuals convicted of Al Qaida-related terror offences between 1999 and 2010 had been to university in the UK, there is no clear evidence to suggest that the university experience was a predominant causal factor in their being violently radicalised. Nonetheless, whether such violent radicalisation happens before, during, outside or after the university setting, all universities have to be aware of the risks of this occurring and do what they can to prevent it from happening. Where the behaviour manifests itself as radicalisation (not necessarily violent) then how universities decide to respond has to be set within the context of universities' legal responsibilities to protect the safety and well-being of staff and students, to promote free speech, to comply with equality and charity legislation, as well as a range of other rights and responsibilities. It can be a difficult balance to strike and there is no one right answer, but it is a balance that we believe universities work hard to get right.

I hope you will find this supplementary information useful. Do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further.

APPENDICES⁴⁹

Annex 1: Guidance document available to university of Westminster staff

Annex 2: Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech at the University of Essex and the University of Roehampton Guidelines for Engaging with Sensitive Issues

Annex 3: Example of speaker booking form from Leeds University Union (incorporating guidelines produced by the University itself)

Annex 4: Example of guidance for external speakers, issued by St. George's, University of London

Annex 5: Copy of the programme for the conference hosted by Universities UK in July 2011 on the theme of "Security on Campus and Freedom of Speech"

Annex 6: Universities UK's recent report *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*

December 2011

Written evidence submitted by Averroes Institute

The Averroes Institute (AI) is a legal and policy think tank working to improve Muslim-Government relations. AI believes in peaceful coexistence and inter-cultural dialogue between communities within the framework of British multiculturalism, international human rights, minority rights, democratic principles and fair representation. AI seeks to represent, convey and articulate the sentiments of the vast often unheard majority of British Muslims (www.averroesinstitute.org.uk).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This submission principally focuses on the relationship between Islam and violent radicalisation amongst the British Muslim community. The distinction and relationship between the two is crucial to counter the perception that the whole community is suspected of, or susceptible to, violent radicalisation.

2. Although it has been acknowledged within the revised Prevent Strategy that terrorist acts on British soil are carried out by a mere handful of people who identify with the Al-Qaida ideology, there seems to be a disproportionate association of terrorism with Muslims along with a failure to identify and articulate that many terrorist attacks are committed by non-Muslims. It is this inconsistency that may be perceived as a deliberate misrepresentation of the Muslim community. Such a portrayal of the extremist problem legitimises the ideology of the English Defence League (EDL) and others who may sympathise with the actions of Anders Breivik, thus facilitating factors leading to domestic extremism.

INTRODUCTION

3. The revised Prevent Strategy proposes a greater and unprecedented role for government in monitoring and regulating ideology. In focusing too heavily on ideological precursors to violent radicalisation, it loses sight of the need to establish a convincing link between the purported precursor and national security. As such, the government has failed to appropriately demonstrate how either opposition or rejection to one or more of the values specified in the revised Strategy necessitates violent extremism, indeed, by attempting to classify those who do not fully agree with these ideals as being extremists, Muslim or otherwise, grossly exceeds the role and rights of government in enforcing beliefs on British citizens.

⁴⁹ Not printed

4. A worrying factor in relation to the practicalities of identifying non-violent extremists is that such a charge is left to public professionals who neither have knowledge of Islamic theology nor the intricacies that exist amongst Muslim ideologies. Such politicisation of Islam ironically serves to strengthen the claims of extremists that western states and their non-Muslim citizens seek to undermine the religion.

5. A key factor in the radicalisation and consequent ascription to a violent ideology (espoused by extremists) is not only British foreign policy as attested to by a number of key personnel in the Security Services, but also the way in which the government has disregarded the sentiments of the Muslim community prior to initiating military campaigns against their co-religionists. The lack of consultation with the Muslim community who make up over 2 million British citizens demonstrates the government's failure to understand the need and desire of British Muslims to fully participate in the decisions that concern them.

6. The basic thesis advanced is simple yet stark. Without initial grievances resulting from a perception that Islam and/or Muslims are under attack, with such ideas sourcing from both foreign and domestic policies in the wake of terrorist acts, the violent ideology would be rendered impotent. As a corollary, those who are devout and grounded in the textual sources of Islam almost never follow such an ideology. Thus a religious education that is better versed with mainstream Islamic teachings is an effective safeguard against susceptibility to an ideology which sees no wrong in the targeting of innocent civilians in terrorist attacks.

7. Such an understanding should impact on the Home Secretary's view of banned Muslim preachers who are well-known amongst European Muslims for their opposition to terrorist acts. Hence the Home Secretary should take extra care not to be easily influenced by the misrepresentation of think tanks that are ideologically aligned to the xenophobic and Islamophobic far right.

8. The lack of specificity of the "problem" proposed within the revised Prevent Strategy as well as the failure to distinguish between non-pacifism and "extremism" means the government makes serious flaws in the identification of extremists. The Strategy preoccupies itself with ideas that "cause" terrorism yet the nature of those ideas and their subtle differences with mainstream Islamic juristic interpretations of warfare have been, on numerous occasions, overlooked by the government.

9. The lack of engagement with scholars and religious leaders who have standing within the Muslim community has led the government to resort to skewed assumptions where resentment is borne out of two reasons. The first is of perception, resulting from the lack of specificity and the use of contested and controversial terms. The second type relates to the inclusion of mainstream Islamic beliefs (under the revised Prevent Strategy) as precursors to violent radicalisation—a claim made without any rigorous examination, be it political or religious.

FOREIGN POLICY AND RADICALISATION

10. The starting point for identifying the root causes of violent radicalisation amongst the Muslim community should rationally begin with an analysis of the articulated intent of terrorists themselves. The 7/7 bombers, for example, explicitly cited engagement of British troops in Muslim countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. The Al-Qaeda narrative that they were said to ascribe to also relies on either foreign occupation or the presence of foreign soldiers in Muslim lands as one of the main instruments of self-legitimisation. Indeed the former Director-General of MI5 Dame Manningham-Buller testified as much at the Chilcot Inquiry.

11. The Averroes Institute (AI) submits that this in essence is due to the perception that foreign policy is directed either against Islam or Muslims. In fact, the sources of grievance are much broader than foreign policy and extend to any hostility perceived to be anti-Muslim, including domestic policies such as Terrorism legislation or the revised Prevent Strategy itself.

Whilst not new, AI is particularly concerned with the validity of the response by the previous and present governments. Firstly, there has been both a silence and an unproductive aversion to the issue of violent radicalisation relating to foreign policy. Secondly, the explanation advanced for such a position is often that foreign policy should not be held to ransom by terrorists and that violent acts would still occur without such resentment solely due to the ideology that sustains it, a claim made by the Prime Minister in his Munich speech.

AI, however, believes that foreign policy plays a vital role in the radicalisation of Muslims in two ways. Firstly there seem to be contradictory practices towards different states or a failure to live up to the ideals of justice, self-determination, and goodwill. Secondly the government has repeatedly failed to consult with representative Muslim groups before engaging in hostilities against Muslim countries.

It is thus evident the government has failed to understand the importance of shared faith amongst Muslims worldwide, which is very much like British citizens who hold dual nationality. In order to allay concerns and demonstrate some sense of accountability to the public, consultation with the Muslim community would not only demonstrate that the government acknowledges British Muslims as "British", but also that the Muslim community, as fully participating citizens of the state, have some say in government policies—especially those that concern them.

Such practices not only undermine the claim of extremists, but also reassure British Muslim citizens that they are not excluded from the political process. Of course, AI fully asserts that grievances over foreign policy do not necessarily lead to terrorism on their own, but that terrorism is buttressed by a violent ideology (see

below for further elaboration). However, having effective democratic practices in place, which include the Muslim minority in the decision making process, the terrorist mindset would be less likely to take shape. If government wishes to maintain that foreign policy grievances play a minor or insignificant role in violent radicalisation then it must provide empirical evidence to support such a claim.

Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 has been proven to indirectly target Muslims due to its arbitrary nature.⁵⁰ Other similar elements, such as Schedule 7, persist and have been criticised by the government's own Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, further reinforcing negative Muslim perceptions of government.⁵¹

Widely documented British complicity in human rights abuses involving Muslims further exasperates the predicament, examples being the abuse of innocent Iraqi's by British forces,⁵² the Al-Skeini and Al-Jedda cases, as well as the ongoing Baha Mousa Inquiry not to mention flagrant human rights abuses by allies such as the US Kill Team.⁵³

EXISTING APPROACHES

12. The previous and revised Prevent strategies both fall short of addressing certain root causes of violent radicalisation. The first cause, grievances and resentment due to a perceived attack on Islam and Muslims emanating from, amongst other factors, foreign policy is not acknowledged, even though it is what enables the violent ideology to take root.

13. Secondly the violent ideology is not defined specifically enough to be effectively addressed at its source or with those over whom it is most likely to hold sway—the politically disaffected and non-devout.

14. Thirdly the lack of definition and the conflating of a violent ideology with the non-pacifist beliefs of the vast majority give rise to a third aggravating factor that confirms the paranoia and negative perceptions of many in the Muslim community.

15. Government appears to be unaware that those most devout are the least likely to develop a terrorist mindset whilst remaining strong non-pacifists. There is also a failure to recognise that self-identification as Muslims and ascription to its tenets necessitate that such individuals can only be approached, refuted and de-radicalised with arguments grounded in Islam. Therefore those who hold credibility and legitimacy such as scholars and non-pacifists amongst Muslims will hold most sway amongst the youth and the grass roots of the community.

16. Therefore specific and tailored strategies must be devised to deal with those who are susceptible to the terrorist mindset, those who have renounced fallacious and illegitimately violent interpretations of Islamic law, and those who propagate such an ideology.

17. With regards to dealing with the source of the ideology, it is imperative that this exercise be carried out in a methodological manner to arrive at a specific and detailed conclusion. One which correctly identifies the precise content of the violent ideology so as to enable the Muslim community to intercept those who espouse such views prior to them actualising their aspirations.

18. Nonetheless, this step has often been overlooked. Instead the problem is vaguely defined and the policies employed far too “blunt” in nature to the extent that it becomes inevitable, both in perception and reality, that Islam itself or the practice of the vast majority of Muslims is conflated with the violent ideology.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MUSLIMS COMMUNITY

19. Conflation only serves to reduce the chances of cooperation with the Muslim community in opposing the violent ideology as the community itself feels at risk of being identified as those with terrorist tendencies even though they are against it.

20. The terms employed from the outset were counterproductive, such as the Prevent program being made specific to “Islamic extremism” but then amended due to public outcry. Even the use of “extremism” implies a religious spectrum with one end occupied by an extreme ideology (and the other by non-observance) thus conflating religious commitment with the likelihood of being prone to a violent ideology. The term “radicalisation” also implies there to be a causal link between religiosity and radicalism. Any term such as “Islamic fundamentalism” that risks religiosity being correlated with a violent ideology or risks identifying religion itself as the root cause should be avoided too. The term “fundamentalism”, though widely used, should also be abandoned since for many Muslims it creates resentment that the immutable aspects of their faith are being threatened. The use of terms that link violence with religion are also unproductive given that they legitimise extreme elements of society to attack aspects of Islam that have nothing to do with “violence”, but merely on an ideological basis.

⁵⁰ Gillan and Quinton v United Kingdom, judgment of 12 January 2010.

⁵¹ Report on the Operation in 2010 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and of Part 1 of the terrorism act 2006 (July 2011).

⁵² Al-Skeini/Al-Jedda v United Kingdom, judgement of 7 July 2011.

⁵³ <http://www.rollingstone.com/kill-team>

NON-VIOLENT EXTREMISM

21. Government should only classify ideologies as “extremist” when they are overtly violent in their means. Thus it is essential that we maintain focus on the factors that categorically lead to violence. These must be construed in a narrow sense, in order to limit governmental interference in the legitimate realm of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, all of which constitute an essential corner-stone of democratic society.

22. The revised Prevent Strategy’s conception of the term “extremism” is highly problematic. Despite Mr. Cameron’s emphatic assurances in Munich of distinguishing between Islam and “Islamist extremism”, a closer examination of the substance of the Strategy (and his Munich speech) reveals the opposite. Mainstream religious views such as those on systems of governance and religious law, gender, sexuality, and a belief in the use of force as an act of self-defence—a belief that has nothing to do with the ideology of attacking one’s own State and its citizens, have been labelled as “non-violent extremist” views—this without any visible consultation with the Muslim community who would undoubtedly work to rectify their misrepresented beliefs and views.

23. This will also mean that almost all mainstream scholars with legitimacy and credibility in the community can potentially be classified as “extremists”, indeed many of these scholars have been openly opposed to the interpretations of Al-Qaida and like-minded groups since their emergence as international organisations.

24. Mr. Cameron’s attack on multiculturalism and his assertion that accommodation for cultures to develop and co-exist has allowed for violent extremism to develop is highly counterproductive owing to the fact that the purpose of Prevent is to diminish threats to security as opposed to threats to the British culture—as conceived by Mr Cameron.

25. In fact the Coalition Government should not attack nor challenge any aspect of the Islamic belief system without having established a firm link with violence against the state. Not only is his conceptualisation incorrect, but it could, for the various reasons stated previously, also add to burgeoning antipathy amongst many Muslims.

26. The revised Prevent Strategy is also unlikely to be within the legal bounds of international human and minority rights law. Firstly it is an essential part of any functioning democratic society to allow differences in view and belief, even if they challenge the form of government as long as such challenges are expressed in a peaceful manner. Secondly, no link has been established between such beliefs and violence. Thirdly, other religious groups who hold parallel views are not subject to the same scrutiny.

27. The Strategy is also unworkable from a policy perspective. As such the government should also understand that a coercive approach is never sustainable. Whatever the government’s intentions, without bringing the vast majority of Muslim community on board, a lasting solution will continue to remain elusive.

July 2011

Written evidence submitted by Centri

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CENTRI

There has been some good work in the Prevent arena and an increase in the number of experts and organisations that are able to access and work with the Government and communities with a better understanding of how and what causes youngsters to be radicalised to extremism. There is however a need for more to be done in the implementation and evaluation of strategies and projects that are being undertaken and to make them more mainstream.

CENTRI has been formed to bring together world class experts with the experience and ability to assist in this area from the different sects and schools of thought within the British Muslim population.

The following is based upon:

1. extensive study with former radicals;
2. engagement with the research that has been done in the UK and abroad;
3. two years of counter terrorism interventions work which has been undertaken with the Police; probation service; community referrals; through the channel process; and other forms of referral;
4. observations of the data that have been gathered over the last 10 years, and the 120 plus cases that have led to convictions in the UK;
5. discussions with senior Police figures responsible for Channel; and
6. theoretical studies undertaken by colleagues and researchers looking at psychological constitution in sociopathy.

Too many people like to describe radicalization towards violence as a single trajectory—a single process and route to radicalization. People either see this as ideology or theology, or grievances or they see it as a specific theological trajectory ie salafist Jihadism (a mixture of what is commonly referred to as the Saudi Arabian brand of Wahabi-Salafi religious dogma which is then taken to a political extreme and seeks to enforce this pre-modern interpretation of Islam by force upon society, and justifies violence in order to achieve this

end). Though tempting to use as analytical tools, these views do not accurately portray what is happening “on the ground”.

The picture on the ground demonstrates a number of trajectories which are common—these four pathways are the most common routes traversed that lead to violent extremism.

PATHWAYS

1. A belief in a world view where the west is at war with Islam. The selective observation of political issues as grievances, leads to accepting the plausibility of violent ideologies as normal and appropriate to the world. This then sees extremist ideology as the only ideology and a reading of religious texts that are consonant and resonate with the world as it is. These individuals are often not drawn to the theology of Wahhabi jihadism, but to the political project and activities as being a manifestation of fighting the war against Islam that is being perpetrated by the West. Whether it is the cartoons, the wars in geo-political East, or one of the myriad other examples cited, they are all viewed as examples of this. Acts of terror are seen in the same light; as a response to this war—intellectual, political, and military. The way to engage such people in our experience is not to immediately challenge the theology, but to get them to see the world in a more nuanced manner; the media, parliamentary debate and policy, government decisions, wars etc are all not “for or against” Muslims. If this is done, then the framework of thinking within which the world is viewed is comprehensively changed. This change then necessitates a more nuanced approach to the religious texts, and it begins to make more sense that such an approach should exist. Hence, this route is a mixture of grievances viewed through a specific narrative, and an ideological view of Islam and terrorism.

2. Theological terrorism—there are individuals who have a full-blown belief that Islamist ideology is the only valid political reality that Muslims can accept. They believe terrorism is a form of Jihad to remove governments and their supporters ie “The West” from Muslim majority countries or what they would refer to as “Muslim lands”. These are specific, theologically driven aims, and they believe that they have an authentic reading of medieval Islamic scripture. This category of people can only be engaged by people with the relevant theological expertise to demonstrate that the views held are inauthentic and are a heterodox reading of scripture. After first dealing with the specific issue of violence, the underpinning mindset can only be engaged by demonstrating the pluralism within Islam, and the diverse nature of Islamic thought; this is a detailed, and specific theological engagement.

3. There are individuals in the UK of Iraqi, Afghani, and Pakistani origin, who have had grievous experiences. These experiences, often of violence; traumatic loss of family members; “collateral damage” involving our troops; or personal experiences of treatment in the UK, makes these individuals personally susceptible to violent ideology. These individuals are often motivated by a sense of moral indignation. Engaging with such people can be difficult. In our experience it requires: management of the emotions and allowing them to be expressed and justified; allowing the moral reaction and building upon it (ie civilians being hurt does not allow civilians being attacked); developing a sense of moral rectitude and re-enforcing this by addressing the theological justifications; and building resilience on human rights, morality, and theological principles over a period of time.

4. Those with mental health problems—whether minor or major—are targets and easily vulnerable. This is why mainstream services identifying such people in partnership with initiatives is so important. Dealing with the arguments, isolating the individuals, placing them in safer spaces, dealing with the causes eg the mental health state, are all part of the resolution as well as specialized interventions; mainstream services play a major role.

INSTITUTIONS

1. Mosques

In my opinion they are not the main source of radical activities nor are they the most likely place within which to find extremist ideologues engaging in activism. But this requires elaboration:

1. There are some institutions—which a survey would identify quite easily—where all groups are allowed to operate without restriction. A well known example of this is the Regent’s Park Mosque which has always allowed Hizb ut-Tahrir to have regular weekly Arabic and English language circle. Hizb ut-Tahrir are not a violent organization but they are ideological disposed to (a) accepting Jihadist groups and activities as politically and religiously legitimate, but different from their own brand of Islamist theology and (b) do accept forms of terrorism that we would consider (i) obviously wrong from a moral perspective, (ii) illegal and (iii) contradictory to the policy of counter terrorism that we have had in place since the inception of CONTEST eg suicide bombing of civilians in Israel and bombings within the civilian population for example. They have also given rise to violent extremist groups in the UK and even in places like India such as the “Milli” off shoot.
2. There are other institutions which are themselves lead by people who support certain types of terrorist groups. An anecdotal example occurred last Ramadan where a Mosque in the North East, supplicated not merely against Israelis but for God to count their number (ie all of them) and kill them. This was an institution run by people close to Hamas ideologically. There are a

limited number of such institutions which in truth are Muslim Brotherhood affiliates (Hamas is officially a part of the MB, in their constitution). These places foster not only the ideological and theological extremist views which are close to violence and extremist ideology but are actually places where masses are exposed to such radical views consistently.

3. Activists who operate from Mosques and within them but are not a part of them. This is something that can only be determined by following known and active groups and individuals with their connections and intelligence; this has been happening to some extent.
4. Some institutions theology is sympathetic to certain brands of terrorism and extremism—the Taliban and certain factions within Pakistani Deobandi institutions. I must stress that this is not to say that all or the majority are like this; but historically there have been many places which have housed and given support to Pakistani groups which are religious “vigilantes” (obviously persecuting people who commit religious “crimes” though not illegal activities). From an experiential and “research” perspective this is, of course, not the norm nor the majority of institutions. Actually, the opposite has been shown, though some of this will be liable to dispute and scrutiny.

2. Internet

Experts are divided by what they see as Internet radicalization—in my work I have come across certain cases which I would share:

1. some individuals who already have “cause” or “motivation” and then seek to find information;
2. those individuals who see it as a place for anonymously spreading their ideology and theology—either through direct one way propaganda, and those who see those forums where “theological/jurisprudential” discussions can take place. Justify and further radicalize those with sympathies, and meet like-minded individuals;
3. finding a community to belong to—researchers have stated that this is a common practice with all sorts of deviant behaviours whether suicide pacts, cults etc. Reinforcing the beliefs and world view and further strengthening such beliefs; and
4. means of discreet communication and open propaganda—strategic communication through alternative sites eg as has been discovered pornographic sites seem to be a route of transferring information and also we have the Inspire Magazine-al-Qaeda’s English language online publication attempting to both relate psychologically to a Western audience and give practical tips on how to be a lone wolf terrorist.

3. Universities

In my opinion the Universities are the single area where there has been little or no consistent focus whilst at the same time we have more and more extreme voices and views being presented:

1. Apparently mainstream institutions. We have for example apparently “representative” institutions endorsing preachers who support terrorism eg Raed Saleh who recently has been bailed after being arrested for being in the UK in violation of a notice of exclusion that he was given. His website supports and praised Bin Laden as a martyr (shaheed) presumably dying in “Jihad”; heads a group that has explicitly stated that it does not believe in civilians in Israel among Jews, and Palestinians taking part in the political process are traitors and that Jews in general—thousands of them in the US—were behind 9/11 and knew about it and conspired against the people, in the official party magazine. This man was defended irrespective of the facts—this is not about Israel and Palestine but about terrorism and anti-Semitic hatred—they decided that he was a good man who should be supported.
2. Violent terrorist supporters and their activists have been operating on campus which did not stop out of principle but actually when some of these matters became more and more public. One institution did not do anything to stop the al-Qaeda Yemen English preacher who has recently gained notoriety, Anwar Awlaki from speaking by live link up and recordings at the University till pressure from public discrediting made it necessary.
3. The politicized discourses which prevent an objective analysis taking place—this is barrier to seeing what is happening within such institutions. I am not suggesting that the majority of University students are embracing extremist ideological narratives and considering violence. In fact I would say that only a small percentage get involved with any type of political activism and even Islamist activism, and only a small percentage will become radicalized. The problem is I do not believe that any non-biased non-political analysis is currently available that is up to date and current on the issue.
4. Institutionally there are little to no resources invested in this area—how many staff members does BIS have related to this and looking into this subject?
5. There has been no objective criterion to differentiate (a) what are the groups and institutions that we are engaging with actually take as their political and theological stand points? (b) what is an acceptable minimal threshold and how do we define it? (c) based upon (a), (b) and the

additional evidence that we have of effective engagement coupled with a developed perspective on radicalization towards violence, have we been developing our policies and activism? The current government does wish to do so and has started the process of developing the criterion for doing so within the prevent review, though there is still much more that needs to be developed.

6. Counter campaigns against the prevalent totalitarian voices need to be facilitated if platforms paid for by the University and public bodies, are to allow extreme preachers. This is in order to allow and facilitate debate and challenge the extreme narratives. Otherwise effectively, it is tax-payers money going to allow people to preach the killing of homosexuals, adulterers, and demonizing Jews in the name of anti-Israeli government labels, effectively totalitarian fascists given a public platform paid by the public to recruit and proselytize their views in the mistaken name of freedom of speech. This is not about rights of public gathering, free speech and not persecuting people, but rather about using state sponsored privileges to spread fascist ideals in the name of a religion; in this case in the name of Islam.
7. Resources to support not merely criticize Universities need to be put in place—greater number of people, advice, information sharing, developing good practice in vetting and challenging extremists and preventing those advocating violence and terrorism or breaking laws against hate speech are all required.

4. Prisons

There are unique circumstances which for various reasons have been created. Some as a result of normal prison community dynamics ie it is a separate society to the rest of society inhabited by people who have established their own criterion outside of the wider society. There is a concentration of people likely to be receptive or “vulnerable”. There are dynamics that have been developed due to general problems such as the gang culture and radical religion compounding together to create very unique types of extremists gangs. These gangs provide primarily safety within prison. But also networks. They reinforce criminal behaviour mentalities through new found religious justifications. Additionally we have had the strange scenario where communities being placed together through religious identity, and these have been including in the past radical hate preachers—inadvertently thereby giving terrorists and those convicted of offences related to terrorism people with whom to interact and propagate their views and theology and political lens—to a group of people who are arguably vulnerable to it. This alongside a complete inability—completely understandable—for the staff to deal with this very unique situation. In conversations with Prison staff, fellow colleagues/interventionists, leading people dealing with post prison probation and community re-assignment the following are key issues have come to the fore:

1. existing tensions are heightened—cultures of racism and prejudice have been addressed over the last few years within prisons but there are still tensions which exist within intra-prison “communities” and those communities and staff;
2. lack of awareness of mainstream staff of the theological and ideological realities they are dealing with;
3. lack of grounded evidence based training for staff on actual evidence based characteristics and behaviours to be aware of when dealing with such cases—yet there are additional burdens that have been placed on prison staff in terms of “policing” extremists and terrorists and seeking to look out for their activities and signs of radicalism as opposed to religious conversion—which is a common phenomenon—and gang related extremism/embracing of “religion” and criminality justified in the name of religion;
4. isolating extremist/terrorist preachers and activists from the wider Muslims populace—how can this be justified? How can it be done? How can interaction be regulated? What lessons can be learned from previous experiences eg with the IRA and their direction and engagement with the outside group?; and
5. what are successful interventions and unsuccessful ones? There are some or rather a few successful interventions which have taken place but not enough of an actuarial sample/data to be able to develop specific understanding though I would outline the following points from the limited number of cases that have taken place that I can build on:
 1. Engage without confrontation initially.
 2. Understand but not justify positive and negative emotions and motivations.
 3. Initially seek to develop a positive basis for interaction and change.
 4. Challenge the effectively and consequences prior to the theology, as a means to questioning the theological basis of terrorism.
 5. Develop an alternative theology within their own theological framework and gradually build alternatives as well as criticize extant extreme points of view.
 6. Set clear and measurable analysis criterion which are constantly being reviewed and monitored for change over a period of time.
 7. Develop through time, positive external foci to build upon.

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6. The above is the best description that I can give without elaborating into massive details of some apparently successful interventions in a prisons set up. It is not a generic formula that can be replicated—each intervention, whether by prisons, probation's, community based, through the police etc, is different, and the role played by theology is different which will be elaborated further.

Key components for a successful deradicalization approach—again this is based upon our experiences in interventions over the last two years and engagement with individual extremists from violent and so-called non-violent backgrounds, and also discussions with other providers and local delivery units that we work with.

The following are key in our view:

1. Initial assessment of all factors: cognitive, behavioural, hygiene, extended environment, mental health, social factors—personal to him, and additional risk factors such as exposure to people etc.
2. A developed analysis and justification for how judgements are made and based should be (a) documented, (b) the basis for developing a plan, (c) monitoring and assessing and evaluating change and effective engagement and (d) evaluating the initial assessment and continuously amending it based upon evidence and reassess plans constantly.
3. A developed understanding of the type of trajectory that the individual has taken and not having a formulaic approach.
4. Understanding key issues related to an individual undertaking violence—pre-requisites that are almost required and manifested in an individual.
5. Not isolating individuals from their human needs and working alongside mainstream services in dealing with the individual.
6. Identifying and addressing key motivations and the associated thought patterns as well as attitudes and perspectives that reinforce them within the individual and addressing them.
7. Adapting styles, upon gaining confidence enough for the individual to even consider what you are saying/questioning, being able to first dismantle the specific emotional drivers, world view, theological bases/claims, context in which they live, separate them if necessary from the source of the radicalization. All of this depends upon the specific trajectory and as we have defined and explained above an outline process of engagement above (see above—Pathways).

THE ROLE OF THEOLOGY

Much of the discussion again in this regard in my opinion is either based upon external lenses being forced onto the debate; ideological bias—right-wing and Far-Right anti-Islam, left-wing grievance primacy assumptions for motivators and then building analysis accordingly. In my opinion the following needs to be documented thoroughly but can be elaborated upon briefly in the following manner:

1. Understanding of the various strands of theology in two respects (1) where do they stand on a theological map and sectarian and intellectual backgrounds.
2. A very clear calibration of views on a clear legal and criterion—this may sound simplistic but it has not been done in an effective manner; types of violence, which are all classified as illegal violence in the UK, overseas, against civilians or against UK troops in illegal insurgencies.

When looking at individual motivations—these can be categorized according to the above pathways outlined: the theology either fits into an ideological framework, the world view which presents things from an anti-Islam/anti-Muslim perspective; there are those that hold on to core theological bases for the Islamist justifications; those who have specifically embraced a salafi-jihadi theological perspective.

Accordingly the level of theological input depends upon the above. If the emotional, the intellectual parameters for viewing the world, the Islamist ideological narrative—which is partially theological and partly intellectual—can be effectively addressed, the role of theological reinforcement is not as essential, though arguably it is a resilience factor. In the case of actual engagement with certain theologically motivated salafi-jihadists inspired radicals and radicalization, and also strongly salafist inspired, there are particular types of calibrated theological engagement.

1. Primary sources and challenging them.
2. Claims of theological authenticity and challenging the sources.
3. Claims that their views are supported by medieval theological, putative authorities, and demonstrate that these claims are factually untrue—this is different to make a Socratic theological challenge.
4. There are other cases where there is little to no theological engagement as the case in certain individuals—particularly those who are people with mental health problems or those with personal experiences that have radicalized them—in one case as an example it was instilling an emotional and intellectual connection with human rights as a universal ethical criterion that can never be rejected.

5. I do believe that there is a precise and specific role in various cases for theological interventions and is necessary but not in all cases and to different extents—which requires a formal and detailed study.

THE ROLE OF “NON-VIOLENT” RADICALS

I would challenge the common usage of the distinction that is being made between Violent and non-Violent Islamists. For example the group, the Muslim Brotherhood is often described as a non-violent extremist organization by people in the area. This is factually (not analytically) not true at all, Hamas, the terrorist organization is officially in its constitution, a part of the Muslim Brotherhood. They undertake actions targeting civilians—this is both illegal, violates all sense of morality, fundamentally in conflict with the objectives as outlined in CONTEST.

These are not minor issues but mean that it is fundamentally impossible to describe them as non-Violent, we may say that they do not support terrorism in the UK, they do support terrorism and illegal extremists violence against UK troops. This is also the case with groups that have received funding previously who have referred to scholars who have justified Jihadist violence in Muslim majority countries, support Jihad against the West—UK, France and the US—when they have the ability to do so and the government of Saudi Arabia or any Muslim majority country- it is at best a containment arguments and not a deradicalization process, and the only difference between such groups and Hizb ut-Tahrir is that the latter are overtly political and not of Saudi-Wahhabi theology.

Categorically, these cannot be deradicalization activities; and fail to meet the basic minimal legal and strategic aims or rational necessities as actual deradicalization efforts. This is not to say that these groups are not genuine in their personal belief. They are, but these beliefs themselves are radical, violent and also very, very close to those who support terrorism in the UK too. They are also a part of the ideological and theological ingredients which produce terrorism in the UK.

PROSCRIPTIONS OF VIOLENT GROUPS

1. It is understandably and practically necessary as these groups violate legislation which requires their being banned.

2. It has been applied inconsistently—many groups and individuals who have also violated the laws yet have not been prosecuted.

3. There has been a failure to:

1. Apply the ban consistently on the same groups—Islam 4 UK and al-Muhajiroun and now Muslims against Crusades—the same group despite the claims of government that it would ban any resurgence of the group with its various names.
2. Instead of merely banning groups individuals should be prosecuted when they violate such laws continuing activities of the banned/proscribed group whilst not being prosecuted.
3. Proscription itself does not deal with the prevalence of the ideas and propaganda of such organizations.
4. Proscription does not deal with individuals who are undertaking activities towards radicalizing individuals.
5. It does not deal with lone wolf terrorism.

All of the above does not invalidate the necessity of proscribing organizations, but it is in some respects a very limited means of effective deradicalization of communities and individuals.

July 2011

APPENDIX

CENTRI—Counter Extremism coNsultancy Training Research & Interventions.

CENTRI delivers evidence-based solutions in counter-extremism. We specialise in issues related to Islam, faith, cultural diversity, and integration. Our services are aimed at:

- National, regional, and local government.
- Police and those working in the security sector.
- Universities, research institutions, and think-tanks.
- Schools and educational establishments.
- Media and communications professionals.
- Film and documentary makers.
- Businesses.
- Religious institutions.

We:

- Assist policy makers and policy implementers.
- Provide specialist advice.
- Provide training.
- Conduct research.
- Deliver interventions.
- Facilitate operational practice.
- Engage in faith-related dialogue.

CENTRI works with other individuals and organisations to facilitate effective project delivery. CENTRI has links to a network of:

- Leading theological thinkers.
- Academics.
- Researchers.
- Former Islamists.
- Prevent practitioners and interventionists.

The amalgamation of experts allows CENTRI to be in a unique position to have a real impact within all levels of the Prevent arena and help to plug holes in certain gaps that are naturally emerging in the strategy and our experiences and backgrounds inform our perspectives on issues surrounding terrorism, Islamism, and integration.

With academic, theological, and practical de-radicalization expertise and first-hand experience of Islamist extremism we aim to enhance current thinking and practice in counter terrorism, counter extremism, and community cohesion.

Furthermore, there is a vast network of people that are currently working with CENTRI in cyberspace as researchers, activists and bloggers as well a number of leading Think Tanks specialising in this area.

This allows CENTRI to have a wide reach and be able to target vulnerable individuals and organisations at all levels within the community.

Written evidence submitted by Congressman Peter T. King, Chairman, United States House Committee on Homeland Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spate of recent homegrown terrorist attacks within the United States and abroad has reinforced the unquestionable fact that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda's strategy to continue attacking the United States and its allies. In an effort to examine the most prescient and dangerous threats facing the United States, the Committee on Homeland Security convened a series of hearings to examine the critical issue of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans. Specifically, the Committee has held three hearings over the past few months that have examined various aspects of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans within the United States. Each hearing has yielded significant findings that have shed considerable light on this critical issue. While the Committee's examination of this problem remains ongoing, the evidence collected thus far provides substantial insight into the extent and threat of radicalization within the United States.

Although the initial announcement of these hearings generated considerable controversy and opposition, the hearings have nonetheless proven successful in that they have had a significant and beneficial impact in fostering an honest dialogue about the growing issue of radicalization within the United States. Moreover, they have liberated and empowered many Muslim-Americans who had been intimidated by leaders in their own communities, but are now able to come forward and address this issue.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Hearing # 1: "The extent of radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that community's response"

- Finding #1: The radicalization of Muslim-Americans constitutes a real and serious threat.
- Finding #2: There is a significant lack of Muslim-American community cooperation with law enforcement.
- Finding #3: There is a need to confront the Islamist ideology driving radicalization.

Hearing # 2: “The threat of Muslim-American radicalization in U.S. Prisons”

- Finding #4: The radicalization of prison inmates to an extremist form of Islam is a significant problem, which can often manifest once radicalized prisoners are released.
- Finding #5: The radicalization of prison inmates is often precipitated by the presence of radical clergy or extremist materials within the prison.

Hearing # 3: “Al Shabaab: recruitment and radicalization within the Muslim American community and the threat to the homeland”

- Finding #6: There are direct ties between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda and its affiliates, and Al Shabaab recruits are often indoctrinated into Al Qaeda’s ideology and network.
- Finding #7: Individuals who have been radicalized and recruited by Al Shabaab may pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States and its allies.
- Finding #8: The Committee’s hearings on the radicalization of Muslim-Americans have empowered Muslims to effectively address this issue.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE THREAT OF DOMESTIC RADICALIZATION

As we commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks on 11 September, we must not forget that the threat posed by Al Qaeda and its affiliates remains as deadly and paramount as ever. While successful counterterrorism operations removed the menace of Osama bin Laden from the earth, his ideological legacy and unwavering resolve to attack the United States and its Western allies unfortunately live on.

As a result of the Allied invasion of Afghanistan in which troops played such a major role and subsequent counterterrorism efforts in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, core Al Qaeda’s primary safe haven is under siege, hindering its ability to carry out large-scale attacks on the U.S. Homeland and other Western nations. Al Qaeda and affiliates such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have been forced to transform their strategy and adapt their operational doctrine. A key focus of this new doctrine is based on recruiting and radicalizing Westerners and United States persons capable of perpetrating attacks within those nations. As a result of this evolving strategy, the threat no longer emanates solely from remote Al Qaeda operatives coordinating attacks halfway across the world, but rather from radicalized individuals residing within the Homeland who are now ready to engage in terrorist activities in their own communities. This strategy shift presents a critical challenge to the counterterrorism, intelligence, and law enforcement communities within the U.S. and for our allies. In addition, the emergence of influential, English-speaking Al Qaeda representatives such as Anwar Al Awlaki has enhanced Al Qaeda’s ability to successfully implement its strategy of targeting U.S. persons and Westerners for recruitment.

Al Qaeda and its affiliates are using various tools to target and radicalize recruits in the West, including propaganda statements, videos, and magazines. For example, in July 2010, the Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) launched the first in its series of slick, online, English propaganda magazines, entitled *Inspire*. To date, AQAP has produced six issues of *Inspire*. American citizens Anwar al-Awlaki and his protege Samir Khan are reportedly behind the development and production of the magazines, with Khan allegedly serving as the magazine’s editor.⁵⁴

Inspire appears to be targeted at American and Western European audiences in an effort to reach aspiring terrorists. It is essentially a “how to” for would-be terrorists cloaked in pop-culture packaging, and resembles most mainstream publications in structure: including letters from the editor, articles from well-known Al Qaeda leaders, high-resolution graphics, and a “how to” section. The magazine is a dangerous step in AQAP’s strategy to recruit and radicalize Americans and Western Europeans, and highlights the shifting threat posed to the United States and its allies.

The apparent increasing frequency of U.S. persons becoming radicalized is an alarming trend and a great concern for U.S. national security. According to Attorney General Eric Holder, in the last two years there have been 126 people indicted for terrorist related activity, including 50 U.S. Citizens.⁵⁵ As Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad stated in his October 2010 appearance before the Southern District Court of New York: “Brace yourselves, because the war with Muslims has just begun. Consider me only the first droplet of the flood that will follow me.”⁵⁶

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

On 9 February 2011, then-National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter testified before the Committee that “... AQAP remains intent on conducting additional attacks targeting the Homeland and US interests overseas and will continue propaganda efforts designed to inspire like-minded individuals to conduct

⁵⁴ Cole, Matthew “Slickest Al Qaeda Magazine Yet From Young American Editor,” 17 January 2011
<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/issue-al-qaeda-inspire-magazine/story?id=12632256>

⁵⁵ Cloherty, Jack and Thomas, Pierre “Attorney General’s Blunt Warning on Terror Attacks”, 21 December 2010,
<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/attorney-general-eric-holders-blunt-warning-terrorattacks/story?id~12444727>

⁵⁶ Times Sq bomber’s vile rant as he gets life in jail, *New York Post*, 6 October 2010
http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/manhattan/proud_to_be_terrorist_DBtc5U2eAYhWzacVpxK24K#ixzzlFEKywFDD

*attacks in their home countries.*⁵⁷ At the same hearing, Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano testified that the threat level today is as high as it has been since 11 September because of increased radicalization in the United States.

As Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I have a responsibility to ensure that the Committee examines the most prescient and critical threats facing the United States. Under this mandate, I convened a series of hearings to examine the critical issue of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans. While the initial announcement of these hearings generated considerable controversy and opposition, I remained steadfast in my belief that these hearings are a critical facet of what I believe to be the main responsibility of this Committee—to protect America from a terrorist attack. The Department of Homeland Security and the Committee on Homeland Security were formed in response to the Al Qaeda attacks of 9/11. Undoubtedly, Congressional investigation of Muslim-American radicalization is the logical response to the unquestionable fact that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda's strategy to continue attacking the United States and its allies. I would not back down to political correctness.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Over the past few months, the Committee on Homeland Security has held three hearings that have examined various aspects of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans within the United States. Each hearing has yielded significant findings that have shed considerable light on this critical issue. While the Committee's examination of this problem remains ongoing, the evidence collected thus far provides substantial insight into the extent and threat of radicalization within the United States.

Hearing # 1: "The extent of radicalization in the American Muslim community and that community's response"

In March 2011, the Committee convened its first hearing to examine this issue. Specifically, the hearing focused on the extent of radicalization in the Muslim-American community, and the community's level of cooperation with law enforcement to counter the problem.

Finding #1: The radicalization of Muslim-Americans constitutes a real and serious threat

Unfortunately, the radicalization of Muslim-Americans has become a direct threat to the national security of the United States. Despite this fact, many refuse to fully acknowledge this problem or just how extensive this matter has become.

Witnesses at the hearing addressed this issue and discussed the extensive nature of the threat of radicalization within the United States, and perceived reticence to fully acknowledge the problem. One of the witnesses, Mr Melvin Bledsoe (the father of radicalized Little Rock recruiting center shooter Carlos Bledsoe), acknowledged:

It seems to me that the American people are sitting around and doing nothing about Islamic extremism, as if Carlos's story and the other stories told at these hearings aren't true. There is a big elephant in the room, but our society continues not to see it. This wrong is caused by political correctness. You can even call it political fear—yes, fear. Fear of stepping on a special minority population's toes, even as a segment of that population wants to stamp out America and everything we stand for.

Another witness, Dr M. Zuhdi Jasser (President and Founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy) also asserted:

The course of Muslim radicalization in the United States over the past two years makes it exceedingly difficult for anyone to assert with a straight face that in America we Muslims do not have a radicalization problem.

Finding #2: There is a significant lack of Muslim-American community cooperation with law enforcement

While the threat of domestic radicalization and homegrown terrorism has increased over the past few years, many within the Muslim community have expressed criticism of law enforcement's counterterrorism operations. Several Muslim organizations, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), have repeatedly criticized law enforcement actions taken to stop potential terrorist activity. They accuse the FBI of falsely entrapping Muslim-Americans and recommend guidelines for Muslims who choose to cooperate with law enforcement and the FBI.

Witnesses at the hearing also discussed the Muslim-American community's lack of cooperation, and specifically the role that groups like CAIR play in discouraging Muslim-Americans from cooperating with law enforcement. Dr Jasser noted:

When we speak about "cooperation of Muslims with law enforcement", what is more important is the growing culture of driving Muslims away from cooperation, partnership, and identity with our

⁵⁷ Leiter, Michael, Testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security, "Understanding the Homeland Threat Landscape—Considerations for the 112th Congress", 9 February 2011
www.nctc.gov/.../Transcript-HHSC_Understanding-the-Homeland-Threat.pdf

nation and its security forces. Our civil rights should be protected and defended, but the predominant message to our communities should be attachment, defense, and identification with America not alienation and separation.

Too many so-called Muslim leadership groups in America, like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) or Muslim Advocates, have specifically told Muslims across the nation, for example, not to speak to the FBI or law enforcement unless they are accompanied by an attorney. Rather than thanking the FBI for ferreting out radicals within our community, they have criticized sting operations as being “entrainment”, a claim that has not stood the test of anti-terrorism court cases since 9/11. Informants end up being showcased as bad apples and subjects of lawsuits rather than patriots.

Another witness, Mr Abdirizak Bihi (the Director of Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center whose nephew Burhan Hassan was radicalized and recruited in Minneapolis to join Al Shabaab in Somalia, where he was ultimately killed) discussed this issue and how Mosque leadership in Minneapolis encouraged its congregants (and the families of the missing young men who had fled to Somalia) not to cooperate with law enforcement. Moreover, Mr Bihi testified that when the families of the missing young men went to law enforcement for help, the mosque disparaged them and claimed that they were lying about the disappearance of their children. Mr Bihi stated:

The mosque leadership continued to disseminate a strong message that there were no children missing, rather than we the families were tools and being used by infidels to try and destroy the mosque. As a result of this, the families united and started Saturday meetings that included outreach to other community members that also had missing children. We learned from the mosque leadership’s tactics used to defame us that the community was the targeted audience, and we framed our outreach strategy to educate the community about the realities of what was happening to us. An intense outreach from both the mosque leadership and the family members started to unfold in the Somali American community, where we were trying to convince the community that our children were taken, that we weren’t trying to destroy our own mosques (that we built), and that nobody can destroy a mosque. At the same time, the mosque leadership was sending the message to the families that had not yet spoken out, that:

- if they speak up about their missing loved ones will end up in Guantanamo because nobody cares about Muslims;
- they have a better chance of getting their children back into the country if they remain silent; and
- if they speak up, they will be morally responsible for having killed all the Muslims and destroyed all the mosques.

Mr Bihi also testified about the dangerous influence of powerful groups such as CAIR, who continue to discourage Muslim-Americans from cooperating with law enforcement. He noted:

Just as we continued to make progress in laying out the realities to our community, powerful organizations such as CAIR stepped into our community and stifled whatever progress we had made by trying to tell our Somali American community not to cooperate with law enforcement. CAIR held meetings for some members of the community and told them not to talk to the FBI, which was a slap in the face for the Somali American Muslim mothers who were knocking on doors day and night with pictures of their missing children and asking for the community to talk to law enforcement about what they know of the missing kids. It was a slap in the face for community activists who had invested time and personal resources to educate the community about forging a good relationship with law enforcement in order to stop the radicalization and recruitment of our children. We held three different demonstrations against CAIR, in order to get them to leave us alone so we can solve our community’s problems, since we don’t know CAIR and they don’t speak for us. We wanted to stop them from dividing our community by stepping into issues that don’t belong to them.

Finding #3: There is a need to confront the Islamist ideology driving Radicalization

Despite the growing problem of Islamist radicalization within the United States, many appear reticent to publicly acknowledge the ideological driver behind Al Qaeda’s radicalization and recruitment of American citizens.

However, witnesses at the hearing acknowledged the need to address the ideological driver of radicalization of Muslim-Americans, namely Islamist extremism. Dr Jasser asserted:

If the root cause of Muslim radicalization is Islamism (political Islam), what good is any effort at counterterrorism that decouples any suggestion of theology no matter how separatist from terror? How can law enforcement effectively do counter terrorism in our country without recognition that Political Islam and its narrative is the core ideology when, at its extreme, drives the general mindset of the violent extremists carrying out the attacks?

... Homeland Security, government, media and our general population are only focused on that final step when the jihadists seek violence against our homeland. But we will all be chasing our tails for

centuries if that remains your focus. I implore you to walk it back and treat the problem at its root, at its jugular—the supremacism of political Islam.

... Our nation's attempts at counter-radicalization have proven so far ineffective because it has lacked a strategy and a forward ideology into Muslim communities. We have been so fixated on preventing the next attack that we have neglected to develop the tools necessary to defeat the ideology that drives the attack. It is malpractice for us to believe that by eschewing violence we solve the problem.

Hearing # 2: "The threat of Muslim-American radicalization in U.S. Prisons"

In June 2011, the Committee convened its second hearing, which examined the threat of Muslim-American radicalization within the United States prison system.

The current problem of Muslim-American radicalization in U.S. prisons is significant, and has been acknowledged by Executive Branch policymakers and legislators of both parties. Former Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Harley Lappin, testified to Congress that “inmates are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by terrorists,” and “we must guard against the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies.”⁵⁸ A number of cases since 9/11 have involved terrorists who converted to Islam or were radicalized to Islamism in American prisons, then subsequently attempted to launch terror strikes in the U.S. upon their release from custody. These radicalized terrorists have also carried out attacks overseas. In January 2010, Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, released a report that stated: “Three dozen U.S. citizens who converted to Islam while in prison have travelled to Yemen, possibly for Al Qaeda training.”

Prison radicalization, unfortunately, is not unique to the United States. Recently, the British Home Secretary emphasized the growing threat of Islamist radicalization and unveiled its new counter-radicalization strategy to thwart terrorist recruitment behind bars. Just as home grown Al Qaeda terrorist attacks in Britain—including the 2005 subway attacks in London, the 2006 liquid explosives plot to blow up American planes flying from Britain and the 2007 car bomb attack on the Glasgow Airport—were emulated several years later in the United States with the attempted New York subway bombings in September 2009, the Fort Hood murders in November 2009 and the attempted Times Square bombing in May 2010, we must assume the same with prison radicalization.

Finding #4: The radicalization of prison inmates to an extremist form of Islam Is a significant problem, which can often manifest once radicalized prisoners are released

Recent cases over the last few years including Richard Reid, Kevin James, Michael Finton, James Cromitie and Jose Padilla have illustrated the danger of prison radicalization, which continues to constitute a serious threat.

One of the witnesses, Deputy Chief Michael P. Downing (Commanding Officer of the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau of the Los Angeles Police Department) discussed this threat, noting:

It is generally understood that the majority of prison converts assimilate back into what they were doing prior to going to prison, however, it is the exception cases that have and will continue to strike fear in the hearts of Americans. It was estimated that 17 to 20% of the prison population, or approximately 350,000 inmates comprise of Muslim inmates in 2003, and that 80% of the prisoners who convert while in prison, convert to Islam. It is further estimated that 35,000 inmates convert to Islam annually.

... There are several ongoing cases whose story is yet to be told, however, the common denominator is conversion to a radical form of Islam while in prison.

... Just as isolated, and balkanized communities can become incubators of violent extremism, so too can prisons. If left unchecked prisons can and do become incubators of radicalization leading to violent extremism.

Another of the witnesses, Mr Patrick Dunleavy (retired Deputy Inspector of the Criminal Intelligence Unit, New York Department of Correctional Services; and the author of *The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Prison's Terrorism Connection*), noted:

The prison population is vulnerable to radicalization by the same agents responsible for radicalizing Americans outside of the prison walls. Despite appearances, prison walls are porous. It is easy for outside influences to access those on the inside, and for inmates to reach from the inside out. As the former Deputy Inspector General of the Criminal Intelligence Division in the New York State Department of Corrections, I am aware that individuals and groups that subscribe to radical, and sometimes violent, ideology have made sustained efforts over several decades to target inmates for indoctrination. Some of these groups act as the certifying bodies responsible for hiring imams into the prison system, thus affording them continuous access to the prison population. In addition, the cycle of radicalization continues through post-release programs.

⁵⁸ *Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Terrorism and Homeland Security of the S. Comm. on the Judiciary, 108th Cong (2003)* (statement of Director Lappin).

While some have asserted that prisoners who are converted to a radical form of Islam do not pose a threat once they are released, Mr Dunleavy discredited this notion by addressing the dangerous post-release activity a number of prisoners have engaged in. Mr Dunleavy noted:

The task force investigation also found that although the initial exposure/conversion/indoctrination to extremist jihadi Islam may begin in prison, it often matures and deepens after release through the contacts on the outside that the inmate made while they were serving their sentences in prison. Among those contacts are transition programs, which offer former inmates assistance in finding housing or finding work. Most of the programs for Muslims transitioning out of the prison system are sponsored by mosques that are local to the prisons. Many of these mosques have extremist leanings and are known to adhere to Wahabbi ideology. In addition to the transition programs, many of the sponsoring mosques also have volunteers or formal programs to provide religious instruction inside the prisons. Thus, contact between the outreach program and the inmate has already been established by the time the prisoner is released. The prisoner is already familiar with the program's personnel and ideology, and therefore their transition to the outside is facilitated by familiar hands.

... One of the influences in some of the homegrown terrorism cases has been the involvement, either directly or indirectly, of radical Islamist clergy. Since 9/11, the involvement of radical Islamist imams has been mentioned as a precipitating factor in the cases of Richard Reid, Jose Padilla, and others.

In 2009 the "Newburgh Four"; James Cromitie, Laguerre Payen, David Williams, and Oonta Williams, were arrested for plotting to bomb synagogues in New York City and shoot down military aircraft with stinger missiles. All had converted to a radical form of Islam while serving time for a variety of offenses. They did not know each other while they were incarcerated, but met each other after their release, while attending a local mosque connected to a prison ministry.

Finding #5: The radicalization of prison inmates is often precipitated by the Presence of radical clergy or extremist materials within the prison

Witnesses at the hearing discussed the pervasive nature of radical clergy and literature throughout the prison system, and its correlation with the radicalization of prison inmates. Mr Dunleavy addressed this issue, stating:

... It has been confirmed that radical Islam is present in the New York State prison system and also in the New York City jails. The apparatus by which this radical form of Islam was introduced into the system was identified as consisting of multiple components, including, clergy, religious volunteers, visitors, fellow inmates and Islamic organizations from around the world that sent parcels and literature into the prisons.

... There is certainly no vetting of volunteers who provide religious instruction, and who, although not paid, wield considerable influence in the prison Muslim communities. Many such volunteers are former convicts.

Deputy Chief Downing also discussed the threat of extremist literature being disseminated throughout the prison system, noting:

Anwar Al Awlaki, a prominent United States born Islamic scholar of Yemeni descent and internet radicalizer is wanted by the United States for Terrorism prosecution. His radical literature has found its way into the prison system and has been used by known extremists to facilitate recruitment and radicalization activities within prisons.

... The spiritual philosopher of Al Qaeda, Sayyid Qutb, wrote the radical Islamist manifesto Ma'alim fi al-Tariq (Milestones Along the Road) while in an Egyptian prison. Copies of this document exist in the prison system and contribute to radicalization.

Hearing # 3: "Al Shabaab: recruitment and radicalization within the Muslim-American community and the threat to the homeland"

This hearing examined Somalia-based terrorist organization Al Shabaab's ongoing recruitment, radicalization and training of Muslim-Americans. Since 2006, a number of American citizens, many of whom are part of the Somali-American community, have been radicalized within the United States to terrorist activity (often by Al Shabaab recruiters or sympathizers) and have fled to join Al Shabaab. At least 40 Americans have joined Al Shabaab in Somalia and more than a dozen have been killed there, including at least three incidents of suicide attacks. According to a Committee review of Department of Justice (DOJ) prosecutions, there are approximately 38 cases of defendants charged in the US in connection with Al Shabaab or other extremist organizations in Somalia, from states including Minnesota, California, New Jersey, Missouri, Alabama, Virginia, Illinois, New York and Texas.

Reflecting a disturbing trend across global terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Shabaab and its leadership appear to be actively attempting to recruit Americans, including a targeted recruitment of Americans who are not of Somali descent. This recruitment is headed in large part by Omar Hammami, an American (non-Somali) citizen from Alabama who joined Al Shabaab in Somalia and now serves as its key English-speaking representative.

In addition to Al Shabaab's growing radicalization and recruitment of Americans, the group has also actively recruited a number of Canadian citizens, including one recently killed. Al Shabaab spokesman Omar Hammami spent time living in Toronto's Somali community before he ultimately fled to Somalia. In addition, the Somali communities in Minneapolis and Toronto often maintain close ties, including familial relationships as well as cross-border commercial traffic.

The hearing also examined Al Shabaab's affiliation with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the homeland security implications. In addition to its connections with Al Qaeda senior leadership, Al Shabaab has also developed alliances with several al Qaeda affiliates, including Algeria's Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Yemen's Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Al Shabaab's broadening cooperation with AQAP is particularly concerning considering the critical threat AQAP poses to the U.S. Homeland and that organization's unwavering attempts to pursue an attack against the United States.

Finding #6: There are direct ties between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda and its affiliates, and Al Shabaab recruits are often indoctrinated into Al Qaeda's ideology and network

Witnesses at the hearing discussed Al Shabaab's ties to Al Qaeda and its affiliates, and the direct threat that such cooperation poses to the United States and its allies. One of the witnesses, Mr Thomas Joscelyn (a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies) noted:

There is extensive evidence that Shabaab's recruiting in the West is not limited to "nationalistic" aims. While some recruits probably do travel to Somalia to take part in a "local" (civil) war, there is always the potential for these same recruits to become indoctrinated in Shabaab's al Qaeda-inspired ideology once they arrive there. Indeed, this has been al Qaeda's strategy, to fold "local" conflicts into an international jihad. Moreover, some Shabaab recruits are clearly radicalized before they even depart American soil.

... Shabaab's recruits in the West have received training from senior al Qaeda operatives who are also members of Shabaab. Earlier this month, the Department of Justice agreed to a plea deal with a Minneapolis man named Omar Abdi Mohamed. According to a DOJ press release, Mohamed admitted that he helped Shabaab recruit Somali-Americans. The DOJ explains: "Upon arriving in Somalia, the men resided in al-Shabaab safe-houses in Southern Somalia until constructing an al-Shabaab training camp, where they were trained. Senior members of al-Shabaab and a senior member of al-Qaeda in East Africa conducted the training. "That is, Shabaab's Minneapolis recruits were delivered to a senior al Qaeda member for training.

Another witness who prosecuted many of the cases in Minneapolis regarding Al Shabaab recruitment and radicalization, Mr William Anders Folk (the Former Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota), discussed the role of Al Qaeda's underlying ideology in the radicalization of Al Shabaab's recruits, stating:

In addition to recruiting by al-Shabaab as an organization and by individuals on behalf of al-Shabaab, religious figures such as Anwar al-Awlaki have provided potential recruits with ideological underpinnings for individuals to fight in Somalia on behalf of al-Shabaab. As has been publicly reported, al-Awlaki's "Constants on the Path to jihad" has provided recruits and potential recruits with an ideological framework, however distorted and incorrect it may be, to fight on behalf of al-Shabaab in Somalia.

Finding #7: Individuals who have been radicalized and recruited by al Shabaab may pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States and its allies

As previously referenced, at least 40 Americans and a number of Canadian citizens have joined Al Shabaab in Somalia. While many believe those individuals are motivated solely to fight within Somalia, the dangerous possibility remains that they may in fact return to the United States or Canada, with the intention of perpetrating terrorist activity. One of the witnesses, Mr Ahmed Hussen (Canadian Somali Congress National President) discussed this possibility, stating:

It is very disturbing to us as Canadian citizens to see the children of those who fled the civil war in Somalia return to a country they barely know and contribute to its misery. There is an additional concern that these individuals would come back to threaten and harm Canada, the very country that has given us peace, security and opportunity.

Mr Folk also discussed the danger in Al Shabaab recruits returning to the United States, noting:

It is impossible to predict with certainty what, if anything, and who, if anyone, will come to the United States after training and indoctrination by al-Shabaab. It is obvious, however, that individuals who are trained, indoctrinated and deployed in combat by al-Shabaab have learned how to carry-out acts of lethal violence. Additionally, it is clear that the ideology espoused by al-Shabaab echoes that of al-Qaeda. This combination of ability and ideology illustrates the threat that is posed by even one al-Shabaab veteran residing in the United States. The ability to prevent or detect such a person from entering the United States or carrying-out any terrorist acts in the United States requires continued vigilance of the group's activities in Somalia, but also to ensure that supporters or sympathizers within the United States are targeted for investigation.

Finding #8: The Committee's hearings on the radicalization of Muslim-Americans have empowered Muslims to effectively address this issue

Despite the mindless criticism directed against the Committee hearings, the reality is that they have liberated and empowered many Muslim-Americans who had been intimidated by leaders in their own communities but are now able to come forward.

This point was reinforced at the last hearing held by one of the Committee's Muslim witnesses, Mr Hussen, who noted in his opening statement:

I would like to close by saying that these hearings are extremely important to us. They empower us, and they remove the stigma in our community that prevents us from talking about these issues that are really important to our community. These hearings are very empowering.

WAY FORWARD

While I have no doubt that the Committee's radicalization hearings have had a significant and beneficial impact in fostering an honest dialogue about the growing issue of radicalization within the United States, I remain concerned that this problem is far from resolved.

According to the results of a recent Pew poll, 16% of American Muslims have a favourable or only somewhat unfavorable view of Al Qaeda. Further, 13% of American Muslims believe that suicide bombing or other violence against civilians, to defend Islam from its enemies, is often, sometimes or rarely justified. Pew states that there are 2,750,000 American Muslims. That means that there are 440,000 American Muslims who view Al Qaeda as only a somewhat unfavorable organization, and 357,500 who believe that killing civilians in the name of Islam can in some cases be justified. These numbers are startling and expose a dangerous disconnect between a number of Muslim-Americans and the democratic values cherished by Western nations.

The radicalization of Muslim-Americans by the Islamist ideology promulgated by Al Qaeda and its affiliates is a problem that the United States cannot continue to simply ignore or deflect. Unfortunately, I am concerned that within the United States, political correctness has prevented many from sufficiently acknowledging and tackling this dangerous problem.

I applaud the UK government for its unwavering and honest examination of this problem, exemplified by the recently revised "Prevent" strategy, which offers a candid assessment of the problem and a model for effectively addressing and countering this problem. I also applaud this Committee's inquiry into the roots of violent radicalization, a matter critical to the national security of both the United Kingdom as well as the United States.

Unfortunately, terrorism knows no boundaries and continues to threaten the lives of citizens of both the United States and the United Kingdom. We are facing an adversary intent on attacking Western nations and all we stand for. As we pass the 10-year anniversary of the September 11th attacks, we cannot allow the memories of that tragic day to fade away. We continue to face an unwavering threat, and must be fully aware that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda's strategy to continue attacking the United States and the United Kingdom.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me the opportunity to discuss this critical issue.

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