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COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE AGE OF ISIL

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COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE AGE OF ISIL

(1:00 p.m.)

MR. ERVIN: -- insights on counterterrorism from both the West Wing and from Number 10. To moderate this session we're very pleased to have with us Kevin Baron, who is the executive editor of Defense One. He's also a national security and military analyst for both NBC News and MSNBC. Kevin beforehand covered the military, the Pentagon, Congress, and politics for among others, *Foreign Policy*, *National Journal*, and *Stars and Stripes*. Please join me in welcoming Kevin in this panel.

(Applause)

MR. BARON: Thank you. Thank you Clark. Thank you everyone for sticking around for this is I believe the last panel before the defense secretary arrives and it's been I think a very informative couple of days. Hope you've enjoyed it. I like that he referred to my work with NBC News and MSNBC which I haven't been on for many weeks because I'm not a Trump expert.

(Laughter)

MR. BARON: Which, you know, can be a blessing and a curse for not being a Trump expert. The good news is we're here in London. So we have Lisa Monaca, we have Paddy McGuinness, both who are deputy national security advisors to their governments which means either you don't get enough blame or you don't get enough credit probably for what you do --

(Laughter)

MR. BARON: -- in your work. But what they have in common is that they're focused on homeland and counterterrorism and which has been I think the strong focus of this forum here in the United Kingdom, a little different than the Aspen Forum in Aspen in the summers which I hope Clark invites all of you to as well. So my thought was we'd try to expand the discussion a little bit as today has started to do from yesterday which was

focused more on what feels like homeland security versus the larger global fight against ISIS, against terrorism. I'm a Pentagon reporter, I'm a military reporter, so I focus too much on what's going on in the battlefield in Iraq and Syria and not enough on the other end of the spectrum of preventing violent extremism that causes a radicalization, everything else that starts people on that path. So to kick it off I wanted to ask you both to give some opening remarks about the state of the partnership in counterterrorism between the United States and the United Kingdom, what makes it different than others, and what's on your priority list right now going forward? So kick us off, Lisa.

MS. MONACO: I was going to give it to -- Paddy has home-field advantage, but --

MR. BARON: He does.

MS. MONACO: Well, thank you very much to Clark, to you, Kevin, to the Aspen Institute for doing this here. I'm really pleased to be here. It's I think really convenient that Aspen has decided to take the Security Forum global at the same time the President has made yet another historic visit to the UK which also allowed me to be here, so --

MR. BARON: We're all going to Germany tomorrow.

MS. MONACO: Yes. So anytime we have one of these visits, we end up talking about the special relationship which is I think totally appropriate. But it is also true, and I think Paddy would agree with me on this, that there is no place where the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is more evident and more important and I would argue more beneficial to our two countries than in the work that we are doing every day on counterterrorism and the homeland security issues that each one of our nations faces. So it's a particularly timely discussion that we're having. Let me say a few words about the threat, the threat from terrorism in general, and the terrorism from ISIL in particular and what we're doing about it, both the United States and of course in our partnership

with the U.K. and the broader global coalition.

So I mentioned that the topic today is very timely. I think that's in part because of the particular nature of the ISIL threat. Even as we are relentless in our pressure against core Al-Qaeda in the fatah, going after the remnants of Al-Qaeda, even as we are -- remain very, very focused in not taking our eye of the threat that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula poses, we face a distinct and particularly dangerous threat from ISIL. And why is that? I would argue it's because ISIL presents a threat that is different in kind, it is a particular type of trans-regional threat which by its nature trans-regional threats cannot be fought in isolation. We will not be successful in stamping out that threat and confronting it if we're doing so alone because of the trans-regional nature. And because of the particular features I think that ISIL has about it and the threat that it poses.

What do I mean by that? ISIL is at once operating as an insurgent army and as a terrorist group. It is seeking to take and hold physical territory and seeking to dominate digital terrain. It is at once a magnet for foreign fighters and executing directed complex attacks as we saw so horrifically in Paris and Brussels, and it is also seeking to inspire individuals to just act wherever they are regardless of travel. So the multifaceted, very diverse nature I would argue is different in kind in terms of the type of threat we faced before, all of which -- all of those features underscore why we've got to continue to prosecute this fight as a coalition both in the coalition of 66 some-odd nations who are prosecuting the fight against ISIL and Iraq and Syria and in our bilateral work with the U.K. certainly and with other partners. The coalition effort I think is a particularly good example of how we can maximize and mutually reinforce our efforts against this distinct type of threat.

We are working as a coalition to first and foremost I think in both of our minds disrupt plots against our homeland and against our allies and partners. We are squeezing the core of ISIL in Iraq and Syria,

whether that's pressuring Raqqa going after areas that ISIL has taken and controlled in Iraq and rolling them back. We are cutting off and seeking to cut off its branches as they try and take root whether it's in Libya, Yemen, Sinai, West Africa, you name it, and we are going after I think very importantly the -- and targeting that which fuels ISIL's capabilities. That's the money, that's the men, the manpower, and very importantly and I think we should spend some time on today, it's message which I would argue is the distinguishing feature -- a distinguishing feature of the threat that ISIL poses.

So the coalition and our bilateral efforts are going after all of those things simultaneously and we're having an effect as I'm sure you've heard in the other sessions today. The momentum that the coalition has built and is taking hold, ISIL is on the defensive. They are losing money, they are losing men, they're at their lowest number of fighters since the conflict began. They're having greater trouble paying their salaries. They are not in fact governing contrary to their claims. We're going after their oil revenues. And we're taking leaders off the battlefield and rolling them back from their territory. They hold some 40 percent less territory than they once did in Iraq and 20 percent less territory than they did in Syria. So we're having an effect.

All of that said, ISIL is resilient. As the horror in Paris and Brussels and Istanbul all show, they are continuing to project their power outward to have an effect with external operations and to continue to push out their brutal messaging. So we've got to evolve with that, and I think that is one of the main areas where we are working so well together is to evolve to meet the threat that ISIL is posing. And that brings me back to the distinctive feature of the threat they pose which is their ability to recruit, to radicalize, to mobilize individuals to violence by using that ironically which has been such an engine of social freedom and progress and free speech and innovation, they -- ISIL that is, bent on rejecting modernity is using that great innovation to perpetuate and spread its brutal message. So we've got to evolve and I think we are evolving to meet that threat.

And what do I mean by that? That means partnering with the U.K., sharing best practices as we have done even on this trip and my discussions with Paddy and his colleagues to go after their messaging, to lift up and amplify credible voices, to work with industry, to work with civil society. The Not in My Name campaign that was launched and came out here in the U.K. is a great example of that type of innovation that is going to help us fill the space that ISIL is trying to occupy virtually and digitally with other alternative credible voices. And the Global Engagement Center that we have set up at the State Department is this similar type of effort, innovative effort to work with partners that are international, that represent the private sector, that represent civil society, to provide that counter to ISIL's brutal message.

So that type of innovation, that type of partnership coupled with the partnership between our two nations and the broader global coalition I think is a critical part of what it's going to take to really make a dent and go after ISIL's messaging which is fueling their violence. So those were a few things that I would offer to frame the discussion and I would just say the work that the services here do every day to keep this country safe is an incredible testament both to their professionalism and to the work that we do together so well and have done for so many decades and it's really -- it's a privilege to work with them and to learn from them every day and to be here. So thanks.

MR. BARON: Well, so that's a nice readout and talking about the message is -- and I segue to Paddy for being in charge of both counterterrorism and cyber in your hat, that's where the messaging is living and thriving now. I wanted to ask you, Lisa, you said that the lowest number of fighters are -- do you have a number of -- an estimate?

MS. MONACO: Yeah, our estimate is they -- the current number of ISIL fighters is in the neighborhood of 25,000. That is down some 5,000 to 10,000 from the beginning of the conflict. So lowest number we estimate since the conflict began.

MR. BARON: Okay. So Paddy?

MR. MCGUINNESS: Thank you. Well, and thank you to the Aspen Security Forum for this opportunity and for being in London, and for bringing the summit. And Kevin, thanks. And Lisa and I talk really all the time or are in touch and e-mailing, but normally we talk on -- in situational Cobra rooms with no windows --

MS. MONACO: Sure.

MR. MCGUINNESS: -- or on secure telephones that even Apple would be jealous of --

(Laughter)

MR. MCGUINNESS: -- and so it's wonderful to have a chance to be together and in a public space unusually. And it also gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to Lisa and the work she's done in the White House. It's not an exaggeration to say from my personal experience that every Brit here in the room should be grateful for the contribution that Lisa -- and though she leads or perhaps (inaudible) have done to keep us safe. So it's a great opportunity to have the chance to put that on the record.

I absolutely -- I think Lisa framed that beautifully for us. One of the other things we talk about when we reflect -- when we have the opportunity to reflect on what we're dealing with when we talk about Daesh is that almost an unspoken problem, but one we always think about and practitioners think about is that Daesh is additional to the existing security threat, not a replacement for it, and that any of the tactics, and we work hard on -- collectively on countering the tactics whether that be having operational capability or the right legislation or the right partnerships, any of the tactics that are causing us concern, so marauding terrorist firearms attack, so use of unconventional -- or the attempt to produce and use unconventional weapons, so attacks on aircraft has been carried out and are still in the playbook of terrorist groups that are active and my

word when we see a bomb on an aircraft in Mogadishu, we see a shopping center attack in Kenya, and we see Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula continuing despite all the pressures there are in that country to expand and aspire to attack, and that I think places a particular emphasis on our work.

Today we're going to talk about Daesh and do let's concentrate -- that because it's a good prompt for reasons I'll go on to. But the thing that Lisa and I talk about a lot is about the capabilities we're going to need, the capabilities we need to develop for all the counterterrorism purposes and I reflect that we have a problem of persistence. I was saying to Kevin just before -- I think I was saying to you Kevin, just before we came up that I was looking back on a counterterrorism career where I first worked against Abu Nidal in 1986, there were some Palestinian groups that have ceased to function, but I can't think of any other terrorist group that has ceased to function in my career and is not still of concern to us.

And as I sit here and I often say to Lisa, of course we must talk about Daesh, there's a scale problem that we have with Daesh, but as I sit here, you know, I reflect on Adrian Ismay which is probably not a name anyone in this room will reflect -- anyone know the name Adrian Ismay? He's a Northern Irish prison officer who was murdered just before Easter by a bomb under his car. Yeah. And the capabilities that we need to develop to deal with Daesh and these other persistent terrorist groups, we need to deal with these long-standing groups to deal with violence. So very often we find ourselves when we're not talking about immediate events talking about those capabilities coming through.

Lisa gave a wonderful speech in Austin, Texas, that some of you will have read, if not I recommend you to read it. And the reason I want -- I recommend you to read it is that what it does is it gives you a picture of the dynamism of the development of the capabilities that we need. And that's true militarily. You weren't so much talking about the military in that speech, and that's in the technology space, and that's true in the law

enforcement space, and it takes us, Kevin, from the domestic to the international and into cyberspace. And I think we just need to keep reflecting on that and we need to keep talking about the capabilities that we need, particularly I think at the moment in Europe and Gilles de Kerchove is here with us, we've had a number of discussions about what is it that Europe collectively and individual European states need to be doing to have the right capabilities to deal with what we're dealing with at the moment, but also to be resilient in the longer term.

Now, there's been work done recently on a range of these areas, but there's much more to do. I'd reflect that we've done work in Europe in particular on how we share data, have a kind of pool within which we can fish to find the people of concern who are threatening us from Syria principally at the moment. I'd reflect that we have worked hard to think about how we can restrict the distribution of firearms and the availability of firearms, what we can do about the availability of explosives, either actual explosives or the precursors. I'd reflect that we are very busy trying to strengthen aviation security in those airports where there is vulnerability and there's a proximity to a terrorist threat, and there's a large number of those and we've been working collectively on that.

And I reflect on the nuclear summit that we had in the week after Easter which reminds us that when we talk about a persistent threat and we talk about capabilities, we also need those defensive lines like the security that protects aviation, but also against those low probability, but very high impact attacks or risks such as the use of nuclear materials or indeed a real cyber capability if one were developed by a terrorist group. So when I think about the richness of our interaction and how we work together, it is driven by events. Currently Daesh is clearly at top of agenda, but actually it's also driven by a wish for an underlying capability that we can apply however this threat develops, and as we heard this morning I think from Brett McGurk and Didier Le Bret rather compellingly, there are indicators that, you know, Daesh is in trouble and you've referred to it there, Daesh is in trouble in the territory that it's

taken, and you know, there's a prospect of an element of military defeat in particular bits of geography.

That isn't the end of Daesh clearly and we are left -- despite Kevin's wish for us to focus on the international -- we are left with particular problems I think that Daesh gives us. And I'd characterize those as follows. I think clearly there's an issue about volume and a lot of that has to do with social media -- we're going to I think talk about that, I look forward to. And Charles Farr was compelling yesterday where he said he thought that the availability of social media was a lucky factor for the other problems that we have with Daesh. And I kind of buy that.

There's a thing about intensity and when I say intensity, I mean the preparedness of Daesh to engage in the most horrific acts and to glamorize them, there's an issue with glamour, I reflect on the way in which they project their message, that it's incredibly appealing to people who might like to play video games or indeed watch Marvel films, not that I'm dishing Marvel as a product, my children love it. Clearly there's a problem with speed, when it's possible to see an individual in dialogue, beginning to look at Daesh material online, gets into dialogue with them and within days is prepared to walk out of their door and mount an attack.

We have a real problem with speed of response, something we didn't have when we dealt with. And then the thing that causes us here in the United Kingdom, causes David Cameron to stand back, to take a step back, and I know we're talking to Lisa the same and it's why we talk about broader policy considerations is the penetrative nature of Daesh's or ISIL's interaction with our societies, and they're playing right at the difficult points in our societies. The demographic is increasingly young, so they're playing against the problem of the alienated young, they're playing absolutely on mental health and there a number of examples where individuals who've got involved in violence, who've got involved have been exploited because of their mental health vulnerability.

They are playing absolutely on the fault lines in our communities, unresolved issues around immigration and integration, and you know, that's a major policy issue that we aren't going to resolve solely for counterterrorism purposes and of course they are exploiting the migratory flows which are such an issue for Europe just at the moment. And what that means is it is rare that we have a policy area, certainly in the broader kind of homeland security space where there isn't a strong kind of Daesh flavor that we need to address within it, even though it is not the principle issue that we are addressing. I'm sure we'll have the opportunity in response to questions to dig into some of these areas a little bit.

I think the really interesting thing is that we've been on a journey and particularly when it relates to technology and that I'm really interested in you as a group and people who are watching on the screen to reflect some of the discussions we have tend to be about, as Lisa said in her speech in Austin, tend to be about revelations from 2012s, concerns about oversight of agencies, concerns about powers, and they don't tend to be about what effect the changing in technology is having on the threat that we face and how we address that collectively as a community, yes, with industry and also in terms of consent and agreement between government and people. And that is somewhere where Lisa and I have been working a great deal. So there's plenty to talk about, you better prompt us.

MR. BARON: Plenty to talk about, try to unpack on that. That's a nice long list of problems that have been identified. Tell us a little about the successes that you're having, what's working and what isn't, what you need more of and the difference of approaches here in U.K. and Europe wider with United States, you know, here we have Paris, Brussels, Istanbul, that's a different concern here for your populations and governments and law enforcement and military than what the United States is thinking or feeling at least right now. So what's working right now and what's the challenge that's maybe not getting the attraction you hoped for?

MR. MCGUINNESS: Can I say something?

MR. BARON: Please.

MR. MCGUINNESS: It's working and I wonder if Lisa -- we talked about this a bit. So I think something that's working is the increasing engagement by the tech companies. It is very striking that Daesh have a volume model and they are disheartened when they're not able to function online. And we have technology companies who also operate at volume, they take out spam, they remove religious content and they have been active and been active of their own accord, not solely at the direction of legislation or government and they're really engaged in this process and it's something Lisa and I have been talking about, about how we foster that.

My reflection would be we have in these companies the most fantastic engines of innovation and we have some technology problems that terrorists give us. What's not to like in giving the innovators the problem to solve and I think we're getting into that space when we think about countering the message and countering the abuse of the networks and that's quite a good step-on from where we were in the parliamentary committee report, for instance on the death of Drummer Lee Rigby where there was criticism of a social media provider because of what it did or didn't do with the data (inaudible). That feels to me like something that's going in a good direction in a critical domain where we need to counter Daesh.

MR. BARON: Well, I'm a skeptical journalist, so I'm not sure if you have -- give us some concrete examples, perhaps, you know, in the U.S. or if you're just trying to sweeten the tech companies right now because of what's going in and out, but to tell me that, you know, they're really helping out, they're doing good because you need them to join the fight as much. Are they joining the fight, what are the examples?

MS. MONACO: Look, I agree with Paddy, I think it is going in the right direction. There is for sure more to do on all sides. So you've seen some of the companies take affirmative steps to address under their own terms and conditions, folks need to remember, this is

about content that is violating their own terms of service, right? None of these companies want their -- I firmly believe this, none of these companies want their platforms to be used for the most horrific images and messages and directions to commit violence. These are patriotic -- companies are patriotic individuals who run and work in them, they don't want to see them used for this purpose. This is a hard, hard problem. So we are seeing the discussions that we've had start to take hold.

We're seeing Twitter take more content down that violates their terms of service and going at this. There is much more to do. We're seeing them engage across a whole range of issues. So for instance -- and I rarely get to do things that I feel are affirmative as opposed to putting out fires, I know for sure Paddy feels this way, but some of the most interesting and dynamic and heartening conversations I've had in the last 18 months have been with folks in industry, I spent a day out in Silicon Valley not too long ago sitting with social entrepreneurs, tech executives, industry representatives, philanthropists, a wonderful cross-section of innovation from the United States in a setting at Stanford called the D School, the Design School, and maybe it was the like wall-less nature of the environment that bred the creative discussion we had, but what we did there is talk about how can we harness the innovation that they've brought to their platforms for a whole range of issues and what they've done to try and combat things like pornography and fraud on their platforms and how can we learn from that to get after what ISIL is doing in exploiting their platforms. And I repeated those conversations in Austin, in Boston, in New York, and here in the U.K. So it is -- there is something to this discussion that is taking hold.

MR. BARON: I'll take a personal privilege. We're about to put on a technology summit exactly on this topic in June in Washington. But tell me from your -- I've asked Carter, our defense secretary, this, but from your conversations, what's the response from the tech community, how real is it that they want to get involved in the fight against terrorism versus the counter story which is these are hoodie kids and coders and they don't like military, they don't want to help kill people, they

want nothing to do with it, you know, this is as liberal green California as you can get. What's the reality in between those if these groups are actually first receptive to speaking to national security officials of the government --

MS. MONACO: Yeah.

MR. BARON: -- are they going to really jump in the fight, are they prepared to deal with the red tape of governments, and what's the motivation? Is it the money, is it the fame, is it the innovation, is it the dollars or is it really some sense of patriotism and enough is enough, Paris, Brussels, it has come into America next, San Bernardino, what's the response?

MS. MONACO: Two motivations, mission, humanity, period, full stop. I think all the conversations that I've had with folks in industry and across civil society, but for sure in industry as well, these are folks who are excited to be engaged in a significant challenge of our time which is seeing again their great innovation and a great innovative tool being used for horrific ends. So I think it is sincere, I think it is -- these are dynamic discussions we're having. Look, they want more information from the government, how can they -- how can we help them go after the same issues that we're confronting? In other words, how can we help them stop their platforms from being used by ISIL? So I think with all due respect for the skeptical journalist, and that's exactly right, and that should be the case, and you should question this, but I can only tell you from the discussions that I've had that these are folks who are sincere in wanting to step up and join in this fight.

MR. MCGUINNESS: And if I may, I think there is an interesting aspect of the companies and the subsidiaries in your understand the mole issues, so they -- and they understand the mole authority. So, you know -- and that was palpable and we are dealing with the death of Lee Rigby and that's certainly palpable after the attacks in Charlie Hebdo and the attack in 13th of November in Paris, enormous authority on the part of the French Interior Minister, Prime Minister in their interaction

with the companies, the company is understanding the issues the French were dealing with and things that were going on, on their network, and accepting that they're not a mere conduit, that actually they have, you know, a moral obligation to engage and they engage because they're sincere.

I also reflect from a British perspective, at most it may be difficult to get them to say this publicly all the time that we made real progress when it comes to the question of legislation, we're in the course as you know of passing Investigatory Powers Bill, it's just going through parliament at the moment to replace emergency legislation from last year, throughout both emergency legislation and this legislation, we've been in dialogue with communication service providers obviously in the U.K. ones, but also on the West Coast of the States as well as with partners in the U.S. government and where we got to is, I think they look at our legislation and what we're doing and they say to themselves, you're coming some way to meet us, you know, that we had some concerns about how we would explain to our customers why it was we were responding to interaction with the British government given the nature of your system and given the apparent experience under Snowden, and now we see, you know, the introduction of judicial authorization and certain warrants, we see a greater transparency, we see a set of things that we have been asking for and you are coming to us and giving it gentlemen. And that's a really interesting aspect and I think they accept that what is required is an enabling legislative frame within which we can do the right thing.

MR. BARON: Well, good. We have 15 minutes on the clock, so please have your questions in mind. Just a final before then, I just wanted to ask, since I'm the journalist and I've got Lisa on stage, in a speech a few weeks ago you mentioned that there was a drone report coming out. How close are we to seeing that and --

MS. MONACO: Pretty sure I didn't call it that.

MR. BARON: Well, okay, you've gotten a report on strikes outside of --

MS. MONACO: Yes.

MR. BARON: -- the actors, you can explain.

MS. MONACO: No, what you're referring to is a speech I gave at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington D.C., a couple of weeks ago, and in it I talked about counterterrorism framework that this administration has put in place over the last 7-plus years and part of that discussion has been about increasing the transparency around our counterterrorism operations in keeping with protecting sources and protecting the ability of our operators to continue to do their jobs. And I talked about why that's important, not transparency for transparency sake, but for the purpose of increasing and under-girding the legitimacy of what we do because these are capabilities that we are going to continue to need in the future. That threat is not going away.

And so the more we can talk about and make clear what it is we're doing, why we're doing it, the care that is undertaken and be as clear as possible about that, the greater the legitimacy I think we will have for our actions. And in keeping with that I talked about the efforts we are undertaking to make clear the number of combatant and non-combatant deaths that have occurred over the last 7 years in counterterrorism operations, outside of areas of active hostilities, outside of military theaters and we are working through the mechanics of that.

MR. BARON: Why outside of theaters, why not right at the heart of everything is happening, Iraq and Afghanistan?

MS. MONACO: Well, that is already taking place and you'll see as I know you're following the Defense Department including very recently put out additional information about the results of their operations in Iraq and Syria for instance.

MR. BARON: Just yesterday, yes.

MS. MONACO: So there's already mechanisms in

place. So where that hasn't been the case with great uniformity for our counterterrorism operations as opposed to our military operations done with coalition partners, we want to try and put in place and make clear what those best practices are and put in place a framework to hold the government accountable going forward for continuing to make those operations more transparent, again consistent with what we also have to do to ensure that we're able to conduct those operations to keep Americans safe.

MR. BARON: And when is it coming?

MS. MONACO: I'm not going to make any news on that particular date now, but we're working through it.

MR. BARON: I tried, good enough. Well, it's a topic that I think is -- should be at the top of our minds as a journalist as well and in the national security press corps back in the States, if not here as well, because of what you just said, the fighting that's going on outside of the theaters is growing, it's extensive, and it's increasingly or continually secret or at least discrete and so balancing the public's understanding of the fight that's happening in their name with their taxpayer dollars versus secrecy required for the mission successfully and safely, good luck with that. We look forward to it. So we go to questions and luckily right at the front row we've got Evan Perez with his hand up from CNN of course.

MR. PEREZ: Thank you and thanks for being here today. You talked just now -- I think Lisa, you mentioned the importance of trying to counter some of the extremist messages and certainly the ideology that is fueling ISIS. One of the things that has been brought up recently is the influence of Saudi Arabia and the fact that they've spent hundreds of millions of dollars building mosques in the region, even in Europe and some of those people that they -- that are running those mosques, imams, are fundamentalists, they're orthodox, they're people who have a message that is inherently hostile to democratic values that we prize here in the U.K., in the United States. I wonder if there's anything that you're doing to try to counter that, what's happening with the Saudi government, what they are doing and how do you change that?

MS. MONACO: Well, look, I think one of the things is to engage and you see that with -- I came here with the President to London on Thursday night after leaving Riyadh and a meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council members and our gulf partners who -- where we talked about of course the efforts all of whom are part of the coalition against ISIL, and the broader issues that are plaguing the region and the issues of regional stability. And part of those conversations is also about the -- what is happening in the region, the demographics of the region, the grievances that have not been addressed. You see that on display in Iraq that contributed greatly to the rise of ISIL, the unaddressed Sunni grievances there.

So all of that is part of the conversation that the President has when he sits down with our gulf partners, and all of it has to be part of our discussion when we're trying to combat ISIL. The thing I would say is in my discussions with counterparts in the gulf, the thing that uniformly unites our gulf partners has been their view, stated quite frequently, that ISIL does not represent Islam, and that has been a unifying theme of our engagement. And so I think that has been something that has galvanized their work in the coalition, but it is certainly true that the strains historically that have fed ISIL's rise are things that are going on in the region that we have to continue to engage and talk about with our partners who have by and large been very productive members of the coalition.

MR. BARON: Are you going to answer that?

MR. MCGUINNESS: I think Lisa has covered it well. My -- our experience has been with the Saudis and with other gulf partners is that they are extremely frank and straightforward partners in the matter of countering the ideology which is leading to, you know, ISIL's rise and other Takfiri groups and that it takes a bit of picking apart the history during the 1970s and '80s as against the position now, and in our dialogue with them we've got to be talking about the here and now, and we've also got to talk about that positive contribution, if you

go up to Lords Cricket Ground, I recommend a good game of cricket. On your way up you will pass a mosque on your right-hand side which is a principle mosque, region (inaudible) mosque on ground I think given by the Queen, built by the Saudis is a great center for Islam in that part of London and it's an authoritative body and is in no sense an issue when it comes to extremism.

So we need to be a little bit careful as we work our way through this. I reflect and many of you will follow that we in the United Kingdom have published a counter-extremism strategy nationally which we are working our way through. I reflect that the critical actors in dealing with that difficulty that I described when I talked about the penetration in our society that Daesh have achieved are the Muslim communities and that making them feel excluded and not taking account of their difficulties as they puzzle their way through what is happening with the young people and a small fringe within them who are aligning with Daesh, with ISIL, is not helpful. So there's something really interesting about us messaging about the here and now and the facts here and now.

MR. BARON: Question? Yes, in the back.

MR. GARDHAM: Hi, Duncan Gardham, I write about terrorism for *The Times Politico* (phonetic) and occasionally NBC. So I wanted to ask Paddy really following on from what your comments about the de-radicalization project that we call prevents and the government's strenuous efforts over the last few years to try and get young people to disengage from terrorism at an early stage, whether you find it frustrating that students have elected a leader dedicated to dismantling that program and perhaps ask Lisa as well how the Americans try and tackle the problem?

MR. MCGUINNESS: So you'll forgive me if I don't question the election of the chair of the National Union of Students, which maybe it seems a bit abstruse to some here, but it is an interesting area and prevent which I didn't actually refer to is a critical element of what we need to do to counter extremism and that is why we have

the prevent duty introduced into law last year on institutions which is the course of attention which the National Union of Students is focused on. What I had observed from my own experience of dealing with universities, to some extent schools and some other public bodies, is it's going to take time for us to have the right kind of setting that will mean that we can manage early signs of radicalization and head people off. There are some positive indicators.

I kind of think of it as being like when we began to introduce a much greater focus on child safeguarding, not that I'm comparing anyone who's radicalized necessarily to a child, but that it took -- we said, right, we're going to have better safeguarding for children, we began to introduce it. On the first day it was not perfect. Now in many areas it's strong and it's something we measure and that's the journey we're on and we're going to have to convince as well as use the force of law, we're going to have to convince and carry people through. I think there's a really interesting aspect and I have to say I don't have a statistical body which I can kind of throw at you now, but if I think about the work since 9/11 or even longer, there's something about the spaces in which we are addressing radicalization.

And again it's been a journey, it's been a development. And one of the reasons we're so focused on what happens in the online space is that when you look at these tragic stories of vulnerable young men and women who are drawn to Syria or drawn to act for Daesh, consistently we're finding they are not doing it in the classroom, in the mosque, in the youth center, in places where previously we had concerns, they're doing it in the online space and in friendship group which are much more difficult, and often they're doing it without the knowledge of their families. And so that takes us in a very different direction.

So I see the prevent duty and the thing that the chair of the National Union of Students is so set against, I see the prevent duty as one of the tools that is going to help us on a journey and will have success I'm sure in the online space. But we'll find that we'll still have to

address this and we'll still have concerns for the vulnerable and have to find a way of caring for them.

MR. BARON: A quick (inaudible) inside five minutes.

MS. MONACO: Yeah, I would just say very quickly, the strategy we're employing is that -- is a recognition first and foremost that government does not have the answers, it's going to come from communities. So what does that mean? It's going to mean sharing with communities best practices, lifting up those cities and communities that are doing this well, that are doing outreach in a way that brings communities together on this problem that is making clear that there need to be what we call off-ramps for individuals before they can be drawn in to what is an increasingly isolated and dark path as Paddy talked about. I would say this is something that I've seen a distinct shift in, in my, you know, 15 years or so of being focused on these issues, which is to say that increasingly law enforcement and national security folks are looking at how do we create interventions for individuals to help them avoid and move off this dark path to radicalization and to violence rather than looking at every particular entity as -- or individual as a potential security situation or prosecution case. Increasingly we're seeing law enforcement try and work with communities to develop off-ramps and that's I think all to the good.

MR. BARON: Our last minute and for a final comment, since Brussels are you more or less afraid of another attack on a western city, especially within the year?

MS. MONACO: Look, I would say that Brussels, Paris, Istanbul reinforces that this can happen anywhere. I think what has been observed is surely true, there is a spectrum of risk and vulnerability from -- within Europe to the United States that is different for a lot of reasons that have been talked about, I think, probably throughout this conference. But the issues that we've talked about today make clear that it can happen anywhere and we have to reflect upon the horror of Paris and Brussels and Istanbul and recognize that which is why the

multifaceted approach we're taking is so important. We are not going to kill our way out of this militarily. We are not going to delete our way out of this.

This is going to have to be a multifaceted approach militarily, diplomatically. Getting after the political solutions in places like Iraq, Syria, Yemen are going to be the only way that we address the grievances over the long term that are feeding what is producing this violence and getting after the messaging as we both observed are going to be the only way we can make kind of a long-term impact. But I think doing it from all of those fronts is the only way that we're going to be successful.

MR. MCGUINNESS: So I mean, here in the United Kingdom our threat level is severe which means an attack is highly likely and a number of European states with a high level of alert than that. So it's highly likely that we'll be confronting something. I'd reflect that on the journey from Paris through the recent Brussels attack, what you're seeing is that we are collectively reaching a point where we are beginning to understand more clearly the nature of the network that we're facing, beginning to identify and beginning to stop them on the game-line or even slightly short of it. And there is a reading of the Brussels attack, which was this was not planned in this way, this is not what they meant to do, they meant to do something else and they were stopped from doing it. In the stopping we had those attacks and I think we're going to see more of that and almost my personal indicator is to see how early we can stop, how early we can find and that's in the partnerships phase and it's what people like Gilles who's here with us, from the EU city coordinator is working on to challenge people, say, well, what are the kind of things we need to do to be able to do that, I think we're on that -- a good way down that journey.

MS. MONACO: Can I say one other thing --

MR. BARON: Please.

MS. MONACO: -- on this issue, which is to say, the other thing I think we've got to observe, and this is good news, and which is rare in our business, is that

resilience is also a part of the conversation. We talk about resilience in the form of our capabilities, but there is a resilience to certainly in the American people, I see it in the U.K., I see it in the communities in Paris and Brussels who go back to the shops, who go back to the restaurants, who go back on the tube, who go back on the metro the day after, I saw it in my hometown of Boston after the Boston marathon bombings. So the resilience that you see in our peoples when these attacks happen is also something that we've built up over the last several years, and that's also important and that's something that we should take pride in, we should reinforce, and we should talk about because that also is a part of our arsenal and it should continue to be.

MR. BARON: Well, it sounds to me there is -- we've reached an era of a lot of beginnings and perhaps good ones for security, the beginning of pushback of territory in Syria and Iraq, the beginning of understanding radicalization, the beginning of understanding the right responses to these attacks on cities that are coming, but at least in my sense it still feels like a beginning and like all of our security officials keep saying, there's a long way to go and we'll all be watching and I'm sure we'll be either back here next year or in Aspen this summer. Hopefully it's quite lovely. I hope you can make it. So thank you to our panel, please give them a round of applause.

(Applause)

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