

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM:
THE SECURITY CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

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(10:00 a.m.)

MR. ERVIN: All right, everyone; we'll get started, if you could take your seats. So we're very pleased to continue the discussion today with the discussion of what I've titled, Countering the Violent Extremism - The Security Challenge Of Our Time. To moderate this discussion, we're very pleased to have with us, Sir Ciaran Devane, who took up the role of chief executive of the British Council in January of last year.

He has focused on ensuring that all stakeholders understand and value the contribution that soft power, cultural relations and the British Council make to security, prosperity and influence and that the organization and staff are aligned behind that vision. Prior to this he served as chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Center Support and he was awarded a knighthood in 2015 for his services to cancer patients. Sir Ciaran. Thank you.

MR. DEVANE: Lovely. And good morning everyone and a privilege to be here and fantastically expert panel as ever for Aspen. Just on my left here Gilles de Kerchove, worked for a long time with the government in Belgium and is the EU counterterrorism coordinator.

We've got Richard Barrett with the Soufan Group, who has got a background in intelligence and defense, both chaired the UN Counter Terrorism Task Force. And we've got Mark Simmonds, who is the chief operating officer of the Counter-Extremism Project and a former minister in the foreign office here in London.

So three people from very different perspectives but with huge expertise. And I'd like to --and if I may, start with Gilles -- and you are in the EU, you live in Brussels, you worked in Brussels for many years and of course there was the attack but using that experience

recently, what do we know about the perpetrators which could inform us about what causes this kind of extremism, environment extremism?

MR. KERCHOVE: Most of them are from Moroccan descent and it's interesting to see in Belgium we have two large migrant communities, the Moroccans and the Turks. Really no one from Turkish descent has gone to Syria and Iraq, most of them are from Moroccan descent. So first -- the first point. The second point, they're not from Morocco as a whole, they come from a specific part of Morocco which is the Riff. These are Berber and they often even don't speak Arabic. That's the second aspect. And most of them are concentrated in the now very famous modern day.

The third one is, it seems to the speed of radicalization, I don't know if it's true but some -- you can see on YouTube, some videos which shows one of the perpetrator of the attack, both in Paris and in Brussels; who less than a year ago was in a night club drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. So was it that he became radicalized extremely quickly or was it what is called Taqiya a sort of dissimulation, it's written clear.

And what the fourth aspect is all of them nearly had a criminal past and a criminal record and I would say 6 out of 10 -- 6 in 10 who were involved in the Paris attack had been in prison, and 5 in 5 involved in Brussels attack had been in prison and most likely radicalized in prison.

So in a way it just confirmed some aspect of what we understand of the process of radicalization and the drivers they are probably a mix of three set of factors, first social economic vulnerabilities and psychological vulnerabilities on one hand, feeling of alienation, discrimination, difficult access to education, job, citizenship in the Arab world but that's a bit different than in Europe. I would say the lack of economic opportunities for sure, plays an extremely important role and violence and especially violence by

state. So that's the economic and social one, and the psychological one is a problem most likely of identity; the need to get a sense of belonging.

The second set of factors is linked to the ideology. But we're pretty divided in Europe, the scholars are divided as to the real role of the ideology (inaudible) the process. Does it play a central role in the process of radicalization or does it just happen at the end of the process of radicalization to provide a sort of black and white interpretation why you can use violence to push your ideas. If you take two well known French scholars Gene Capell (phonetic) on the one hand and Olivier Wha (phonetic) on the other hand, would say, Capell believed that it is one important factor in the process of radicalization. It plays a role, this extreme interpretation of Islam. While Olivier Wha believes -- it's more a Marxist explanation --it's more the economic and social factors that I mentioned before.

And lastly, the last factor I would say that's the facilitation factors. Internet, we have seen young women radicalized on Internet alone, going to Syria, and after two weeks which is completely the reverse of what we believed in the past. Prison, as I said before, a very important element. An active Salafi organization, we had Sharia for Belgium in Belgium. So that's a bit what I learnt -- what I take it from these attacks.

MR. DEVANE: Thank you so much. Richard, it's a complex problem but how do we begin to get in to this, because of course not everyone becomes extreme and not everybody becomes violently extreme.

MR. BARRETT: Yes, indeed. One of the problems I think is the lack of data you know we can speculate a lot about why people are joining the Islamic State, but one of the things I've been doing recently is trying to interview people who've come back. So you can ask them to tell you their story, you know, what led to their decision to go and how their thinking evolved while they were there and indeed why they decided to leave.

It's very difficult to get hold of these people of course and our sample is only about 35-40 or so in a relatively long time. But I think that one interesting thing that has emerged from that is, of course, that everybody's route is fairly individual; that it's very much a personal decision to leave. And what may trigger that decision can be across a whole range of issues. But also in -- just a comment on some of the points that Gilles was making -- it's not necessarily a linear path that you start with pretty fuzzy beliefs and you become radicalized in a politically theoretical way or even religious theoretical way then you get to the extreme point, then you join the Islamic State, then you get violent.

I mean that is not necessarily true at all and some of the people who end up violent haven't gone through that process of radicalization. I mean some of course people who join the Islamic State maybe have extreme views about religion or about politics or about social issues and so on. And you see groups going (inaudible) like a whole group of people who reckon we will be better off living in a purer state which lives in a better way. That sort of radical view but of course states don't operate like that.

But generally speaking I think most people will end up there by their own course and when they get there because they lacked a sense of identity or belonging -- you know they've had a -- they live in a crap area and they want to live in a better area, or they feel judged by their criminal past and they have -- they're trapped and they want to get out and have a new beginning. They want respect maybe. They just feel alienated from the society they live in; yes, they may end up there for those reasons, very personal reasons.

And once there, then of course they're given the Kool Aid of well your problems are not your problems they're our problems, you know we are all in this. And the reason we have these problem is because those people

out there, everybody else, are ensuring that we have no opportunity and so on and are keeping us down. And those people out there are all collectively responsible, it's not just the political leadership or anything or your community leadership but it's also the guy who is going to the rock concert in Bataclan or whatever. Everybody out there is responsible. And if you're going to deal with this issue -- and in fact you have a duty and an obligation to deal with this issue because you're acting on behalf of a much wider community as well -- then you must go out and defend yourself and that means by attacking.

So -- and that sort of presentation seems to draw people in but there, the point I'm trying to make is the initial pull into the Islamic State maybe in a reaction to the vast majority of Islamic State video production if you like, or social media production which is about the State, which is what a marvelous place this is, you know look how we're planting flowers in the median strip and mending the roads and providing people with flour and all this sort of thing. So that is much more what the Islamic State believe is the pull than saying look you can come here and we'll give you a sharp knife and you can cut somebody's head off.

So our survey I think may not influence policy very much, but I hope it will teach us that we cannot make general assumptions about why people are going and nor maybe can we make therefore accurate policy about dealing with the reasons why people might go without having much more nitty-gritty data. Thank you.

MR. DEVANE: I mean before I come to Mark, just an observation, the Arab Youth Survey, which came out recently of 3,000 plus young people in the Gulf, and by definition not the people who went, were saying that unemployment was number one. And my form of Islam is better than yours was number two. So it is a binary thing, so how do we respond to that and what is the European response to that, Gilles?

MR. KERCHOVE: I think, yeah, two elements, as you said the lack of economic opportunities but also political violence, violation of human rights, disrespect for people and that in a way should reinforce the basic diplomacy more development, economic development and promoting human rights and that we will grow more than we are currently doing and more energetically.

MR. DEVANE: Mark, in your experience what works to counter this story which attracts people?

MR. SIMMONDS: Well, I think the first I would like to say is I think you've always got to be wary of surveys, from what -- however excellent the institution which develops these surveys are. They're inevitably a snapshot in time and with a very small number of participants. And in fact I think that was evidenced by a survey that took place a few years ago in Palestine where a large number of Palestinians were asked which was their biggest enemy in the world and 80 percent of them said the United States of America. They were then asked which country in the world would you most like to live in, 80 percent said the United States of America. So I think you have to sort of be wary of those surveys.

I think in terms of direct answer, Ciaran, to your question about what works, I think it's very difficult to assess a mechanism where there is a specific counter narrative. As the other panelists have quite rightly said, there is clearly no discernible pattern in the way that people are being radicalized either radicalized without violence or radicalized with violence.

There's a whole range of variances, both in terms of where people sit on the curve of their Islamic beliefs, whether at the liberal end or the more conservative end; a whole range of understanding of the Islamic jurisprudence, wide age ranges, different socioeconomic backgrounds, different levels of affluence, different demographic status. So I think it's becoming increasingly challenging to think there will be a specific and the counter narrative.

And I think there's been a lot of academic work that is being done looking for the golden thread that runs through the radicalization of individuals, and personally I don't think that it exists. So I think there has to be a multifaceted response and I think the response to those, for example in Belgium, may well be different from those that are being radicalized here in the United Kingdom. So it has a country specific element to the counter narrative as well. I think certainly in the UK those who have gone to Syria there is evidence that they don't have the same, for example, criminal background that those in Belgium did, so there's a whole multiplicity of factors.

But there are some very good examples of what has or what is working but they're on a very small scale at the moment. So I think if you were to go on to YouTube later today and look at the Abdullah-X video, which is a very smart five point plan of trying to look at people who are thinking about being radicalized of being well informed, rather than misinformed there are some excellent work on a small scale being done in training teachers in schools not just to spot those who are tempted to be radicalized but actually prevent them from going down that path.

There's also some excellent work being done in the Muslim community itself particularly --an example -- particularly through social action projects to give those who might be disaffected in the range of areas we've heard about before, from actually feeling as though they have a positive role to play in their communities and in broader society outside their communities as well. We need to find mechanisms of scaling all of that up.

And whilst governments clearly have a very important role to play it can't just be left to governments and to state apparatus. There's a huge role for not for profits and for the private sector to play in building out that capacity.

MR. DEVANE: Gilles?

MR. KERCHOVE: Just to reinforce a point, Malcolm X over -- what's

MR. DEVANE: Abdullah-X.

MR. KERCHOVE: Abdullah-X.

MR. DEVANE: Yeah.

MR. KERCHOVE: Malcolm-X -- is extremely done. We supported that work if I remember with Google IDs but it's just one video and we have as you said, to scale that up significantly and its much less for governments and also the society that we work. I agree that it's country specific, it's probably sometimes individual specific to the person itself because there are so many different profiles, it's very impressive to see that we have no women going to Syria. We have people from quite well educated from the middle class, so it's more and more difficult to understand this process.

But I would say I'm not going in too much detail but I think we need to explore all the avenues at the same times education is critical, the Internet, both removing from Internet the unlawful content much more so we have started engaging with Internet companies to do that more. We have at Europol, an Internet referral unit based on the experience in the UK at Scotland Yard. But it's more the users themselves who have to flag more and the companies, I think the companies could do even more than they're currently doing and that's what we try to explore with them in an IT forum.

But it's not only that, it's as I said, education social inclusion, the fight against Islamophobia in Europe and this is something we have to be extremely vigilant because with the 1 million plus migrants mostly Muslim who arrived in Europe and the many more who are likely to arrive we've 20 million Muslim in Europe we have to be extremely vigilant to avoid the rise of PEGIDA type

or AFD in Germany because this is something which feeds itself and its very problematic.

So integration, more I would say, energetic integration. I saw recently a survey of the British Muslim, what British Muslim really think, it is quite telling to see a diversion sense of values even in the same society, very different attitude towards value. That requires to think of it and see how we have to address because you cannot have parallel society.

One of the factors that I did not mention notably it is nearly 100 percent (inaudible). You have enclaves, urban enclaves or sub-urban enclaves, these does not promote a good integration.

So these are, and finally I know it's very sensitive and people are a bit reluctant to open that debate that raised the question of the role of the ideology in the radicalization process but the role of Islam and especially -- there is a debate -- and especially in France as to would we have to discuss this.

We have some people who say Islam has nothing to do with this. And those who said by denying that there is a link, you abandon all those inside Islam who are trying to fight to get rid of the sect who distort Islam for criminal purposes. So till then, it has nothing to do with the interpretation of Islam, it's just because people are poor or they live in ugly neighborhood. So what you do is completely irrelevant. You have to reflect on that.

So the question is, is there a role to promote and how do you promote a European Islam, and not Islam in Europe to take the very simplistic way President Sarkozy tried to capture the idea. We have to compare notes.

If you look at our member states you have different approach. If you see Austria recently adopted legislation banning all sorts of external funding of religion. Germany is more and more demanding, especially towards the Diyanet, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Turkey. And on the other hand France is exploring how

Morocco or Algeria could help training the imams. So a bit opposite attitude. Do we need to compare note? Is it something for government, or is it completely irrelevant? It's something we need to discuss I think.

MR. DEVANE: RICHARD?

MR. BARRETT: Well, obviously there is a danger in conflating things too much. You know there is a very small group of terrorists even if there are what 5,000 from Europe who joined the Islamic State and let's say another 10,000 who may sympathize with them and think of going. And probably they all are from the Muslim community but then they may not be particularly observant Muslims. But there are many, many more Muslims across in Europe than that. So the vast, vast majority are not interested in this sort of violence. And refugees I think the conflation of refugees and terrorism is also a big mistake. Most of these refugees are trying to escape Islamic State and other dysfunctional areas of the world, which have been wracked by this sort of violence.

And again I think that if we are too quick to say yeah, this is a problem for the Muslim community, you tend to again make it harder for the Muslim community to deal with it. And for the rest of the community to think, yeah well, that woman wearing a hijab or something, she's obviously a terrorist. And we get these instances now in the States repeatedly of passengers on airplanes saying they feel uncomfortable sitting beside somebody who's clearly a Muslim or they believe is Muslim probably turn out to be a Sikh or something but happen to think is a Muslim and demand that the person is removed from the plane. Well it's really dangerous that isn't it this stigmatization of communities.

And on the narrative, I think the narrative has to be very, very clever. And across a huge range I mean the Abdullah-X is a good example. In Pakistan, for example, they have a very similar thing called the Burka Avenger which is a young woman you know who's really showing the pen is mightier than the sword. She has supernatural powers. But that's a cartoon. The Palestinians were putting out cartoons both to encourage

people to join extremist groups and to oppose them way, way back I think sort of 1970s and 1980s.

So this is one stream which is can be very effective with one particular audience. But the audience is very complicated they are made up of lots of different segments that need different media, different messengers and of course different messages.

MR. DEVANE: Mark?

MR. SIMMONDS: Okay, I want to say a couple of things. I think firstly, it's very important that there is a mature sensible and calm debate about the role of Islam in this particular challenge. And there is some interesting thoughts that are coming out of particularly the academic community. If you're at the conservative end of the Islamic religious spectrum, you are much less likely to be radicalized and if you're on the other spectrum, which is a very interesting way to feed into this particular debate.

We must make sure always obviously we don't only alienate the Islamic community either. And certainly in a recent conversation that I've been involved with, there is a feeling in some of the Islamic, Muslim community here in the UK that the focus of extremism in the UK is purely on them and not on other extremist groups in the UK. We have right being extremism here as you do in Europe in Brussels and elsewhere. So we need to be careful and sensitive to that to make sure that moderate Muslims are brought into this conversation and discussion as well.

I also just want to, if I may, just make a couple of points about the important role of social media in all of this. Social media is not -- by shutting down the social media it's not a complete answer. The analysis, intelligence analysis of Twitter exchanges from those who have been radicalized shows that many of them know each other and are in the same geographical location. So of course it's not all about people communicating with each other from vast distances. But I agree with you. There needs to be much more that's done to shutdown and stop some of this poison that is being used on the social

media platforms. And in my view Twitter is the gateway often to other social media platforms, Twitter need to much more to shutdown quickly the potential tweets that are taking place and 46,000 Twitter accounts that have potential ISIS support; 200,000 tweets gathered a day all of -- around this particular area and hostile to the West.

They are not all about beheading people and violence. There are all these other aspects that we've talked about before. And I think it's beholden on these social media platforms which is in a positive way transforming lives in some of the developing world. But actually it should be used for positive. You need to turn social media around to actually disseminate the messages that we want to disseminate about the role, the positive roles that people have to play. Young people who may feel disaffected, they don't have a future, they don't have a prospect of getting a job to provide for themselves and their families. All those things need to change. And we should use social media for that purposes not be allowed it to be used for radicalization.

MR. DEVANE: What's the goal of civil society in this, you've touched on it. And it's not just the role of the state. And the Northern Ireland experience, would say that you know the police and the military and the intelligence services reduced the level of violence. But what brought peace was when cross-border and cross community conversations started taking place. And rather than sitting in your living room with nothing to do and your support became cross community and people engaged in other activities. So what's the role of that in the European cities but also in the neighborhood?

MR. KERCHOVE: There is one lesson of the summit on Prevention of Radicalization that President Obama organized last year, is that we are not doing enough with civil society. We need to involve much more, use women in this. I try to mobilize the EU money program to do that more both internally and externally. Internally, it's a lot to -- I know it's not only the answer, but try to find solutions so that people can report and detect early signs of radicalization and find a way to report. Very often whom better than the mother can detect these signs. But

they don't know to whom they can report, what they can receive, what non-security response they can receive. So experience like in France the hotline seems to be pretty successful. And -- but you need to build trust in the communities it's not only community police who does that but all the front liners, social workers and parents.

So I would tend to believe we need to do that more. But the same on empowering civil society, moderate voice in civil society to speak out and not only on Internet. So I believe it's important.

MR. BARRETT: It's interesting the Islamic State see this as well that they try to do what they could eliminate the gray zone. And the gray zone is the area between people who oppose them and people who support them. Obviously they're going to get very little share of that. But in the same way, I think that we should be attempting to engage the whole of society in this issue to understand what it is. And also the threat that it poses because society at the moment is encouraged to be enormously fearful of something which is incredibly unlikely to happen to any particular individual.

So building that sort of social resilience you know so well you know show there is terrorism around, show it's horrible, and show it can happen to me too, but so can lots of other things. And taking the power, if you like, away from the terrorists by refusing to be afraid. Because terrorism after all is not about killing you, it's about making you afraid that you might be killed and therefore you demand changes in policy and so on that may support the terrorist cause a bit more.

So I think that the engagement of community is much broader than just saying well you ought to be looking out for somebody who might be becoming radicalized. That maybe effective and it will be interesting to have a closer look at the programs here in the United Kingdom. But effectively, people who are going to be violent and particularly in relation to the Islamic State, as Gilles said earlier, tend to come from a very tight knit group. You know they're already grouped together, they're already in a bubble, they're already exchanging Twitter messages

or whatever but actually are completely insulated against outside influences.

So there is a key audience outside that of civil society; people who might aren't quite interested in what's going on in the Syria that Assad guy is really bad. Can't we do something about it? And then being moved down the track towards Islamic State. And the rest of civil society which is pretty neutral about the whole thing. Thinks, well it's not my problem, it's government's problem or teacher's problem or something. And they need to be engaged as well.

MR. DEVANE: There was paper in Foreign Affairs recently, which was looking at the educational origin of North African students who became radicalized. And they were saying that you see lots of people. And I'm the engineer -- we see lots of engineers, you don't see people who've studied humanities. So what is it in education systems, which mean that's one cohort who -- of people who are very, very similar seem to be inoculated, whereas another group don't. Do we have evidence, do we understand why that phenomenon is happening. Because it was stark, but why wasn't clear?

MR. BARRETT: Well, I'm not sure I completely agree with the analysis that people who are engineers are more likely to join than people who study humanities. I mean it maybe that sort of person who was attracted to study humanities is not the sort of person who's attracted into that sort of life that's offered by terrorist groups. But I think that would probably be a very broad generalization. And I think perhaps a dangerous one. I mean terrorism is enormously eclectic -- if that's the right word -- it's enormously embracing.

If you want to join you, yourself want to join Islamic State, fine, they'll have you, you will have skills that they can benefit from. If I want to join, sure. Maybe they'll find a skill that I have that they'll benefit from as well. I'm trying to think what it might be.

So I think the -- what I'm trying to say, go

back to what I said before is that the route that anybody takes to join a terrorist group or commit an act of terrorist violence is very, very personal. And I think -- that is what I am trying to say -- he is dressed in this way or had that sort of education so he's more likely.

MR. SIMMONDS: As you like my views were wrong to look for generic patterns in why people are being radicalized whether they're violent or non-violent. But I think there is a much stronger role for civil society to play. I think that both in the UK and elsewhere we haven't quite worked out what it is that civil society representing the -- not just those communities from within which people are radicalized, but those that can have an impact perhaps from -- externally. I also think there seems to be a misunderstanding particularly of many young Muslim men about the positive impact that the Islamic world has had on our world. There doesn't seem to be a knowledge of the huge importance of civilization and medicine and education all these other things that we will probably all know about.

And I think there is a role for civil society within the Islamic community to make sure that particularly young men who maybe attempted to be radicalize in this way actually have a much more detailed understanding that we haven't got to where we've got to as a civilized world just from Europe and the United States. And there is some excellent work in this area that has been done. But I think there is much more that we could do to assimilate and disseminate those key messages into the Muslim community.

MR. DEVANE: But there is a tendency I think to see this is as surgery. How do we identify those people or address this community. But there is kind of almost a public health bit of it how do we reduce the pool of people from whom these people might come. And that gets you back into employability and education. But is that something we are putting enough effort into, into understanding what's happening in those systems. Because if we are fishing in a smaller pool, so to speak, or the pool is smaller, then the problem is smaller.

MR. KERCHOVE: Obviously, we need to do more. I know that the European Commission will soon come with the -- several proposal in this field on education on reducing discrimination. But it's member states and often local level. But we can support different initiative. I am in favor of launching big flagship program. For instance, one that I like a lot of, I said that several times, and I think no other commission get it, is to do a bit what President Obama launched a big -- a virtual exchange program connecting 1 million American and 1 million Arab students by Internet. We'll do the same.

So, there are several other initiatives like having sort of ambassador going into the schools and promoting more civic involvement. For instance, I believe that everyone who goes to university in Europe should spend some time engaging with social work and that would be part of the curriculum as well. So, we can be imaginative and launch big program of that sort.

MR. DEVANE: Yeah. We have a program in Pakistan which we started in Lahore College which is the women's university strangely in Lahore. And you couldn't graduate without doing a program of citizenship that's now in 47 universities and the plan is to have this compulsory for all universities in Pakistan by next year.

And what's coming from that point of view it isn't saying this is about counter extremism, about counter radicalization it's coming from point of view saying if we have a cohort of people who are engaging in their societies then the society is inherently better, more prosperous, more --

MR. KERCHOVE: Yeah.

MR. DEVANE: -- more robust. But it has to be at scale and getting that kind of commitment I think from institutions can be very difficult and --

MR. KERCHOVE: Not because we look (inaudible) for instance. It's probably the best program that the commission ever launched to bring young students outside their country and just widen their mind. So, it has had

for the -- not maturation, but the duration after that, a huge impact. Why don't we do that more in scale alone? If you tell each and every would-be graduate that they has to spend sometime every week to engage in social work that has a major impact and we can negotiate that if we recall the (inaudible) process with the universities in Europe. It's huge.

MR. DEVANE: Okay. Richard.

MR. BARRETT: I think that -- that program is great. Yeah, and I agree and your Lahore program is great too these are really valuable things, but there always going to be people on the margin of society, there always going to be people who are criminals, there are always going to be people who perpetrate violence whether at home or other people. There always going to be terrorists.

So, what we're trying to do is limit the numbers aren't we really and reduce the conditions which encourage people to become like that. And certainly these programs help but ultimately the Islamic State if one can take that and al Qaeda as well exists because of political conditions in the areas, you know, where they thrive. And that impacts our internal security but it's really an external problem.

You know, in Syria-Iraq it is a regional problem which has to be resolved essentially I would have thought by regional powers, by the people in Syria and Iraq but by the regional powers the then with international support that Staffan de Mistura has been trying to muster. So, I don't think we should say it's all our fault. You know, it's -- yeah, sure we can do lots of things but let's look also at the factors that are external.

MR. SIMMONDS: Yeah, of course there are good programs that are taking place and we need to upscale those in the way that we were talking about before. But I think we've got to be very careful about this theory. It's -- you need -- we need to be very sophisticated, it's extremely complex. And if you get into a classroom and get into this conversation you very quickly get to the edge of where you're going to start offending people

particularly if there are some Muslims in the room.

So, you need to really quite careful with all this and get to a state where people don't feel that they're being spied on, that they're being watched and monitored all of the time. I think where we haven't put enough thought into the area of education yet is into the point that Richard was making earlier about those who are returning from Syria and Iraq. And the recent stat that came out of the UK government, 350 people have come back from Syria to the United Kingdom, 70 of which are potentially extremely dangerous.

So, there is job that needs to be done by the body politic not this government but all the associated organizations to after Richard and his team have interviewed them to make sure that we put in place strategies to deradicalize them and assimilate them back into their communities. And there is some very interesting evidence from elsewhere in the world in quite different contexts but people coming out of, for example, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in Africa where people perpetrated the most terrible crimes. And actually have been assimilated back into the -- into their communities eventually. So, it can be done, it is a special focus on --

MR. DEVANE: Gilles.

MR. KERCHOVE: I cannot agree more that's my message to the Ministry of Justice repeatedly that we are legging behind. We don't have rehabilitation program ready for the return of hundreds of Europeans. Doug said they're not coming, I feel they will come earlier than we expect because the pressure we put on Daesh will have an impact, many of them will get back in great number.

And we have a difficult decision because in some instances we have the evidence, so we can bring them to alternate court but it's difficult to get an evidence. We are not Syria, we are not working with the Assad regime and after the only evidence we have are digital evidence but that takes time to get them from across the US, first problem. If we don't have the evidence but intelligence

and interview shows that they are dangerous and (inaudible) is that they hide their real intent often.

They say they are ready to undertake a rehabilitation program that when we monitor what really they -- they believe it's a bit different. But let's suppose for those who are dangerous and we don't have evidence we need to monitor them 24/7 but that takes -- that requires a lot of people. The head of the German service told me the other day it takes 60 members of his staff to do it for six months for one person.

So, for those are generally ready to undertake a rehabilitation program we need to have something which works. But very few members say they have that so far. So, that's of critical importance and we have been trying to learn from other experience, you said Africa but there are many experience abroad and start doing that. We know that the Danes have some initiative; here in Britain, there are some initiative, but we need again to scale that up.

MR. BARRETT: Yeah. I think that's about 13 rehabilitation programs around the world which are well established, you know, and some new ones like the Danish one which is very limited in fact that one small town a very few people gone through. It's really, really important that we focus more on this whole issue and it's difficult but again if you learn more about why people went then you can help them if you like return to society. And if even the 70 people who have -- of significant threat here in the United Kingdom if we were to be able to follow them around then everything well clearly we will be living in a state that none of us I think really want to live in, you know, with such massive surveillance capabilities as that.

So, we need to focus so much more on rehabilitation and I've talked to Gilles in the past about the possibility to have a European effort on this because although we have lots of cultural differences between us at least we can all get together perhaps and think about what is the best practice. But the fact that there isn't effective rehabilitation in Europe, in the European Union

countries particularly, is I think is just a sign of how difficult it is.

MR. DEVANE: Okay. Allow me to open this up. The gentleman over here.

SPEAKER: Thanks. Excuse me for speaking a second time. For some years I've been training some of our counter radicalization people as part of a channel project, which is a well regarded project in Britain. But one observation would be that's we never would have spoken about previous terrorist organizations in counter radicalization terms. We haven't talked about deradicalizing Irish Nationalists who perpetrated some pretty awful crimes in a 30 year campaign in Britain.

We rather focused on de-operationalizing people and we haven't convinced them of the errors of their way but they are no longer carrying out acts of terrorism. So, my first question is whether we should -- we should be cautious about using the term deradicalization. But my question is Britain is currently reviewing its counter terrorism strategy. But that's going alongside a process of defining a counter extremism policy.

And I wondered if the panel would comment on the tensions between effective counter radicalization, counter terrorism sitting with a counter extremism strategy that can close down (inaudible). The civil society you speak about includes people that the counter extremism strategy tells us we shouldn't be speaking to.

MR. BARRETT: Thank you. Well, absolutely right. On the counter terrorism thing, I mean we were all thinking of counter terrorism and what should we do to beat these people, and so it led to this -- automatically to this sort of kinetic response largely military response. But if you look at the evolution the White House Summit that both of us were at and that sort of activity it encouraged then a move from counter terrorism to countering violent extremism, okay.

So, that was a step and what I think was right direction. Now, the new mantra is to prevent violent

extremism. So, it's moving even further upstream if you like to see the things that may cause violent extremism rather than dealing -- deal with it once that it's happened or certainly before you deal with terrorism. And on the other issue of deradicalization you're absolutely right to make that point, I mean it's disengagement from violence that we're looking for.

I think being radical is absolutely fine maybe at certain parts of your life. But, you know, I mean there's nothing wrong with being radical and that can effect change in a positive way. But being violent is completely unacceptable. So disengagement from violence is a key.

MR. DEVANE: Gilles.

MR. KERCHOVE: I would have said the same. I think we try to avoid that people use violence to push their ideas. So, disengage, deradicalization I believe it's very difficult to achieve even if it's very desirable. As to the question to go a step further that move from preventing violent extremists to prevent extremism which is in a way what the Prime Minister Cameron said. That's a sensitive issue, if you look at the EU/US approach to free speech for instance that is not an obvious thing to achieve.

It's interesting because I remember -- I was involved in the negotiation of the draft legislation in the past on preventing racist mix and of phobia. And this country was one of the most receptive as to the scope of free speech and so that -- that may I think be much more difficult to achieve. I've personally believed we have to challenge extreme narrative as well and that's why I'm raising and again I don't want to reopen that discussion.

We have to challenge some sort of distorted interpretation and I am not mixing up at all the two but we have to challenge sometime extremist views because that's the first step towards a process which might lead to violence.

MR. SIMMONDS: Can I just jump in? I mean, I

agree with my other two panelists primarily but I think it's a very good point that you're making if I might say so and I think that -- I can't remember if it was President Obama or the head of home and security in the US said that we can't arrest our way out of this problem. So, we have to focus on the -- in broader terms the prevention side as well.

I think the other thing that we've got to do is just to build on the point that is being made, is to challenge the extremism narrative and that has to be done -- building on what we were saying earlier, through disseminating messages through the social media platforms as well as perhaps more traditional platform. Now it's much more difficult to do with the democratic values that we all hold so there's not one message we can send, when we're dealing with only one really poisonous messaging coming back the other way.

So, it is coming out but we need to give much more thought to how we do -- how we do that from our perspective whilst maintaining our values of freedom of speech and democracy and everything. I just finally, while I am no longer member of the UK government, I can give you an assurance that within the UK government there is a really detailed understanding about the importance of having parallel structures that are infused both in the terrorism and extremism fronts and the respective ministerial teams work very closer together to try and deliver the best joint approach.

MR. DEVANE: The gentleman here.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Armand Arton (phonetic). As we are all seeing in the news, the deal between the European Union and Turkey for handling the refugees happening this summer. How this translates from security concerns of having potentially 75 million Turkish citizen being able to travel visa free to Europe for handling the 2 million refugees with -- which they have promise to keep and handle in Turkey.

The concerns of visa free mobility of this large number of Turkey citizen. How it will be able to be

managed by your agencies?

MR. DEVANE: Simple question to handle, Gilles.

MR. KERCHOVE: I don't have much to say except that we are working on it. It's part of the deal and in order to get visa free access to the European Union the Turks have to meet I think 72 conditions. Not all of them are related to, some are related to rule of law, the respect for free speech as we just mention, an effective justice and to respect due process in all this. Some are linked to police effectiveness and border management and I hope that Turkey will meet all these conditions by the June deadline I think.

I don't see the problem in itself, I think for -
- I understand why for the Turks it would be nice to, as a first step towards the accession process because we are engaged with Turkey in accession process that it can just come in and go back. I don't expect the hundred thousands of Turks to flee their country and so I don't see the point. Provided that the 72 conditions are met.

MR. DEVANE: Mark.

MR. SIMMONDS: I just want to make one point if I may in addition to what's being said. A visa regime is very different from free movements of people. With a visa regime you can stop people moving by refusing to give them visas. There is a mechanism and a structure within that.

MR. KERCHOVE: Just to add at the -- we discussed yesterday at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg, a proposal of the Commission to do like the Americans, a sort of electronic travel, international authorization like the (inaudible) with the US because it will lift the visa requirement we need to know who comes in.

MR. DEVANE: Yeah, great. Thank you all for listening to us and can I ask you to thank our fantastic panel. Thank you.

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