EASTWEST INSTITUTE

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Lessons from the Abrahamic Faiths

An EWI Policy Research Report

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FOREWORD

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, many religious leaders, civil society organizations, and government agencies have increased their focus on countering extremist violence committed in the name of religion. This type of violence was prevalent long before the attacks of September 11. Almost all faiths have, or have had, their share of extremists prepared to commit violence in the name of religion.

In 2006, the EastWest Institute launched a project to counter violent extremism and radicalization. Given EWI's reputation as a "think-and-do" tank, this project has involved both an active research agenda to deepen our collective understanding of violent extremism and its root causes, as well as concrete recommendations to counter the tide of extremism. Through research, the convening of experts, and engaging spiritual leaders along with other members of civil society dedicated to countering violent extremism, EWI has laid the foundation for a unique space for dialogue, discussion, and learning.

The volume you are about to read is intended to increase our collective understanding of extremist recruitment and pathways to violence. It formulates recommendations for policymakers, civil society, faith leaders, and the media, all of whom have important roles to play in a truly global struggle against radical and extremist forces.

The volume is an analysis of extremism across the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) in selected communities in Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This is in no way a statement that any of the three religious traditions breeds extremism more than others. EWI sought simply to commission research into extremist violence perpetrated by members of the Jewish faith in Israel, the Christian faith in the United States, and the Muslim faith in the United Kingdom. This was not intended as an exhaustive investigation. The aim was to compare similarities across the movements, gather recommendations from those with experience in the field, and transmit these findings and recommendations to policymakers, leading persons of faith, members of civil society, and others engaged in countering violent extremism.

One of the greatest challenges involved in countering extremist movements that promote violence is defining what is meant by extremism. Ultimately, it is a relational concept and one that exists on a spectrum. Some of the world's most respected politicians have proudly claimed the title 'extremist' for their (peaceful) cause. Whether or not we categorize a person, group, or movement as extremist is entirely contingent on the entity against which they are being compared. We must further distinguish between those who represent a genuine security threat—that is, the people who are willing and able to carry out violence—and those whose orthodoxy may be at the far end of the religious spectrum. So long as the latter do not coerce others, they must be free to practice their religion.

Evaluating the threat from extremist groups espousing a politicized theology is more complicated. Often these groups may not espouse or support violence but do seek to impose their religion on a state's legislative and social regimes. It is certainly wrong to conflate such groups with terrorists. Yet it would be folly to exclude these groups from consideration as having no influence on violent extremists. EWI's research determined that, in some cases, these nonviolent but politicized extremist organizations prepare people ideologically to the point that they can be recruited to violence through the urge to translate belief into action.

The recommendations contained in this report are a result of our research, interviews with leading experts, various seminars, and a major conference held in New York City in June 2007. They are intended to be applicable for specific constituencies in a variety of countries. They strike a balance between advocating continuance of current policies for which the political will may be wanting and suggesting new policy approaches. The recommendations are designed to address internal, or homegrown, threats from actors living within a state's borders. Some of these actors may be inspired by external organizations, while others may be affiliated with internal militia-style organizations, but none should be considered soldiers, although many clearly view themselves as such. The question of "sleeper agents" who immigrate to a particular state specifically to commit violence there is beyond

the scope of this report. So, too, are those who, although fueled by extremist beliefs, strike from beyond a state's borders.

The main message that this report conveys is that civil society, religious leaders, and faith communities must do most of the heavy lifting in countering extremism. The role of government, at least in these three cases studied, is limited. The most important task for governments is to create the space necessary for local communities to respond to violent extremism undertaken in the name of their religion.

The primary research for this volume was undertaken by three prominent analysts on commission for EWI: Daniel Levitas (Christian extremism in the United States), Dina Kraft (Jewish extremism in Israel), and Thalia Tzanetti (Muslim extremism in the United Kingdom). They undertook extensive field work and interviewed leading experts. The major findings of this research are contained in chapters 1, 2, and 3. Chapter 4 is a synthesis of the findings from these three cases—drawing parallels and highlighting differences with the aim of teasing out the commonalities that might inform policy responses to extremism. It synthesizes not just the findings from the fieldwork but is based on additional research undertaken by EWI staff. It also incorporates the results of EWI's June 2007 conference on extremism. The conference also was one of the main sources for the recommendations that follow in chapter 5. This conference featured panelists and participants from diplomatic and security backgrounds, religious leaders, academics, and members of civil society. EWI would like to acknowledge the role of Stephen Tankel for his work compiling the three research reports and recommendations from the conference for chapters 4 and 5.

This EWI Policy Research Report on countering violent extremism is being released simultaneously with EWI's *8-Point Action Plan* for countering violent extremism. Both publications are available on the EWI website, www.ewi.info.

CONTENTS

1. VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG CHRISTIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Daniel Levitas

INTRODUCTION

The April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was the deadliest act of domestic terrorism on U.S. soil and focused the attention of law enforcement, policy makers, and the public on the long overlooked or ignored activities of American paramilitary groups. Although the actions of those convicted for the bombing—Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, and Michael Fortier—were not driven principally by theology, the political movements from which they drew their inspiration have long been associated with the beliefs of a movement that has taken the name "Christian Identity." It is characterized by ideas purporting to draw religious authority for anti-Semitism, white supremacism, and neo-Nazism.

Although most commonly linked with groups such as the nearly-defunct Aryan Nations, Christian Identity theology has a long and well-established lineage in the United States. According to Identity belief, white Anglo-Saxon Christians are the true descendants of the lost tribes of Israel to whom God's covenant belongs, Jews are the product of the sexual union of Eve and the Devil, and non-whites are subhuman renditions of the pure Aryan man that God created in Adam. Obsessed with maintaining white supremacy, exterminating Jews, and often viciously homophobic, advocates of Christian Identity have been responsible for scores of violent criminal acts over the past 25 years, including assault, theft, bank robbery, kidnapping, torture, bombing, arson, and murder. These crimes have been directed against minority groups, law enforcement, abortion clinics, newspaper offices, civil rights leaders, children, government workers, lesbians and gay men, and places of religious worship. Terrorist plots linked to Identity followers also have targeted public buildings and infrastructure.[1]

The founder of the American Nazi Party, George Lincoln Rockwell, embraced and promoted Identity theology, as did several of his loyal followers who joined their anti-Semitic theology to the entirely secular agenda of National Socialism. Although declining in influence, Christian Identity will remain a driving force behind violence directed against minority groups and the state for the foreseeable future.[2]

There are other sources of violent extremism in the United States that claim vindication from Christian theology. On April 26, 2007, an unexploded bomb approximately the size of a piece of carry-on luggage packed with two pounds of nails was discovered in the parking lot of the Austin Women's Health Center in Austin, Texas. After traffic was halted on a nearby interstate highway and an adjacent apartment complex was evacuated, authorities used a robot to disarm the device. In addition to 180 arson attacks and 52 bombings against reproductive health care facilities from 1982 to 2005, this incident marked the 94th attempted bombing or arson of a reproductive health clinic in the United States since 1977.[3]

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen understanding among policymakers, opinion leaders, and security experts about the role played by Christian Identity and other aspects of Christian theology to justify and inspire criminal acts and violence in the United States. Other religious ideologies associated with white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups also will be discussed.

The content of this chapter is based on diverse sources, including the author's expertise and published work since 1983, press accounts, academic works, and a recent series of targeted interviews with journalists, scholars, former law enforcement officers, and independent experts.

In conducting these interviews and consulting related materials, a series of key questions were discussed:

- What makes the message so attractive to those who join or support extremist movements or commit violent acts as a result of belief in a radical religious ideology?

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[*] *Note on quotations*: Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are derived from interviews conducted by the author. See list of interview subjects at the end of this chapter.

[1] For a recent summary of nearly 60 terrorist plots attempted or carried out by Christian Identity followers and related extremists from 1995 to 2005, see Blejwas et al., "Terror From the Right. Almost 60 terrorist plots uncovered in the U.S."

[2] Simonelli, *American Fuehrer,* 115-122.

[3] Margaret Moore (director of the National Center for Women and Policing, Fund for a Feminist Majority, Arlington, Virginia), interviewed by Daniel Levitas, April 10, 2007; "Bombings and Arsons on Reproductive Health Care Facilities 1982-2005," Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). See also: NAF Violence and Disruption Statistics. Incidents of Violence & Disruption against Abortion Providers in the U.S. & Canada, published at: http://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_statistics.pdf.

- How have these actors, or the movements that have supported them, used the language of religion to justify their violent actions?
- What are the tipping points that can push or pull someone toward committing violence?
- How are recruits into the violent wing of the movement initially identified and approached?
- Alternatively, for those who embrace a radical ideology in isolation, what steps do they take to identify and join a group? How public or covert and how structured or decentralized is this process?
- How much logistical support do violent actors receive from the movement or group?
- What key mistakes should be avoided when attempting to counter religiously based violence or terrorism?
- What are some of the key elements of a successful counter strategy to address religiously based violence and extremism?

In addition to addressing the above questions, this chapter aims to identify not only the core religious beliefs associated with Identity theology and anti-abortion violence, but also to outline the history and role of these beliefs as a unifying ideology among individuals, groups, and social movements committed to violence. Although not intended to be exhaustive, the chapter also examines key elements of the socio-economic and political environments in which these activists live, work, and organize in order to accurately present the context in which violent activity is likely to occur. Finally, the chapter discusses the strengths and weaknesses of past efforts to combat the recruitment and criminal activities of those involved and offers recommendations for successful counteraction strategies.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY THEOLOGY[4]

Although most commonly associated with groups such as the Aryan Nations, Christian Identity theology (also known in an earlier era as British or Anglo-Israelism) has a long-established lineage in the United States and is responsible, in part, for the publication of most widely circulated piece of anti-Semitic literature in the history of the United States: Henry Ford's "*The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*."[5] Ford's book was little more than a reconstituted, Americanized version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a notorious anti-Semitic work that appeared first in Europe in the early 20th century and purported to be the verbatim record of Jewish plots to accumulate wealth, destabilize aristocracy and authority, instigate war, control the press, promote economic chaos, undermine Christianity, destroy private property, and foment revolution so Jews could dominate the world.

Appearing first in 1920 as a series of 91 articles in Ford's newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, the text for most if not all of *The International Jew* was probably written by *Independent* editor William J. Cameron, a close associate of Ford who played a leading role promoting the cause of Anglo-Israelism in the 1930s. The articles were later compiled into four volumes published by Ford as *The International Jew*. The Ku Klux Klan reprinted its own bound edition.

Core theological elements of Identity

According to William Potter Gale—a retired Army lieutenant colonel, one of the leading proponents of Identity in the post-war era, and the founder, in 1971, of the right-wing paramilitary group, the Posse Comitatus—Adam and Eve were celestial beings of "pure seed" whose Aryan character was demonstrated by their fair complexion and ability to blush, a trait absent from "non-white races."[6] The racial prospects of the divine first family were shattered, however, when Eve was seduced by the devil and gave birth to Cain, who then murdered his brother, Abel, and became the ancestral father of the Jews. In this way, Gale's interpretation of the Book of Genesis contained a novel twist on the story of original sin. According to conventional Christian theology, the fall of woman and man occurred when the serpent convinced Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and Adam followed suit. While the causes and meaning of the fall have been debated for centuries, including its possible sexual connotations, Identity believers like Gale were the first to define original sin as race mixing between human beings and the Devil.[7]

In contrast to the pure offspring of Adam and Eve, Cain's children were "a pollution of the Holy and Celestial seed" who multiplied rapidly, "had no morals...and were evil."[8] This is commonly referred to as the two-seed theory of Christian Identity.[9] To

[4] For a summary overview of the history and theology of violent anti-abortion extremism in the United States, see Blanchard, "History of the Anti-abortion Movement," and Clarkson, "Anti-Abortion Extremists."

[5] For more on the provenance of Ford's work, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 407, n27.

[6] Convicted of conspiracy, attempting to interfere with federal tax laws, and mailing death threats to IRS agents, Gale was sentenced to three one-year concurrent terms in federal prison in 1987 but died before he began serving his sentence. For more on the Posse Comitatus and Gale's background, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door;* Ridgeway, *Blood in the Face*, 109-145; and Corcoran, *Bitter Harvest*. For more on Gale's theological beliefs, see Gale, *The Faith of Our Fathers*.

[7] Genz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 761-763.

[8] Gale, *The Faith of Our Fathers,* 12

[9] Some proponents of Identity reject elements of this two-seed theology and shy away from classifying Jews as direct descendants of the Devil. These believers favor a "single seed" doctrine that

prevent further race mixing between Satan's offspring and those who were pure, God instructed each generation of Adam and Eve's Aryan descendants to separate themselves from Cain's progeny. Satan, on the other hand, constantly lured them into the ranks of the "Enosh"—fallen (non-white and "kinky-haired") angels who had originated on other planets and been brought to Earth by Lucifer after he was cast out of God's Kingdom.[10] According to Gale—who probably derived these ideas from his religious mentor Wesley Swift, another prominent proponent of Identity—the arrival of the so-called Enosh predated the creation of Adam and Eve by hundreds of thousands of years.[11]

According to Gale's biblical genealogy, nearly all of Adam's descendants polluted their celestial bloodline by intermarrying with either the non-white Enosh or the satanic children of Cain. Enoch and Noah were the only exceptions—"righteous children" whose families renewed "the Celestial Family of Adam's seed"—but of Noah's three children, only Shem remained pure, as did his descendants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but not Jacob's twin brother Esau, who took satanic Canaanite wives. This, explained Gale, is why "many of Satan's children today appear on the surface to be of the Adamic race, while others have the appearance of the pre-Adamic peoples with whom they were mixed."[12] Gale's scheme of biblical racial classification translates thusly: The white, true Israelites of the Bible who mixed with the pre-Adamic Enosh transformed themselves into "non-white races," while the offspring of those who took Canaanite wives sometimes retained the appearance of Adamic peoples but nonetheless acquired the satanic character of their Jewish ancestors. The true Israelites called the Canaanites and their descendants "Edomites" or "Yehudi," which translates simply as "Jews" in Hebrew but which Gale claimed means "the cursed ones."[13] It was the Yehudi, Gale wrote:

> …whom Jesus revealed hundreds of years later as the children of Satan…He revealed their atheistic form of government as one we know today by the name of `Communism'. These were the `Yehudi' in the days of Jesus and they are the `Yehudi' today. They are still doing the works of their father the devil and it includes the efforts of Satan to mix the Holy seed of Adam's family in order to destroy them, as Satan has tried to do since Adam and Eve came out of the garden.[14]

If the non-white Enosh were barbaric primitives and descendants of Luciferian aliens, and the Jewish Edomites were malevolent agents of the Devil, the pure descendants of Adam were a master builder race. Echoing what he learned from others in the movement, including followers of the popular pseudoscience of pyramidology, Gale wrote that the descendants of Noah used "atom powered space vehicles" and "divine knowledge" to build the Great Pyramid of Giza.[15]

Viewed through the lens of Christian Identity, Gale saw all of history as a Manichaean struggle between white, divine, Anglo-Saxon Christians and satanic Jews. In Europe, Gale wrote, the devilish Yehudi were "destroyers from within" who gained control of the wealth of the nations they invaded.[16] America, in contrast, was a "New Jerusalem," divinely established to advance the interests of Aryan "Adamic Israelites" through its 13 colonies that were formed from the "thirteen tribes" [sic] of ancient Israel.

These religious and racial theories may seem bizarre, but stripped of their futuristic fantasies about atom powered space vehicles and devilish non-white aliens from outer space, Gale's core beliefs were derived not from fringe theories but from centuries of mainstream European and American theology, beginning with the notion that the covenant between God and the ancient Israelites belonged not to Jews but to Christians.

According to Leonard Zeskind, an independent scholar of right-wing social movements and an expert in Christian Identity theology:

> Most treatments of Identity…regard it as simply an ideological justification for a pre-existing course of activity. In fact…Identity believers have a specific notion of their God and what God demands of them. Identity contains all the essential ingredients of a complete theological system, including views of sin (falling away from God's will) and redemption (fulfilling God's will).[17]

Covenant Roots

The idea that the divine blessings bestowed by God upon the ancient Hebrews could be transferred to Christians dates back to the Middle Ages, when medieval historians—through legends, genealogies, myth, and error—traced the lineage of English kings directly to the biblical David and Shem.[18] In 1649, John

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instead asserts that Jews today are merely converts and racial imposters, but still satanically influenced. Functionally speaking, however, the ideology is no less racist or anti-Semitic.

[10] Gale, *The Faith of Our Fathers,* 5-7, 9 and 13.

[11] See Swift's sermon, "God, Man, Nations and the Races," delivered Jan. 27, 1963, in Hollywood, California. Swift, *God, Man, Nations and the Races,* 27.

[12] Gale, *The Faith of Our Fathers,* 19.

[13] Ibid., 24.

[14] Ibid., 25.

[15] Ibid., 17.

[16] Ibid., 35.

[17] Zeskind, *The "Christian Identity" Movement*, 48, n2.

[18] Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, 40-41. According to Poliakov, one subject of King Henry II noted: "[from Enoch] Noah was descended who alone was found worthy, with his wife and his children, to escape from the destruction of the world. His first-born, Shem was blessed by his father...Thus it was from Shem that the genealogy descended to Woden, whose authority was so great among his people that the fourth day of the week, with the Roman pagans

Sadler, a Puritan member of the British parliament and friend of Oliver Cromwell, issued what may have been the first Anglo-Israelite manifesto, *Rights to the Kingdom.* Sadler argued that Anglo-Saxon laws were derived from Talmudic ones and mused about whether the Druids were Canaanites.[19] Nearly 50 years later, the famous Puritan cleric and colonial scholar Cotton Mather donned a skullcap, called himself “rabbi," and wrote his magnum opus, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Christ's Deeds in America). According to Mather, the Puritans were engaged in a divine mission to establish the "New Israel" in what would later become America.[20] While the Puritans did not claim they were direct descendants of ancient Israelites, they believed that they—not the Jews—were God's chosen people.

White Christians have not been the only ones to appropriate the promise of the Covenant. The Rastafarian movement was founded, in part, on the idea that certain Africans and their descendants are directly related to the early Israelites. And while only a few African American religious sects have claimed that blacks are the true Jews, the Exodus story has long held a special meaning for black Christians whose theology has emphasized a symbolic—if not an actual—kinship with the ancient Hebrews and their struggle for liberation.

When presented pejoratively, the central tenets of Identity theology can be made to seem like crackpot notions, but for centuries many Christians have been attracted by the thought of seizing—or at least joining in—the Hebrews' presumed special relationship with God through the Covenant. Early advocates of British Israelism established their theology by building on the power of the Christians-as-Israelites idea. In 1787, Richard Brothers proclaimed himself a direct descendent of King David and announced in London that the people of Europe and Britain were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Eventually, Brothers' messianic, millenarian delusions landed him in an insane asylum.[21] Identity followers are naturally reluctant to acknowledge that Brothers contributed much to their faith, although they proudly cite the 1840 work of an Irishman, John Wilson, author of *Lectures on Our Israelitish Origin*.[22] And it was Edward Hine, one of Wilson's disciples, who in 1871 later published the best-selling *Forty-Seven Identifications of the British Nation with Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Founded Upon Five Hundred Scripture Proofs*." By the time Hine dedicated his book "to the (So-Called) British People," Anglo-Israelism had spread throughout Britain.

The point here is not that the Covenant-envy found in mainstream Christianity and its various sects is equivalent to that of Christian Identity. It is not. The Puritans may have seen themselves as inheritors of the biblical promise made to the Jews, but they did not see themselves as literal "replacements" for the Jewish people, even if they were confident that their theology had superseded Judaism. Besides, theories of racial origins were too poorly developed at the end of the 17th century to be of much interest to the Puritans. It was much easier to simply regard the Jews as they had been for centuries—as a wayward people who had killed Jesus Christ and/or rejected the promise of salvation and were destined for eternal damnation.

In contrast to the Puritans and others, Identity believers not only claimed the Covenant for themselves, but they explicitly usurped the actual group/ethnic identity of Jews. Having done so, they then felt compelled to address the question, "Who, then, are those claiming to be Jews?" By the late 19th century, the answer was plain enough: racial and satanic imposters. The development and refinement of this idea was made possible by the contemporaneous emergence of a large body of scholarly and scientific thought that advanced the notion of racial classification and white Anglo Saxon, Christian, and "Aryan" superiority.

POPULAR ARCHETYPES AND CONVENTIONAL PREJUDICES

If the belief that non-Jews might be heirs to the Covenant has been attractive to some far right radicals and mainstream Christians alike, so, too is the notion that Jews are confederates of the Devil and satanic killers of Christ. To say, as Bill Gale did, that Jews were the direct descendants of Satan was merely a more explicit articulation of a concept that was popularized throughout Christian Europe for centuries: the idea that Jews, in spurning Jesus Christ as the messiah or, in fact, killing him outright and rejecting Christian scripture, must certainly have been inspired or controlled by the Devil.

As recently as 2002, 65 million adult Americans (37 percent of those polled) believed that Jews were responsible for killing Jesus Christ. In the face of the tremendous progress made since Vatican II and the publication of *Nostra Aetate*, which repudiated the millennia-old Christian teaching that Jews were collectively responsible for the killing of Christ, this is a

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called the day of Mercury, was dedicated to him, a custom which the English follow to this day."

[19] See, *Rights of the Kingdom; or Customs of our Ancestors*, p. 336. "How Old is Anglo-Saxon Truth?" *The Anglo-Saxon World,* p. 39, undated. For more on British "Early Myths of Origin," and Sadler, see also, Poliakov (1971), pp. 37-53.

[20] According to Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a noted authority on Judaism and Jewish history, Mather wrote his book in "biblical, mythic accents," arguing that the early Puritans had left Europe "not simply to escape persecution. They had come on a messianic journey to bring about the Second Coming of Christ." See Hertzberg, *The Jews in America,* 40, and Genz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 667.

[21] Roy, *Apostles of Discord*, 6.

[22] C.F. Parker, B.A., "A Short History of the Modern Israel-Identity Movement: I.-Early Traces of the Teaching," *The National Message*, February 14, 1948, 57.

significant number. Another 16 percent of those polled said they did not know who was responsible or refused to answer. [23]

When discussing the religious appeal of Christian Identity, it is therefore impossible to divorce the extreme racism and anti-Semitism of the theology from the significant reservoir of racial and religious prejudice that exists in American society. In particular, religious antipathy goes well beyond the longstanding archetype that Jews are confederates of the Devil: About 36 million Americans believe that Jews care only about themselves, 48 million believe Jews control the media, and 58 million believe Jews have too much influence on Wall Street. About 6 million Americans believe the Holocaust did not occur, and another 8 million are not sure or don't know that the Holocaust happened.[24] Measured another way, fully 35 million Americans hold hard-core anti-Semitic beliefs, concurring with six or more anti-Semitic stereotypes.[25]

This leads to the reasonable conclusion that a certain population of people will undeniably find the Christian Identity message attractive *because of* its explicitly anti-Semitic message, not in spite of it.

A similar dynamic exists concerning the racist beliefs associated with Christian Identity. While racial attitudes in the United States have undergone considerable positive change in recent decades, a significant minority still admits to beliefs that would indicate a susceptibility to the racist rhetoric of Identity theology. For example, while the number of whites expressing negative views toward interracial marriage dropped from 67 percent in 1990, fully 38 percent of those polled in 2000 still expressed opposition to a family member marrying someone who was black. More significantly, fully 12 percent of whites believe that interracial marriage should be outlawed.[26] And when asked whether African Americans have worse jobs, income, and housing than whites because of "less in-born ability to learn," 12 percent of whites agreed, in contrast to just 4 percent of blacks.[27]

IDENTITY THEOLOGY AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT

A dozen years before the Oklahoma City bombing, a group of Identity believers had conspired to blow up the Murrah building, though their plans never materialized. One man at the center of the plot was Richard Wayne Snell, an Identity adherent who robbed pawnshops because he assumed the owners were Jewish and then turned over the proceeds to The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord (CSA), a paramilitary compound in northern Arkansas. According to James Ellison, the leader of the Aryan encampment and an Identity believer, Snell had been "sent by God to help the CSA by stealing." During the course of these activities in 1983, Snell killed a pawnshop owner and the following year he shot and killed a black Arkansas State Trooper, Louis Bryant, during a routine traffic stop. Sentenced to life without parole for the Bryant murder, Snell received the death penalty for shooting the pawnbroker and was executed on the night of April 19, 1995, the same day as the Oklahoma City bombing. "Today is a very significant day," Snell reportedly had told one of his guards earlier.[28]

In carrying out the Murrah bombing, McVeigh and Nichols were principally motivated by the belief that the federal government was at war with its own citizens and they were justified to respond in kind. They took several events as evidence for this belief: the deaths two years earlier of scores of Branch Davidians at Waco; the lethal 1992 standoff between federal agents and the family of Randy and Vicki Weaver (both Christian Identity believers) in remote Boundary County, Idaho; and the passage of federal gun control legislation in 1993 and 1994.

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[23] The question asked was "Do you agree or disagree that the Jews were primarily responsible for the killing of Jesus Christ?" The poll was conducted, May 3-7, 2002, by International Communications Research (ICR), a leading public opinion research organization based in Media, Pennsylvania. A total of 1,013 interviews were conducted and within each household reached, one adult was randomly selected. Sampling error for total sample percentage estimates close to 50% is ± 3.1 percentage points. See. Tobin and Groeneman, *Anti-Semitic Beliefs in the United States*.

[24] Ibid.

[25] See: "American Attitudes Towards Jews in America. An Anti-Defamation League Survey of 1,600 Americans conducted by the Marttila Communications Group, March 2005," published at: http://www.adl.org/anti_semitism/Anti_Semitic_Attitudes_files/frame.htm. It is worth noting that in order to be classified as "most anti-Semitic," poll respondents must respond affirmatively to six or more of 11 statements. Individuals who respond to between two and as many as five statements are judged "neither prejudiced nor unprejudiced." The statements presented are: 1. Jews stick together more than other Americans ; 2. Jews always like to be at the head of things; 3. Jews are more loyal to Israel than America; 4. Jews have too much power in the U.S. today; 5. Jews have too much control and influence on Wall Street; 6. Jews have too much power in the business world; 7. Jews have a lot of irritating faults; 8. Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want; 9. Jewish business people are so shrewd that others don't have a fair chance at competition; 10. Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind; 11. Jews are (not) just as honest as other business people. For more on measuring anti-Semitism, see: Daniel Levitas, "Understanding the Unexpected" and "Roots of the Jewish Power Myth." In *Reform Judaism,* 32, 1 (2003).

[26] This data is consistent with a 2001 Harris Interactive poll that found that 34 percent of Americans would not approve of intermarriage with an African American. Opposition to intermarriage with other groups measured as follows: Asian American (24%), Hispanic (21%), and Jews (16%). See: http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=285.

[27] This chapter does not permit a detailed examination of these attitudes and beliefs, but for a thorough treatment of the subject, see Bobo, et al., *Racial Attitudes in America.*

[28] For a longer discussion of Snell, his early activities, and his execution on the day of the Oklahoma City bombing, including thorough source notes, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 5-7, and Serrano, *One of Ours*, 269-270.

Like their kindred spirits in the American militia movement, McVeigh and Nichols saw these events as a prelude to the imminent invasion of the United States by a shadowy "New World Order," which already had captured the levers of power in Washington, D.C. As fanciful as these theories might appear, they curried favor in some places rather close to the mainstream, including, ironically, the Oklahoma state legislature, which passed a resolution denouncing the "New World Order" and the United Nations only slightly less than a year before the Oklahoma City bombing. Among other things, the non-binding pronouncement called on Congress to "Cease any support for the establishment of a `new world order' or to any form of global government." The events at Waco and Ruby Ridge were compelling reasons enough for McVeigh and Nichols, but the Snell execution, as well as the earlier Christian Identity-inspired plot that targeted the Murrah building, still should not be ruled out as entirely irrelevant to what occurred on April 19, 1995.

Setting aside speculation about Oklahoma City, there is no doubt about the critical role played by Identity theology in both motivating and justifying Snell's actions a dozen years earlier, as well as a host of more spectacular crimes committed by dozens of men and women who inhabited the same revolutionary world of racially and theologically inspired violence. Not only did Snell murder and steal, but turning over the proceeds of his crimes helped to sustain Ellison's compound. Among those churned out of Ellison's compound were men like Randall Radar, an early disciple of Ellison's who oversaw "military tactics" for the CSA before leaving the group to direct weapons training for the Aryan insurgent group, the Order. Snell was also an associate of Gordon Kahl, discussed below.[29]

AGRICULTURAL CRISIS AND THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Although most media accounts generally referred to Kahl in popular shorthand as a "tax protestor," the North Dakota farmer, part-time mechanic, and oil roughneck had embraced Identity theology as early as the 1950s. A decorated World War II veteran, Kahl renounced the income tax in 1967 and joined the right-wing Posse Comitatus six years later. Latin for "Power of the County," the Posse was founded in 1971 by William Potter Gale, who urged his followers to resist the income tax, attack minorities, and wage war against the government, which he believed was in the thralls of an international Jewish conspiracy. [30]

Kahl's activities soon got him into trouble with the law and he was convicted of federal tax evasion in 1977. After being released from prison in 1979 (after serving eight months of a one-year sentence), Kahl refused to submit monthly probation reports. Wanted on a minor warrant for his misdemeanor probation violation, Kahl shot and killed two federal marshals and wounded three other lawmen in 1983, when Ken Muir, U.S. Marshal for North Dakota, attempted to arrest Kahl in the company of his wife, son, and several right-wing compatriots outside Medina, North Dakota. It was a significant miscalculation by federal authorities and set the stage for a number of similar encounters between right-wing militants who had committed only "paper crimes" such as tax evasion but who vowed never to be taken alive should law enforcement agents attempt to arrest them.

After the Medina shootout, Kahl vanished into the Christian Identity underground for months, until a $25,000 government reward produced information about his whereabouts in northern Arkansas. The fact that federal authorities had absolutely no idea where to find him before they were tipped off underscores the fact that, despite considerable paramilitary activity throughout the Midwest in the five years leading up to the deadly shootout, law enforcement had exceptionally poor intelligence on the Christian Identity movement and its neo-Nazi allies.[31]

A similar dynamic was in evidence more than a decade later when the Murrah building collapsed into rubble and intelligence experts instantly pronounced the crime the work of "Middle Eastern terrorists," while an alert Oklahoma highway patrolmen pulled McVeigh over for driving his car without a license plate. As former FBI agent Michael German observed in an interview, had McVeigh not been serendipitously apprehended he, like Kahl, may well have had considerable success evading the authorities.

RACIAL RESENTMENT AND THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

The violence and social movements that spurred Kahl, McVeigh, and their contemporaries did not emerge from a vacuum. Since its founding in 1971, the Posse Comitatus had grown and helped spread Christian Identity theology by appealing to diverse sectors of the population: tax resisters, farmers, and others reacting to high interest rates and other aspects of severe economic recession; Second Amendment absolutists who protested early gun control efforts following the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy; and rural property owners chafing under local land use planning

[29] For more on Ellison, the CSA, and the relationship between the group's religious beliefs, its criminal activities, and the activities of the Order, see Flynn and Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood*.

[30] For more on the Posse Comitatus and the background of William Potter Gale and Gordon Kahl, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, Ridgeway Ridgeway, *Blood in the Face*, 109-145, and Corcoran, *Bitter Harvest*.

[31] For a thorough treatment of Kahl's background and criminal activities, including the deadly 1983 shootout and the four month manhunt to apprehend him, as well as his relationship to Snell, see Corcoran, *Bitter Harvest*, and Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 192-200, 217-222.

restrictions and federal environmental regulations that began to be imposed in the 1970s.

Christian Identity theology advanced an explicitly racist set of beliefs but its greatest popularity was not in the South, which had traditionally been a stronghold for groups like the Ku Klux Klan, but in the Great Plains and Mountain West, where rural America was undergoing the most severe economic dislocation since the Great Depression. From 1970 to 1984, due to a complex combination of factors including low farm prices, skyrocketing interest rates, and rising production costs, total farm debt had increased more than tenfold, from $20 billion to more than $220 billion, driving fully one-third of family farms into insolvency. Banks failed, small businesses closed, and massive unemployment swept agriculture-related industries.

While fear of personal financial failure and the economic unraveling of rural communities certainly drove thousands of farmers and other rural residents into the arms of a right-wing social movement espousing radical religious and anti-government beliefs, there were other dynamics at work beyond simple economic frustration.

More than a decade earlier, beginning with the 1954 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka mandating desegregation and continuing with the upheaval of the Civil Rights Movement and the massive legal and political reforms that brought about an end to the Jim Crow era, a significant segment of America's white population still refused to adjust to the new reality. This was not a majority of Americans, to be sure, but a significant plurality still adhered to the old racial order while others had come to perceive that their hard-earned dollars would now be redistributed to undeserving blacks through welfare and social programs like the War on Poverty. The riots that rocked Los Angeles, Detroit, Newark, and other major U.S. cities in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King's 1968 assassination did little to assuage their anxieties.

"The federal government has become the enemy of the useful members of our society," wrote Martin Larson, a member of the editorial board of *American Mercury* magazine, who also denounced the "Negro birthrate" and asserted that the tax burden posed by blacks "unquestionably doomed [the] American way of life."[32] According to Larson, the federal government had "degenerated into a vast system of extortion and bribery; and were it not for the fact that it transfers untold billions of hard-earned money taken by force from producers and given to many millions of non-producers and parasites, very few of the present members of Congress would or could be reelected."

Such views were firmly grounded in the ideological terrain of middle American radicalism, a phenomenon first identified by the late sociologist Donald Warren in his 1976 book, *The Radical Center: Middle Americans and the Politics of Alienation*.[33]

In addition to white resentment, the growth of right-wing paramilitary groups and organizations like the Posse Comitatus throughout the 1970s was also fueled by the delegitimization of government itself—a phenomenon that owed much to the combined failures of Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, and the rise of the counterculture movement, all of which significantly eroded middle-class confidence in government and respect for political institutions.

Identification of these trends is critical to understanding not just the context in which Christian Identity adherents made their first violent marks on the U.S. political landscape in the early 1980s, but also to identifying why it is that Identity's theological message is appealing in the first place.

According to Leonard Zeskind, the religious themes of Identity are attractive fundamentally because they are invoked in defense of an idealized *civilization*. "Theology is employed in defense of a notion of the way things *should* be and God is seen as a defender of that particular civilization."

Of course, the tone and pitch of individual proselytizers will vary. Zeskind maintains that men like Identity "Pastor" James Wickstrom—the self-appointed "Director of Counter Insurgency" for the Posse Comitatus from Wisconsin, who authored a slim, 14-page pamphlet, *The American Farmer: Twentieth-Century Slave*, in 1978—calibrated their message of imminent Armageddon to appeal to financially distressed farmers, many of who saw themselves as economically, culturally, and racially *dispossessed*, and thus made particularly good recruits for Wickstrom's angry brand of racist and anti-Semitic religious rhetoric. [34]

This contrasts significantly with the 1960s, when the racial violence perpetrated by whites was motivated more by an intense desire to *preserve* the status quo of Jim Crow (both North and South) and its associated privileges. Since the 1970s, the white supremacist

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[32] Martin A. Larson, "The Crisis of Race and Culture." *American Mercury* 486 (1967), 7, 11. The *Mercury*, a once prestigious publication, had been founded by the American journalist and critic H.L. Menken in 1924. By the 1950s, its ownership had changed and its pages were filled with hard-core anti-Semitic and racist diatribes. In 1964, it still had 27,000 subscribers.

[33] Larson, *The Continuing Tax Rebellion*, xi. For more on the ideological and rhetorical roots of the tax protest movement, including its relationship to the Posse Comitatus and Identity theology, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 97-112.

[34] Convicted in 1984 of impersonating a public official for his role as the self-appointed clerk and judge of a bogus Posse-created township in Shawano County, Wisconsin, Wickstrom was sentenced to the maximum term: a year and a half in jail. Despite his significant notoriety and his status as a convicted criminal, Wickstrom polled 7,721 votes running for governor of Wisconsin the following year.

movement and its Christian Identity adherents have seen things differently, according to Zeskind: "If one sees the world through the lens of dispossession, then the goal of social protest and violence will be to *overturn* the status quo and the violence will be different and will mean different things. The ideology of the movement determines the nature not just of the violence, but who the victims will be."

LEADERLESS RESISTANCE

Although the general concept of "leaderless resistance" has been advocated by numerous guerilla and insurgent movements, the idea was first advanced among the ranks of U.S. neo-Nazis in 1984. The year before, a former Texas Klansmen, Louis Beam, laid the groundwork for his approach by publishing a "point system" that favored the assassination of elected officials, judges, law enforcement agents, civil rights activists, and other political targets over everyday members of minority groups who were usually regarded as the most opportunistic targets. Beam's instructions appeared in *Essays of a Klansmen*, a hundred-page booklet that he published from the Hayden Lake, Idaho, headquarters of the Aryan Nations and disseminated widely to Identity believers and others across the radical right.[35]

One highlight of the document was a chart Beam developed to illustrate this point system, which Beam presented to his peers at a conference in Hayden Lake in 1984, along with the following advice: "I'm not telling you to go out and commit acts of terrorism, but…you need to decide whether you want to act on your own or whether you prefer to recruit a few people to work with you. It is best to work alone, but small groups of up to five individuals can be effective."[36] The same year, Beam explicitly advanced the concept of "leaderless resistance" in the *Inter-Klan Newsletter and Survival Alert*, a publication that he produced jointly with former Michigan Klan leader Robert Miles that was mailed to probably several thousand subscribers. It was an elementary strategy for subversive violence and differed little from what one finds in any other terror manual that advocates the use of small cells instead of larger organization in order to operate effectively and achieve greater operational security. According to Beam:

"The orthodox scheme of organization is diagrammatically represented by the pyramid, with the mass at the bottom and leader at the top…In the "pyramid" type of organization, an infiltrator can destroy anything which is beneath him…In order to get around the obvious problem…the cell system developed…in [which] numerous cells are created which operate completely isolated from each other…but are orchestrated together by "headquarters." The entire purpose of Leaderless Resistance is to defeat state tyranny."[37]

In its simplest form, the goal of leaderless resistance was to ensure that activists committed to criminal activity organized themselves into small cells capable of independent, autonomous action in order to minimize the likelihood of infiltration by law enforcement, limit potential liability to the larger group if their activities were exposed, and ensure greater operational effectiveness.

THE ORDER

Although sometimes popularly cited as a real-world example of leaderless resistance, another extremist group—the Order—was much too large an operation to qualify for Beam's designation. Nevertheless, it is useful to examine its activities in the context of addressing the role played by Christian Identity theology and related racist and political ideologies in motivating violence.

The formation of the Order was inspired by the racist novel *The Turner Diaries* and the group took its name after the secret inner circle of neo-Nazi revolutionaries described in the book. Known also as "Brüders Schweigen" or "the Silent Brotherhood," the real-life Order perpetrated a series of violent crimes across the Pacific Northwest in 1983 and 1984 in pursuit of a failed scheme to incite a race war, overthrow the government, and/or ultimately establish a separate all-white nation within the United States.[38] Some of its members were followers of Christian Identity, while others were Odinists, atheists, or mainstream Christians.

Operating under the leadership of Robert Jay "Bob" Matthews, the Pacific Northwest leader of the neo-Nazi group the National Alliance, the Order robbed banks, counterfeited money, and murdered prominent critics—including Denver radio talk show host Alan Berg—and fellow members. The month after gunning down Berg in the driveway of his home in June 1984, Matthews and his group netted $3.6 million in an

[35] A former Klan leader from Texas, Beam was the founder of the "Texas Emergency Reserve," a violent private militia that terrorized Vietnamese-American fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico in the late 1970s and early 1980s until the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, won an injunction against the group, charging it had become a paramilitary organization with the "command structure, training, and discipline so as to function as a combat or combat support unit." See*, Vietnamese Fishermen's Association v. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan,* 543 F.Supp. 198, 210 (S.D. Tex. 1982).

[36] Notes of Special Agent Kelly P. Hemmert, FBI, July 19, 1984, pp. 1, 3, as cited in Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 292-293.

[37] Leaderless Resistance and Beam's role in promoting it among Identity followers and other white supremacists has been widely discussed by experts and in the popular press. For a brief description, see Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 292-294.

[38] For a definitive account of the life of Robert Matthews and his activities, including the role of *The Turner Diaries* in inspiring the Order, see Flynn and Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood*.

armored car heist outside Ukiah, California. On December 8, 1984, federal agents tracked Matthews to a safe house near Seattle, where he was killed after a 36-hour gun battle.

A total of 24 members of the group were indicted on racketeering charges by a federal grand jury in Seattle on April 12, 1985, for bank robbery, counterfeiting, and murder. Of the 24, ten were convicted in December 1985, 13 pleaded guilty, and the last defendant, David Tate, was subsequently convicted of killing a Missouri State Trooper and is serving a life sentence for that crime.

The group is often described as an "offshoot" of the Idaho-based Aryan Nations, but in fact it drew its members from across a wide swath of paramilitary groups**.** One of its leaders was David Lane, a former Colorado Klansmen who attended meetings hosted by "Pastor" Pete Peters, an Identity minister based in LaPorte, Colorado. Others included men like Randall Radar the former head of "military tactics" for Jim Ellison's CSA and an Identity believer.

Lane, who has since adopted Odinism[39] as his religion and is currently serving a 190-year prison sentence for, among other things, his role in the murder of Alan Berg, is the author of the oft-quoted "14 words": "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." Other high-ranking members of the Order such as Richard Scutari, now serving a 60-year sentence, have reflected on the shortcomings of their criminal efforts and urged their colleagues to operate in a more effective clandestine manner. In an open letter sent to a 1986 meeting of the Aryan Nations, he urged others to "learn from our mistakes, succeed where we failed. The Brüders Schweigen has shown you the way."

LONE WOLF ATTACKS

While *The Turner Diaries* helped inspire the actions of the Order and others, including Timothy McVeigh, the book's author also sought to instigate attacks by individuals, reasoning that they would be far more difficult to anticipate or interdict. In 1989, William Pierce authored *Hunter*, a novel that chronicles the fictional homicidal exploits of Oscar Yeager, a fictional lead character who makes a career out of murdering interracial couples, Jews, non-whites, and other minorities.[40] Pierce dedicated the book to the serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin, whom he praises as "the Lone Hunter, who saw his duty as a White man and did what a responsible son of his race must do, to the best of his ability and without regard for the personal consequences [sic]." Beginning in 1979, Franklin went on a killing spree, targeting black men, interracial couples, and white women he suspected of having sex with blacks. In addition to bombing Jewish synagogues, Franklin seriously wounded National Urban League president Vernon Jordan in 1980. Two years earlier he shot and paralyzed magazine publisher Larry Flynt.

If the Order remains a poor example of the proper execution of leaderless resistance, the crimes of confessed Olympic Park bomber Eric Robert Rudolph can certainly be said to more closely follow the lone wolf approach. Although it is possible that others may have been involved, no one besides Rudolph has ever been named in connection with his attacks, which have often been extolled by other extremists.

In addition to pleading guilty in April 2005 to the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, Rudolph was responsible for bombing abortion and family planning clinics in Birmingham, Alabama, and the Atlanta suburb of Sandy Springs. Rudolph also bombed the Otherside Lounge, a gay and lesbian nightclub in Atlanta in 1997, injuring five. A companion bomb also was found outside the club. The Olympic Park bombing killed a woman and injured more than 100 onlookers. The clinic bombings resulted in one death and several injuries, including a secondary device targeting law enforcement personnel that injured six people, three of them federal agents. Rudolph was on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List for almost five years before being apprehended by chance in May 2003 in North Carolina.

While some reports have linked Rudolph to Identity beliefs, he has publicly denied the charge, though he readily admits to deep religious inspiration for his acts of violence. In an Internet-published postscript to a lengthy 11-page confession distributed by his lawyers in April 2005, Rudolph had this to say about his association with Identity:

"I am not now nor have I ever been an Identity believing Christian. I was born a Catholic, and with forgiveness I hope to die one. It is true that for one six month period in 1984 I did live near and attend a church that holds to the Identity doctrine. The purpose for my prolonged stay at this church was because I met a wonderful young lady whose father attended the church. We became engaged for that short time, but when the relationship ended, I left the church and I do not believe I have talked to an Identity believer since that period in the early 1980's.

While attending this church I never bought into the convoluted Identity argument of racial determinism. I believe that human beings are spirit and ideas and the important conflicts in this world, and probably the next, are about ideas, not flesh. For example I oppose the idea, philosophy and the spirit behind the horror of

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[39] Odinism is a neo-pagan religion with roots in Scandinavia and northern Europe whose followers worship a pantheon of Norse gods. While not all Odinists are affiliated with right-wing or neo-Nazi groups, many participants in the white supremacist movement in the United States, Canada, and Europe have embraced Odinism over Christianity and Christian Identity in the past two decades.

[40] Pierce, *Hunter*.

abortion and will accept as my comrade any man or woman of whatever race who joins me in this fight. Racial determinism is a day before yesterday idea, a product of 19th century Darwinism, and its obsession with biological determinism. We are not our bodies, but rather we are spirits on a temporary sojourn in the world of flesh."[41]

Whatever the state of Rudolph's current beliefs, it also is true that his mother, Patricia Rudolph, had flirted with Christian Identity and filled her home with a wide range of movement literature, including white supremacist and neo-Nazi tracts—some of which may have inspired a ninth grade essay reportedly written by Eric Rudolph denying the Holocaust.

Rudolph also claimed affiliation with anti-abortion group The Army of God, a biblically-inspired underground network of anti-abortion extremists whose supporters advocate the "justifiable homicide" of abortion clinic doctors and others. Although Rudolph has not admitted to sending them, two letters received by investigators and a television station claimed the Sandy Springs and Otherside Lounge bombings were "carried out by units of the Army of God."

Other lone wolf attacks carried out by Identity believers and related white supremacists are far too numerous to list here, but are discussed widely in the literature enumerating the criminal activity associated with the neo-Nazi movement.

THE PHINEHAS PRIESTHOOD

Like their corollaries in the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement, many Christian Identity adherents place great significance on the story of Phinehas, which appears in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 25. According to the Hebrew Bible, while wandering in the desert, unfaithful Israelite leaders took up the forbidden practice of Baal-worship and also had sexual relations with women of neighboring tribes. This prompted God's wrath and a plague. In order to expiate themselves from these sins, God commanded Moses to execute the apostate leaders, but before he could carry out the command, Phinehas—a descendant of Hebrew priestly lineage—grabbed a spear and executed a prominent Israelite, Zimri, whom Phinehas had spied engaging in sex with a Midianite woman, Cozbi. The plague against Israel was lifted and Phinehas received high praise for his actions.

Some extremists advocate the concept of a modern day "Phinehas Priesthood" that would act similarly to punish race-mixing and other transgressions, including homosexuality, abortion, and usury. Advocates include men like Richard Kelly Hoskins (author of "*Vigilantes of Christendom: The Story of the Phineas Priesthood*"), who asserts that Phinehas was justified in killing Zimri and Cozbi because they were engaged in "inter-racial sex," and Byron DeLa Beckwith, the convicted murderer of Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers in 1963. DeLa Beckwith was a self-proclaimed Identity adherent and has been hailed by white supremacists as a "member" of the Phinehas Priesthood. As articulated by "Pastor" Pete Peters, a proponent of Identity theology since the late 1970s, "a bigot and a racist is another great hero of the Bible…His name was Phinehas a man who understood God's law on interracial marriage and integration."[42]

According to Zeskind, while it is important to note that many Identity adherents see Phinehas as a hero and seek to emulate his actions—as do many advocates of violence against abortion clinics—rabbinical commentaries on the Phinehas text have not necessarily treated him kindly, and instead, explicitly noted that Phinehas set a dangerous precedent by engaging in vigilantism.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As previously noted, the content of this chapter is based on diverse sources, including interviews with journalists, scholars, former law enforcement officers, and independent experts. The following findings are based on interviews conducted with Michael German, Mark Potok, and Leonard Zeskind, as well as the author's research and independent expertise. Each of the interviewees was asked a series of key questions, the answers to which are presented below.

What makes the message so attractive to those who join or support extremist movements or commit violent acts as a result of belief in a radical religious ideology?

While the religious content of Christian Identity is important, one of the most attractive aspects of what is communicated, according to Zeskind, is the use of theology in support of a particular idea of civilization. In this way, theology is invoked in defense of the way things *should* be, religious beliefs are used to justify the fight for a better world, and God is seen as a defender of a set of idealized beliefs about how society should be organized.

As German points out, the religious nature of the message also conveys a sense of personal obligation and responsibility to act: "Essentially it says, `We've educated you, you've accepted this and now you have to take action." The message is compelling because it presents an opportunity for genuine obedience to God's commands.

"The notion that men must be obedient to a `higher law'—to God's law, in particular—is accepted without question throughout the violent wing of the movement. Claiming that their actions are a form of obedience to

[41] See http://www.armyofgod.com/EricRudolphStatement.html.

[42] Peters, *The Bible Handbook*, 4-5.

God absolves those who commit violence of personal responsibility," says Blanchard.

Advocates of anti-abortion violence derive similar comfort from the fact that the religious message not only justifies what they are doing, but "adds an element of moral redemption," explains Moore. "Oftentimes the people who commit violence might not otherwise be all that successful in other things in life, but by taking action with religious justification they feel they are redeeming their lives and giving them value."

Thomas highlights the utilitarian justification for violence that the religious message provides:

"These people were against abortion, but their movement had failed in the courts. Roe v. Wade was the law of the land and even the massive clinic blockades weren't effective. Frustrated by their inability to end abortion, they found Bible verses that would justify their actions. And to them, eliminating the clinics or the doctors—which they considered the `weak links' in the abortion chain—was the only option left."

Potok notes that aspects of the message put forth by Christian Identity believers and others similarly situated offer an easy explanation of the world. "When you're in a situation where you have other difficulties, it is a far easier to blame another group rather than take responsibility for one's individual difficulties or shortcomings, especially if you can point to the Bible and say that it gives you the reason." Though simplistic, the explanations are not necessarily devoid of complexity, he notes. "Americans are peculiarly susceptible to conspiracy theories and many of the religious beliefs of those who commit violence are conspiratorial in nature. As such, they can be appealing to people who may not necessarily be critical thinkers."

Both Christian Identity adherents and anti-abortion militants are likely to see the world in rigidly black and white terms. "To them, it is obvious what is evil and what is not evil," says Blanchard. However, where Identity followers regard Jews as the literal children of the Devil, abortion opponents see themselves as Bible-believing Christians engaged in a Manichean struggle with the *forces* of evil, not the flesh-and-blood agents of Satan himself. As a practical matter, however, both points of view can readily lead proponents to commit homicidal violence.

"Extremists in the movement see abortion as a stand-in for satanic archetypes and are most likely to perceive events as if they were a grand morality play," says Blanchard. "This is why the religious message usually appeals to people who are strongly fundamentalist, including those Catholics who are fundamentalist in accordance with their own tradition."

Finally, despite the attractiveness of the religious message, German notes that individuals genuinely committed to violent action often recognize that hyper-religiosity can compromise their operational effectiveness, both on an individual level and in terms of their ability to collaborate with others who share their goals, but not necessarily their particular beliefs. As a result, radical religious ideology does not always play as visible a role in the context of operational activities as one might think.

This was true within the Order, a highly effective criminal enterprise launched by white supremacists that included Christian Identity believers, Odinists, atheists, and those with more mainstream Christian beliefs. Additionally, notes German, certain terrorist groups whose members are followers of Islam will be perfectly willing to compromise their ideology and religious beliefs in order to collaborate operationally with Christian Identity followers and other white supremacists and vice versa. "This is not a matter of time; it already has been attempted," says German.

For opponents of abortion, this same tendency toward operational efficiency is evident in the collaboration between Catholic and Protestant extremists who have set aside huge doctrinal disagreements in favor of collaboration to support violent acts against clinics and health care providers.

Saporta, Lau, and Thomas all note that the religious message of abortion opponents also is attractive to many activists because it reinforces their preference for traditional gender roles where men are dominant. "The protesters…may say their beliefs come from biblical inspiration, but I think they're motivated more by anger and attitudes towards women and a feeling that they don't want to let go of their place in the world… [and] they find it convenient to employ theology to support their cause," says Saporta.

How have these actors, or the movements that have supported them, used the language of religion to justify their violent actions?

The core element of Christian Identity doctrine that is used to justify racist and anti-Semitic violence is the belief that modern day Jews are the actual descendants of Devil and the notion that blacks and other non-whites are literally sub-human. According to these beliefs, Jews are not seen simply as an evil or satanic force but the Devil incarnate, thus heightening the imperative to act violently against them.

The theology of Christian Identity thereby creates a reservoir of shared beliefs and values that translates into support for those who do commit violence. As Zeskind explains, some individuals emerge from this religious framework to urge violence and command it, even if they do not commit it themselves. And then there are those few who step forward and say "I believe. I will do." Identity theology also lowers the barrier between what is normally regarded as violence and what true believers perceive as normative ideas

and behavior, thereby making it easier for them to commit violence.

According to Zeskind, Identity theology offers believers an explanation for what they see in the world around them and how they feel in relationship to it. As such, it is less a rationale for violence than an explanation for the totality of what they experience. In tracing the roots of contemporary Identity belief to British Israelism, Zeskind emphasizes the importance of the following dichotomy: In its original and early form, and throughout much of the 19th and early 20th century, British Israelism was an ideology of domination and superiority that helped explain *why* the British Empire was so successful. After all, as the inheritors of the biblical promise of the Covenant, white Anglo Saxons were naturally "anointed" to rule the world. The parallel theology of Manifest Destiny—absent an assertion of Hebrew lineage—played much the same role.

Christian Identity, on the other hand, is an ideology of dispossession and it arose in conjunction with the dissolution of the British Empire and the growing perception by many whites that they might no longer reign supreme. And so, even while the core theological precepts about the Israelite roots of Anglo Saxon Christians may be the same, there is a fundamental difference: The ideology of Christian Identity does not just say why white Christians should be the "dominant race," it also explains why they are not currently in a superior position, according to Zeskind.

Potok notes that the United States is a country with exceptionally high rates of religious participation and belief. And while there certainly are many leaders of violent white supremacist groups that reject any religious framework altogether, others recognize the importance of relying on Christian scripture. "When someone like George Lincoln Rockwell, the founder of the American Nazi Party and a staunch atheist, can completely and cynically adopt Christian Identity theology because he believes that Americans cannot be moved unless you shake a Bible at them, that tells you a lot," Potok observes.

Potok also notes that Christian Identity is less important today than it was five or ten years ago and cites the increasing appeal of Odinism among younger activists. "For the younger generation, [Identity] smacks of ridiculousness. Odinism offers a more appealing theology and is easier for young people to understand. Like other elements of neo-Pagan theology, it relies heavily on the simplistic belief that `might is right' and is often nothing more than a religious version of social Darwinism."

Christian Identity theology also is used to justify anti-gay violence. "Pastor" Pete Peters of the LaPorte, Colorado "Church of Christ" is the author of a pamphlet specifically calling for the death penalty for homosexuals. In it, Peters cites the usual range of Bible verses used to condemn homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13, Leviticus 18:22, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:18) and asserts that the Bible "advocates discrimination, intolerance and the DEATH PENALTY" for active homosexuals.[43] Phinehas Priesthood advocate Richard Kelly Hoskins, who asserts that biblical "Law brands homosexuality a capital crime," approvingly cites the 1989 acquittal of former White Patriot Party members Douglas Sheets, who was accused of murdering three men in a North Carolina gay bookstore.[44]

While not citing the biblical basis for his opposition to homosexuality, Olympic Park bomber Eric Robert Rudolph declared that homosexuality was "a direct assault upon the long term health and integrity of civilization and a vital threat to the very foundation of society," that should be "ruthlessly opposed…[by] force if necessary."

"A lot of people in the movement are motivated by the literal language of the Bible," observes Potok. "It is obvious that one can almost justify anything using scripture. The admonitions against homosexuality are a perfect example of how scripture is used to justify not just a particular point of view, but also violence against gays and lesbians."

Anti-abortion militants also regularly quote from the Bible, but unlike most Christian Identity believers, who already see themselves as living beyond the strictures of mainstream authority, the more traditionally conservative political orientation of abortion opponents drives them to cite scripture not only as justification for the criminal violence they endorse, but also their disobedience of conventional laws. For example, during the Operation Rescue protests in Wichita in 1992, when Randall Terry was served with a federal temporary restraining order to prevent clinic blockades, Terry threw it on the ground saying, "We have an injunction in the Bible that commands us to rescue innocent children. We fear God, the supreme judge of the world, more than we fear a federal judge."[45] Among the movement's favorite biblical passages are the following:

- Acts 5:29. "We must obey God rather than men."
- Exodus 20:13. The Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."
- Proverbs 24:11: "Deliver *those who* are drawn toward death, And hold back *those* stumbling to the slaughter."

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[43] For a detailed overview of some of the key theological arguments used by Christian Identity adherents and others to justify opposition to homosexuality, including violence against gay men and lesbians, see Moser, "Holy War."
[44] Hoskins, *Vigilantes of Christendom*, 416.
[45] Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*, 327.

- Genesis 9:6. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.”

And in yet another difference with Identity believers, who make no apologies for the theological commandment that they exterminate Jews or “cleanse” the nation of “mud people,” most violent opponents of abortion frame their arguments in a way that justifies the use of deadly force in protection of the unborn in the same way as it might be justified in defending a living person. Abortion is thus seen as a “greater violence,” according to Blanchard, and this justified the use of violence to prevent it.

TIPPING POINTS FOR COMMITTING VIOLENCE

While the theology adopted by violent individuals and groups often commands them to go to war against their perceived enemies, including the state, tangible, real-world events are much more likely to push them into action. Whether someone commits violence also is related to the general level of violence carried out by their peers in the movement. As an example, Zeskind cites the endemic violence and forcible resistance to integration during the 1960s that “certainly created a dynamic in which people who might not otherwise have participated in violence didn’t hesitate to do so.” There is an individual tipping point, but also a movement tipping point, Zeskind observes, and the latter is no less important than the former; in fact both can be closely related.

The development of a culture of resistance to the state—especially to the criminal justice system, law enforcement, and the courts—accompanied by a “war mentality” also primes people to act more abruptly than they might otherwise.

This process is described another way by Blanchard as *encapsulation*, when people start isolating themselves from those who do not agree with them and live their lives in an environment where alternative ideas or explanations aren’t permitted. “Individuals can exist in a world with people who they don’t agree with but also don’t relate to in any meaningful way,” explains Blanchard. Under these conditions, the tendency to commit violence can be increased.

All the experts interviewed agreed that it is not possible to end all the violence because some individuals are simply going to take action spontaneously or as a result of planning that is undetectable in advance. That being said, specific tipping points that were cited include:

State violence, or the perception thereof, that allows people to justify their own personal violent actions. This was the case with the reaction of many people in the militia movement (including McVeigh) to the events in Waco. Generally speaking, the more disproportionate the state violence is to the actual offense, the greater the likelihood that there will be a violent response.

In the case of the anti-abortion movement, abortion is seen as killing on a massive scale akin to war, which thereby justifies the use of violence to stop it.

A specific event that concretizes the general belief that “the stranger”—which in biblical terms according to many Identity adherents translates to mean non-whites or Jews—is “ruling over” white people. This dynamic appeared to be present when Richard Wayne Snell murdered Louis Bryant, a black Arkansas state patrolman, during a routine traffic stop.

Similarly, many of the individuals who commit violence already have moved a considerable distance away from mainstream society, either physically, culturally, or both. Despite this considerable distancing, a perception that society is moving in on them often dominates. Sometimes the perception that they are being intruded upon is enough to trigger violence.

“There’s nearly always a path to violence,” according to Moore. “Many people start with a grievance. Then they undergo a process of ideation. Some may feel that picketing may be sufficient to fulfill their need to address the grievance, but for others it may fall short. These people then may decide to do more.”

There can sometimes be a desire for self-gratification that occurs related to the violence because the act brings the perpetrator societal recognition as well as acknowledgement by peers. “This can have a particularly significant effect on people who feel that they might not otherwise be leading lives that contribute very much to society,” says Moore.

A seemingly innocuous government process can sometimes spur individuals or groups to violence. The violent shooting spree carried out by Benjamin Nathanial Smith after Church of the Creator leader Matthew Hale was denied his law license by the Illinois Bar Association is one example.

Decisions by courts or actions by government that further constrain the options and effectiveness of the group or movement can also be a factor. The first tipping point for the anti-abortion movement came with the Roe decision in 1973, which established a new legal right to an abortion. Ironically, passage of the FACE Act also led people to take more drastic actions as they came to believe that they had no other choice but to engage in violence to accomplish their goals. Just two months after President Clinton signed the bill into law, Paul Hill shot and killed Dr. John Britton and his escort in Pensacola, Florida. Although the very first murders occurred before passage of FACE, the rise in murders of clinic personnel coincided with passage of the act.

The belief in an apocalyptic vision of the end times with a specific date, or seeing "signs" of the supposed end times can act as a tipping point. Joseph Grace, an abortion clinic arsonist who was sentenced to 10 to 20 years in a Virginia state prison following a 1983 clinic arson, was constantly predicting the imminent end times.

Dates of importance to group or movement ideology, including anniversary dates of significant events, including key court decisions can also be a tipping point to violence. In Canada, many of the sniper attacks targeting doctors occurred around the national "Remembrance Day" holiday, which abortion opponents have seized on to commemorate their cause. Anticipating dates of significance requires a knowledge and understanding of the history and ideology of the group(s) in question. Likewise it is critically important to understand the strategic goals of the group as they relate to the possible targeting and timing of violent actions.

Rage or undue stress sparked by personal life events can sometimes trigger violence.

Personal ego and an obsessive desire for fame and attention can drive people to commit violent acts. Clayton Waagner, who was behind hundreds of fake anthrax attacks in 2001, was probably highly motivated by a desire for personal publicity that led him to commit particularly newsworthy and high profile crimes.

Sometimes the motivation to commit violence can stem from a desire to demonstrate greater effectiveness or intelligence than those who committed previous crimes. For example, several of the first individuals to murder physicians made only half-hearted attempts to escape. In contrast, some of the motivation for the second wave of murders and attempted murders—which were carried out by snipers—may have been stemmed from a desire to demonstrate that there is a more "effective" way to carry out fatal attacks. The escalation to sniper attacks clearly represented an understanding that other kinds of criminal activity were necessary.

High quality propaganda such as *The Turner Diaries* can sometimes act as a tipping point in and of itself. In the case of the anti-abortion movement, a variety of films, props, and propaganda all have been cited as catalysts for particular actions.

Events that reinforce the self-image of a lone individual up against an army, or an outlaw vigilante facing overwhelming force, can sometimes trigger an escalation in violence.

Individual mental illness certainly can play a role. Aryan Nations supporter Buford Furrow is one example. Furrow fired 70 bullets from an Uzi submachine gun into a Los Angeles-area Jewish community center in 1999 and then murdered a Philippines-born postal worker. Although he was undeniably motivated by racism, anti-Semitism, and the ideology he had learned at the Aryan Nations, Furrow had been civilly committed to state psychiatric institutions in Washington State prior to the shooting after saying he had suicidal and homicidal thoughts.[46]

Occasionally, people become involved in violence to prove themselves or their loyalty to the group or simply because they are in the presence of others and decide to participate, just to go along. This is most commonly seen among groups of skinheads, where lesser or female members of a group take on a violent role after others have chosen the target and instigated an attack.

Charismatic leadership, encouragement by others and/or direct instructions can certainly motivate movement followers to commit violent acts.

A sense of complete hopelessness for the individual can be another factor. This can often combine with a desire to martyr oneself and commit a spectacular act of violence in the process.

The real or perceived vulnerability of the particular victim or victim community can sometimes trigger an individual's decision to act.

IDENTIFYING RECRUITS FOR VIOLENCE

All the experts interviewed agreed that recruitment into the violent wing of the movement takes place through a broad range of normal avenues as well as social movement activities: family ties, business and professional relationships, social gatherings, religious worship, meetings, rallies, protests, picketing, books and other publications, leaflets, stickers, electronic and broadcast media, shortwave and HAM radio, online communities, web based propaganda, and other avenues too numerous to mention. German emphasizes the necessity of constant recruitment in order to replace those individuals who burn out, fall away, or become incarcerated: "Groups are using just about every means at their disposal to identify and bring in new members and just about every possible avenue is used."

It is during public protest events that basic relationships are established among participants who

[46] The failure of prosecutors, mental health professionals, and others familiar with Furrows to more closely examine the relationship between his beliefs, his mental health, and his propensity for violence prior to the August 10, 1999, Los Angeles shootings offers nearly a textbook case in how a seemingly "spontaneous" act of criminal violence might well have been avoided. See: Heath Foster, "The hate-filled descent of Buford Furrow. White supremacist's shooting rampage puts state's justice and mental health systems under scrutiny," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Sept. 17, 1999. See: http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/furr17.shtml.

share common values. It also is during these events that committed activists give voice to a more extreme point of view and identify those who come forward in response. At least 37,715 people have been arrested for civil disobedience and other clinic "incidents" since the late 1970s, thereby providing an ample reservoir from which to recruit more hardened activists.[47]

Some movements develop unique social and cultural avenues, such as the white power music scene that provides an easy avenue to access the violent skinhead subculture. "This is something that people can explore in the privacy of their own homes with no embarrassment, until they decide to enter the more public scene and attend a concert where they're susceptible to recruitment in-person," explained Potok.

Additionally, recruiters often search out people who simply look or behave as if they might be likely to escalate their activities to violence or who appear to be psychologically, emotionally, or otherwise vulnerable to manipulation and persuasion. Skinheads often target young people who are targets of bullying or people who otherwise feel victimized, observes Potok.

Most people are recruited into the violent wing of the movement in stages. They enter through broader and more public networks and movements that then funnel them into an arena where they become more willing commit violent acts. During this process, a supportive culture is created for and around the individual and the group often provides the individual with an identity that reinforces their desire and capability to engage in violence.

The personal contact and recruitment often is accompanied by grisly props and propaganda. Prior to his killing of Dr. David Gunn, Michael Griffin was shown a graphic anti-abortion video, "The Hard Truth," by Pensacola movement leader John Burt. Griffin also was shown an aborted fetus that Burt kept in a jar of saline solution. These experiences reportedly had a profound effect on Griffin and shortly afterwards he joined protesters outside a local clinic. At these protests, one of Burt's props was a bloody effigy of David Gunn, inscribed with the text of Genesis 9:6. "Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed." White supremacists also employ extreme caricatures of racial and ethnic minorities to dehumanize them, along with displaying images or graphic stories of their alleged victims, who are frequently portrayed as white women.

However, as former ATF agent Margaret Moore points out, recruits are motivated by more than just anger and disgust. "For those concerned about abortion, they also are recruited to commit violence on the basis of moral justification and often are enticed by appeals to their sense of a higher calling, as well as the idea that they can make a difference in the world."

Insufficient attention may be paid to recruitment and indoctrination through family-based ties. Shelley Shannon, discussed below, recruited her teenage daughter to participate in criminal anti-abortion activities, the spouses of various clinic bombers have clearly been implicated in a range of conspiracies, and there are numerous cases of Identity believers following in the footsteps of their parents to carry out acts of extreme violence. The numerous murders, robberies, gun thefts, and other crimes carried out by brothers Chevie and Cheyne Kehoe—both ardent second generation Christian Identity believers—are a prime example of this phenomenon.

Likewise, Benjamin Matthew Williams and his brother carried out the brutal, homophobic murder of a prominent gay couple in 1999 in Redding, California, along with arson attacks against two synagogues and an abortion clinic. The boys' father clearly played a role in their adoption of militant religious beliefs, and Benjamin Matthew Williams, the older sibling, became enamored with Christian Identity and then aggressively recruited his younger brother to the cause.

Although considerable attention is being paid to the Internet and technology-based propaganda and recruitment, the majority of experts interviewed feel that the vast majority of the significant recruitment activities still take place face-to-face in real life and not online.

Newsletters, publications, and Internet sites devoted to exultations of violence still play a special role, however. Louis Beam's *Inter-Klan Newsletter and Survival Alert*, along with his point system for the assassination of public officials, served this function, as did the *Army of God Manual*, which became a popular recruitment tool and was quietly circulated among more radical anti-abortion protesters at rallies and clinic blockades. Michael Griffin's writing in defense of his killing of Dr. David Gunn and Paul Hill's "Defensive Action" treatise and petition functioned similarly as did the newsletters of other activists. Both David Leach's "Prayer and Action Weekly News," published in Des Moines, Iowa, and Michael Bray's "Capitol Area Christian News," reached approximately 200 subscribers and reported on and encouraged acts of violence. And *Life Advocate* magazine, published by Andrew Burnett and Paul de Parrie out of Portland, Oregon, with a circulation of several thousand, helped spread Hill's views and informed readers how to contact him.

Prison and prison ministries have consistently been an effective way to recruit people to commit even more violent acts than those that brought them to prison in the first place. Once individuals are discharged, many have no place to go, so they will reach out to the group

[47] See NAF Violence and Disruption Statistics. Incidents of Violence & Disruption Against Abortion Providers in the U.S. & Canada, published at: http://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_statistics.pdf.

that reached out to them in prison. Robert Miles, an early associate of Aryan Nations founder Richard Butler, pioneered this approach among modern white supremacists and heavily emphasized religion and spiritual beliefs in his prison outreach. Odinists, Christian Identity activists, the Church of the Creator, and other similar groups have done and are doing the same thing today. Similarly, those in prison are quite conscious of their role as catalysts to motivate supporters on the outside to engage in violence. This was clearly one dynamic at work in the case of Rachelle "Shelley" Shannon, an anti-abortion activist who firebombed clinics and shot Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas, on August 19, 1993. As detailed by journalist Judy Thomas, Shannon corresponded regularly with jailed clinic bombers, giving them support and receiving encouragement to commit violence herself in return.[48] Some of the key leaders in the anti-abortion movement also have made a point of visiting practically every supporter sentenced to prison, picketing their trials, and issuing statements backing them. Additionally, certain websites provide a rallying point. The "Prisoners of Christ" webpage maintained on the Army of God website provides a vehicle for individuals and movement activists to initiate or maintain contact with those convicted of various crimes.[49]

According to Blanchard and all the experts consulted on anti-abortion violence, the incarceration of activists during some of the major protest events turned out to be one of the most significant factors that led to the recruitment of new key violent activists. This occurred in Atlanta following the Operation Rescue arrests in 1988, when many activists became acquainted with their peers in the movement and later went on to engage in extreme violence. It is widely reported that the *Army God Manual* was drafted by those individuals who were jailed together in Atlanta and that their experiences—and frustrations—with civil disobedience led them to adopt more violent tactics.

Sometimes the relationships established in jail can facilitate criminal activity many years later. James Charles Kopp, who was referred to in the AOG manual by the nickname "Atomic Dog," and who was responsible for the October 1998 assassination of Amherst, NY, obstetrician and abortion provider Dr. Barnett A. Slepian, was later helped by a Brooklyn couple, Dennis James Malvasi (himself a convicted clinic bomber) and Loretta Claire Marra. Marra and Kopp had been arrested together during clinic protests and jailed several times dating back as early as 1990. Mara and Malvasi served 29 months in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to harbor a federal fugitive by funneling money to Kopp while he was evading federal authorities in France and then trying to sneak him back into the United States.[50]

Having a core group of people celebrating violent acts, such as the Aryan Nations World Congress events of the 1980s, and the White Rose banquets of the 1990s, which honored and raised money for those imprisoned for anti-abortion violence—including murder—are obvious vehicles to attract those who are considering committing violence themselves.

Large scale, symbolic events such as Waco, Oklahoma City, and September 11 often are used to bring people in. Both the real events of Waco, and the conspiracy theories surrounding the Oklahoma City bombing and the September 11 attacks create a setting where people can be recruited based on the argument that the government is not only illegitimate or corrupt, but also bloodthirsty and murderous. "This is the perfidy that your government will engage in," people are told. And then, as is the case with both September 11 and the invasion of Iraq, propagandists assert that Jews were behind both events and in so doing recruit people with anti-Semitic tendencies.

EXTREMISTS IN SEARCH OF A GROUP

While all experts acknowledge the phenomenon of lone activists who embrace radical ideology in isolation and then go on to commit violent acts, they disagree as to the frequency with which this occurs. It also appears that loners who commit extremist violence may be more common within the anti-abortion movement than among those who identify as white supremacists or neo-Nazis.

According to Blanchard, approximately half of the individuals who have engaged in violent anti-abortion activities tended to be unrelated to any organization. They embraced their ideology in isolation and then identified with groups while in prison or after their release. Thomas agrees "most of those who committed extreme anti-abortion violence tended to be loners." From 1982 to 2005, there were 180 arson attacks and 52 bombings (232 attacks in total) against clinics, as Moore pointed out, and the majority remain unsolved. "It certainly is true that a number of people who commit violence are definitely loners," says Moore, "but there still has to be some motivation, some other means by which they get to the point where they decide to commit violence." Additionally, Moore observes, "Just because only one person is indicted and convicted in connection with an act of violence doesn't mean there isn't a larger group involved."

[48] Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*.
[49] See: http://www.armyofgod.com/favicon.ico.

[50] Blaine Harden, "Couple Accused in Plot to Sneak Fugitive to Brooklyn From France," *The New York Times*, March 30, 2001; Susan Saulny, "Two Who Helped Doctor's Killer Are Released After 29 Months," *The New York Times*, August 22, 2003.

Prosecuting agencies "don't want to work conspiracies," explains Moore, so just because a case begins and ends with the indictment of a single individual does not mean that only one person is involved.

Experts also highlight the important role played by social movement structures and group activities in ideological reinforcement and building support for violent action. And these public structures are generally quite successful at maintaining an effective dichotomy between the public face of the movement and its covert structure.

"The above ground group is critically important because it helps sustain the political and ideological identity that participants in the violent underground deeply need. It also provides a vehicle for recruiting into the violent wing of the movement," German explains.

Assessing the actions of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh illustrates this dynamic. Ultimately, McVeigh did not act alone and his actions cannot be divorced from the larger phenomenon of the militia movement at that time, which provided the necessary ideological framework for him to act. "You would not have had the Oklahoma City bombing in the absence of the larger militia movement," Zeskind explains. At the same time, McVeigh engaged in "a long, deep and very private exploration of the radical right before he decided to blow up the Oklahoma City building," according to Potok. As part of this exploration, McVeigh then attended a number of rallies and other public events associated with the militia movement, and met privately with others, including co-conspirators Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier, who themselves had ties to various parts of the movement. However, "by and large, McVeigh essentially recruited himself to violence," says Potok.

Blanchard highlights the fact that many leaders of the anti-abortion movement publicly eschew violence while at the same time try to promote it by tipping their hat to the perpetrators. This is done in myriad ways, including maintaining lists of incarcerated activists and facilitating contact with them or giving those in prison a voice by publishing their correspondence and manifestos.

As highlighted by Thomas, following many abortion clinic bombings, Joe Scheidler would say that he would "shed no tears over bricks and mortar." He also visited extremists in prison, picketed their trials, and issued statements supporting them. Scheidler wrote to Paul Hill after he issued his statement supporting justifiable homicide, telling him "it took guts" to defend the killing of Dr. Gunn. "Your arguments are strong and from a biblical perspective quite convincing," he wrote, "but you can be sure they won't be accepted in a U.S. Court of Law."[51]

Other groups also encouraged the violence. Hours after Dr. Gunn's shooting, Rescue America issued a press release asking for donations to Griffin's family—not Gunn's. And Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry issued only a tepid statement of opposition: "While we grieve for (Gunn) and for his widow and for his children, we must also grieve for the thousands of children that he has murdered."[52]

Some experts highlight the role of the Internet in allowing people to explore a forbidden political environment in very private setting. "Clearly the Internet has permitted an initial exploration of the movement that is unprecedented," observes Potok, even as he and other experts still emphasize the critical importance of face-to-face recruitment.

Others, including Saporta and Lau, point to an interesting reverse phenomenon, in which radical activists embrace the ideology in isolation and then use the Internet to publicize and further their criminal acts and join with others in the movement. Following his distribution of more than 550 of false anthrax threat letters targeting abortion and family planning clinics around the nation in 2001, Clayton Waagner, who did not appear to have any previous ties to established groups, used various well-known anti-abortion Internet websites to publicize further threats against clinic workers, threatening them with death if they refused to step down from their jobs.

As illegal and violent activity becomes more common in the movement, leaders and activists clearly engage in purposeful efforts to decentralize their activities in order to minimize the impact of civil and criminal liability on colleagues, families, and movement organizations.

Anti-abortion protesters facing heavy fines for violating court orders following passage of the FACE Act took extensive steps to ensure they were judgment proof so as to minimize financial exposure and cost to their families. Although the annual White Rose banquet, organized by convicted clinic bomber Michael Bray, was conducted as a semi-public event for many years, Bray discontinued their public component in 2002 in favor of a more clandestine approach.

All experts consulted in this research agree that numerous individuals and groups are committed to clandestine, violent activity, and highlight that some actors are considerably more sophisticated than others. Additionally, while some violent actors are extremely careful to act covertly in order to carry out

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[51] Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*, 346.
[52] Ibid., 344.

their objective, not all of them necessarily take steps to avoid detection or capture.

"Many of the perpetrators of violence were not very sophisticated and didn't pay close attention to the technical aspects of carrying out their violence. Nevertheless they certainly were determined and committed to a thorough approach of trial and error. They also were willing to share what they learned with others. Although Paul Hill may not have been sophisticated about planning his escape, he was ruthlessly efficient in carrying out the murder of Dr. Britton and his escort [James H. Barrett]," Thomas observes.

Likewise, the July 1999 killing spree of WCOTC follower Benjamin Nathanial Smith was carried out in broad daylight and only ended with Smith's suicide as law enforcement agents were closing in. And Buford Furrow's attack on a Los Angeles Jewish Community Center and murder of a Filipino-American postal worker the following month was not carried out with the objective of escaping—in fact, Furrow turned himself in to the FBI immediately afterwards. These kinds of highly visible, public attacks are much less common than the clandestine violence, as most activists seek to avoid detection and capture in order to avoid punishment and remain free to engage in further violence.

When discussing the operational nature of specific groups, experts sometimes disagree as to whether an entity such as the Army of God actually exists or merely functions as a propaganda vehicle. As reported by the National Abortion Federation:

"The first public mention of the Army of God (AOG) is believed to have been when Don Benny Anderson used the AOG name in 1982 when he and Matthew and Wayne Moore kidnapped an Illinois abortion provider and his wife. The couple was later released unharmed and the trio were apprehended and convicted. Benny Anderson and the Moore brothers were also responsible for abortion clinic arsons."[53]

"The AOG is definitely more than just a concept or commonly held idea," says Moore. Highlighting the similarities between the AOG manual and the manual developed by Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda, Moore said that "they are virtually the same."

Then again, there is no evidence that anti-abortion activists such as Clayton Waagner and Eric Robert Rudolph, who both sent letters claiming responsibility for their attacks in the name of the AOG, had any functional relationship with the group.

"The Army of God is not a real entity," maintains Blanchard. "But it is useful for law enforcement authorities to pronounce it as a real entity because it enables them to crack down. It also is useful for some in the anti-abortion movement to declare it is a real entity because it conveys the idea that the AOG is perhaps more of a threat to abortion providers or better organized than they really are."

In the 2001 HBO documentary *Soldiers in the Army of God*, prominent anti-abortion activists publicly declare the existence of the group and their affiliation with it, while others characterize the entity in less concrete terms.

A similar distinction was noted by experts on the Christian Identity movement with regard to the Phinehas Priesthood, though all generally agree that the Priesthood is not—and never has been—a real organization. Although assorted Priesthood paraphernalia, including copies of books written by Priesthood promoter Richard Kelley Hoskins, have been found among the belongings of violent activists, there is no real evidence of an organized group by that name.

This distinction is sometimes not readily apparent to outside observers, especially when activists themselves assert the existence of the group. For example, on October 8, 1996, three self-described "Phinehas Priests" were charged in connection with two bank robberies and a spate of bombings targeting two banks, a newspaper, and a Planned Parenthood office in Spokane, Washington. All three men (Charles Barbee, Robert Berry, and Jay Merrell) were eventually convicted and sentenced to life terms. Notes left at the crime scenes, and subsequent threat letters, referenced the Priesthood.

Although more commonly thought of in connection with the racist and anti-Semitic Christian Identity movement, the Priesthood also has been embraced by the anti-abortion movement. Paul Hill and other proponents of the doctrine of "justifiable homicide" have cited the Phinehas story to justify their actions and *Jubilee,* a Christian Identity publication, has referred to Hill as a "Phinehas priest."

Blanchard also cites a convergence between the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement and militia-related groups. "The anti-abortion movement has learned a great deal from these people," according to Blanchard, who cites the technique of filing so-called "common law" liens, which were first perfected in the 1980s by the Posse Comitatus and the tax protest movement to target IRS agents, judges, and others and now are used against pro-choice activists.[54]

[53] See "ANTI-ABORTION EXTREMISTS/The Army Of God and Justifiable Homicide," found at http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/army_god.html.

[54] See Clarkson, "Anti-Abortion Extremists."

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO VIOLENT ACTORS

While some individuals appear clearly to act alone, many others do depend significantly on a larger movement structure. According to some experts like Zeskind, the actions of lone individuals should be treated as exceptions to a more general rule. Moore agrees: "They all have to have some kind of support. It may not rise to the level of a legal conspiracy, but I think there are very few individuals that would be able to carry it off totally independently without telling anybody. After all, they're only human and they all want some degree of recognition and acknowledgement for their actions."

Blanchard sees things differently. John Salvi, who shot and killed two workers at separate clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts in December 1994, does not appear to have had any logistical support. Similarly, although Buford Furrow was associated with the Aryan Nations, there was no evidence to suggest that anyone else was involved in planning and carrying out his attack. In contrast, activists like Shelley Shannon or the Kehoe brothers relied on networks of key supporters for all kinds of logistical assistance.

Regardless of any disagreement about the degree to which violent actors receive tangible logistical support from the larger movement, all the experts consulted here concur that the moral and political support provided by like-minded activists is critically important. "A community of co-thinkers is necessary to motivate and mobilize violent actors," according to Zeskind. Thomas cites the White Rose banquet events as providing essential support to those in prison and legitimizing violent actions in the eyes of anyone wanting to follow in their footsteps.

"The `Wanted Posters' and Internet sites such as the 'Nuremberg Files,' which listed personal information about more than 200 doctors and clinic employees around the country, along with calls for the 'baby butchers to be brought to justice,' ratcheted up the rhetoric to a higher level that may have given direction to those who wanted to commit violence," says Thomas.

According to Saporta and Lau, the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement has an extensive and elaborate network of public supporters who channel financial and moral support to perpetrators and their families. They concur with Thomas' assessment that Internet and newsletter advocacy, as well as public events such as the White Rose banquet, serve as effective vehicles to not only support those convicted of crimes, but to recruit and encourage others to follow in their footsteps.

Along with an increasing focus on clandestine activities since September 11, Potok believes that activists planning violent attacks are less inclined to connect themselves to a larger group. "The fact is it is a scary world out there for many of them ever since 9/11. And it seems perfectly obvious to many people that if you are connected to a group that is espousing violence, you are likely to be investigated."

Other experts observed that violent actors might get support from people in the movement who do not necessarily know what they have done.

If one is going to ask how much logistical support violent actors receive from the movement, it is equally important to inquire about what support the larger movement received from these violent actors. And the answer, in the case of those Christian Identity inspired activists within the white supremacist and neo-Nazi movement, is quite a lot.

When the Order executed its armored car robbery in Ukiah, California, in July 1984 and netted $3.6 million, nearly all of the money was distributed to a wide range of neo-Nazi groups and never recovered. The Order also created its own support network of safe houses and logistical systems specifically because they feared that relying on people outside their group would be more likely to get them caught.

Richard Wayne Snell, the Kehoe brothers, and the racist partisans of the "Aryan Republican Army"—who were responsible for 22 bank robberies in the Midwest during 1994 and 1995 as part of their plan to overthrow the U.S. government, exterminate Jews, and establish an Aryan state in North America—all participated in campaigns of robbery, delivering cash or weapons to other sectors of the movement. While these and others like them received different levels of support from the movement, it is clear that many of these relationships operated to mutual benefit, with resources flowing in both directions.

PITFALLS IN COUNTERING RELIGIOUSLY BASED VIOLENCE

Collusion or Permissiveness by Local Officials

Unlike white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups who rarely, if ever, are welcomed by major city officials, there have been numerous instances when abortion opponents were encouraged by mayors and other local officials to organize major protests despite the certainty of illegal activity that had the potential to escalate into violence. This occurred most often in religiously conservative communities where sympathetic judges and law enforcement authorities often failed to enforce state or local laws, despite blatantly illegal protest activities. And in a variety of cases, local judges even went so far as to acquit those accused of breaking the law by accepting their

"necessity defense," thereby encouraging an escalation of protest activity, according to experts.

In Buffalo, New York, in the late 1980s, the mayor invited anti-abortion leaders to town. These protestors then laid siege to clinics in the community and were given great latitude in their actions by law enforcement. According to Saporta and Lau, this tolerant approach arguably set the stage for the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian in October 1998. It was only after Slepian's death that elected officials and law enforcement in Buffalo really took the problem seriously. In sharp contrast to these events, city officials in nearby Rochester, just 75 miles away, took a completely different approach and succeeded in keeping most protest activity out of the city. When such activity did occur, it was not permitted to escalate.

In Pensacola, according to Blanchard, the city council had taken up the issue of abortion clinic protests several times but never passed an ordinance limiting picketing. Despite the 1984 Christmas Day bombings of three clinics and the murder of Dr. David Gunn in 1993, the city did not impose a buffer zone to keep protesters some distance from clinic entrances until the murder of Dr. Britton and his escort in 1994. Until the murders, most city officials looked upon the law breaking that was going on as part of a public debate on the issue, not as illegal activity that needed to be punished, says Blanchard. "Clearly, being too permissive in the face of law breaking can precipitate an escalation into violence. And in some instances it wasn't just permissiveness, per se; there actually was encouragement of law breaking activities on the part of the authorities." Elsewhere, Blanchard has detailed the problem thusly:

"[T]here has been frequent support of anti-abortion extremism by law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, and city/county officials. Police have researched automobile tag numbers to trace clinic personnel, patients, and escorts. Police have also refused to enforce laws against protestors and arrested victims of violence instead. Some minor court judges have dismissed cases, accepting the "necessity" defense. Prosecutors have advocated dropping of charges. City officials have refused to support buffer zones."[55]

According to Blanchard, the absence of effective enforcement of the law says to people: "`You can do whatever you want,' and they end up believing they have social support as a result. This is akin to the dynamic in small rural communities where people will sometimes take the law into their own hands because they believe that everyone else also thinks that it is acceptable for them to do so. Embracing the legitimacy of `private law' in this fashion leads people to conclude that they have the personal right to enforce what they believe are community values and norms."

In other instances, authorities as well as community leaders communicate tacit approval through inaction, even if no affirmative steps are taken to welcome a group or its activities. The tragic deaths associated with the Christian Identity encampment in Rulo, Nebraska, where a five-year-old boy and twenty-six-year-old man were both tortured and killed in 1985, highlight the significant cost associated with official inaction.[56] In the case of Rulo, the local sheriff and community residents, as well as other law enforcement agencies, ignored obvious signs of suspicious activity, including frequent gunfire coming from the 80-arce farm. Similarly, the response of law enforcement to the paramilitary training activities of the CSA encampment in northern Arkansas in the early 1980s was lackluster, at best.

Failure to Take Violent Extremist Movements Seriously

Although official, public encouragement of protest activity by white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups is exceedingly rare, there are numerous examples of local law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities failing to respond adequately to individual incidents of hate violence and bias crime. Considerable progress has been made educating state and local authorities in recent years, but it is not uncommon to see these incidents dismissed as pranks or otherwise downplayed.

According to Zeskind and other experts, there is a widespread failure to understand people who participate in these movements and take them seriously until it is almost too late. Likewise, not enough effort is expended trying to understand the nuances and detail of the theology and religious motivation of the leaders and violent actors. As a result, authorities often resort to stereotyping of individual participants or relying on narrow behaviorist classifications that are so simplistic as to be of virtually no value either in preventing or solving criminal attacks. German agrees: "There is often a lack of contextual acumen on the part of security agencies when dealing especially with religiously based extremism and violence."

In the Weaver case, Zeskind notes that the Marshals Service had no substantive understanding of Christian Identity theology.

"Law enforcement has got to take these situations seriously. Too many people think this is a just a fringe

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[55] Dallas A. Blanchard, **"**Core Value Social Movements and the Development and Mitigation of Violence: The Cases of the Anti-Abortion, Anti-Civil Rights, and Anti-Union Movements" (paper presented at the Mid-South Sociological Association, October 27, 1995).

[56] Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door*, 232-242. See also Colvin, *Evil Harvest*.

phenomenon," says Potok, who cites some 60 terrorist plots in the ten years immediately following the Oklahoma City bombing. "These have included plans to bomb or burn government buildings, banks, refineries, utilities, clinics, synagogues, mosques, memorials, and bridges; to assassinate police officers, judges, politicians, civil rights figures and others; to rob banks, armored cars, and other criminals; and to amass illegal machine guns, missiles, explosives, and biological and chemical weapons."[57]

All experts agree that there has been some change in law enforcement attitudes toward domestic terrorism since September 11, 2001, but also note that consistent pressure is needed to ensure that the relevant agencies remain vigilant.

Failure to Appropriately Prosecute Criminal Activities

Experts in both anti-abortion violence and white supremacist movements were unanimous in citing the failure of federal law enforcement officials to formally designate certain criminal acts as domestic terrorism or conspiracies when the crimes obviously met the appropriate definition. This failure has had a variety of consequences, not the least of which is diminished investigatory and prosecutorial resources. Almost by any measure, the activities of clinic bombers and a wide range of Christian Identity-inspired groups meet the FBI's definition of domestic terrorism, yet rarely have any of the groups or individuals involved been classified as such.[58]

Invariably, it is almost impossible to avoid the politicization of these designations. In April 2003, federal agents discovered a huge stockpile of weapons, ammunition, and explosives, including a fully functional sodium cyanide bomb capable of killing hundreds of people, in a storage locker in eastern Texas. The weapons cache belonged to William Krar, a 62-year old right wing extremist, and included half-a-million rounds of ammunition (large even by U.S. standards), and more than 100 explosives, including pipe bombs specially disguised to fit inside suitcases. Antigovernment literature and terrorist propaganda generated by U.S. neo-Nazi groups also was found. Despite the presence of a functional chemical weapon on American soil and a huge stockpile of deadly explosives, the U.S. Justice Department never made a high-profile announcement about the case.

This contrasts sharply with the pronouncements made by then U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft one year earlier, in June 2002, when Ashcroft interrupted an overseas trip to announce in a news conference held in Moscow that a suspected terrorist associated with al Qaeda had been arrested in Chicago with plans to allegedly explode a radioactive dirty bomb on American soil. "We have acted under the laws of war and under the clear Supreme Court precedent which established that the military may detain a United States citizen who has joined the enemy and has entered our country to carry out hostile acts," Ashcroft said. The dirty bomb allegations against Jose Padilla, an American citizen, have since been dropped and many news reports since Padilla's arrest have strongly suggested that no evidence in fact ever existed for such a plot involving Padilla. Yet when Krar was taken into custody one year later with a real chemical weapon, a massive cache of explosives, and a stockpile of bona fide terrorist literature, Ashcroft made no statement at all. Perhaps more significantly, Krar was granted all the legal rights guaranteed to him by the U.S. Constitution, including the right to counsel and a speedy trial, while Padilla, also an American citizen, has been treated as an "enemy combatant," placed in military confinement, denied effective access to counsel and the courts, and allegedly harshly abused while in custody.

Additionally, there is the problem of simply enforcing existing law. From 1994 to 1996, the number of paramilitary militia groups in the United States grew from zero to 370. Although exact membership numbers are difficult to come by, even the most conservative estimates put the number of individuals involved well in excess of 10,000. Although militia movement members were prosecuted individually for a wide range of criminal activities such as the stockpiling of illegal weapons and explosives, not a single state attorney general took the initiative to bring an indictment against members of a militia group based on the fact that such groups constituted illegal private armies in 24 (out of 50) states, where such armed paramilitary groups were expressly prohibited by law. These laws had been upheld by the United States Supreme Court in 1944 in a ruling that emphatically declared:

"There can be no justification for the organization of such an armed force. Its existence would be incompatible with the fundamental concept of our form of government. The inherent potential danger of any organized private militia, even if never used or even if ultimately placed at the disposal of the government, is obvious."[59]

Despite this clear judicial guidance from the country's highest court, state attorneys general remained reluctant to prosecute members of militia groups less

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[57] Blewjas et al.,"Terror From the Right. Almost 60 terrorist plots uncovered in the U.S."

[58] The FBI's definition of domestic terrorism is as follows: "The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civil population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

[59] *Application of Cassidy*, 268 App. Div. 282, 51 N.Y.S. 2d 202, 205 (1944), affirmed, 296 N.Y. 926, 73 N.E. 2d 41 (1947). See, also: Morris Dees and Philip Zelikow, "Ban Private Military Groups," *The New York Times*, May 7, 1995.

out of respect for the constitution's First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech and political assembly, and more out of a deep seated reluctance be perceived as taking any action challenging firearms rights or ownership, even when those firearms are used to create private armies in direct violation of state law.

It was also during this time that the gun lobby succeeded in forcing policymakers to abandon an important but modest initiative that might have provided law enforcement with a useful tool to identify and prosecute certain extremists. One week after the Oklahoma City bombing, the Clinton administration revived a draft of the antiterrorism bill it had prepared following the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York. Among other things, the measure required that certain chemicals used to make explosives be microscopically marked so investigators could more easily trace where bomb components had been manufactured or purchased. However, when groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA) argued that tagging gunpowder was a form of firearms registration, key members of Congress gutted the provision by reducing it to a study, and one that applied only to plastic explosives at that.

Absence of Proactive Investigations

While the FBI is often quick to cite the reforms of the Church Committee, whose 1976 report led to significant restrictions on government surveillance of American citizens, as significantly limiting the scope of possible domestic terrorism investigations, the fact remains that those restrictions are insufficient to explain why the activities of some political groups and social movements are aggressively investigated or highlighted prominently in FBI reports, while other entities with substantially greater records of violent activity are treated less vigorously.

According to law enforcement experts like German and Moore, the past failure of the FBI to launch proactive criminal investigations consistent with even the strictest attorney general guidelines governing the use of confidential informants, undercover investigations, and eavesdropping represents a significant missed opportunity to interdict violent criminal activity.[60] "Unfortunately, all too often even when the necessary criminal predicate was present, law enforcement agencies failed to take proactive action," says German.

"From 1982 to 2005 there were 232 bombing and arson attacks against abortion clinics—this is more than any other target," states Moore. "If these people had been bombing McDonald's franchises, we certainly would have seen a more aggressive law enforcement response, especially from the FBI." Moore further cites the lack of attention paid by law enforcement to anthrax hoax attacks on abortion clinics. " Prior to the real anthrax attacks on Congress in 2001, the most frequent target of fake anthrax attacks were abortion clinics, but law enforcement was not really paying close attention to those and did not take the opportunity to learn from them."

Moore does not fault all law enforcement agencies, noting that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) made "a very conscious effort…to respond immediately to abortion clinic bombings," whereas "virtually none of these violent activities were investigated by the FBI in the 1980s. The FBI never displayed any interest in these cases until passage of the FACE Act" in 1994. According to Moore, "there should be more resources devoted to the problem and to getting a better handle on who was who, who the major players were. There also should have been more infiltration of these groups and networks." And despite the effectiveness of FACE, experts assert that federal law enforcement officials still have been too selective in their enforcement of the act. "There have literally been hundreds of actions violating FACE that federal authorities have never bothered to deal with," says Blanchard. "The absence of effective enforcement is made clearer by the fact that in the relatively few instances when federal authorities did clamp down, the enforcement did have a significantly dampening effect."

Moore also calls for placing a higher priority on the gathering of good intelligence. "It wasn't valued highly enough. Operationally, for an agent to go work intelligence used to be considered something of a downgrade. Agents want to be more operational. But good intelligence needs to be collected, analyzed, and utilized." German concurs, noting that despite the copious amount of information he had gleaned from his successful undercover investigations of white supremacist and militia groups, he was never thoroughly debriefed, nor were his offers to share what he had learned accepted by those higher-up in the Bureau.

Aspects of the intelligence gap can be closed through closer partnerships with non-governmental groups, says Moore. "There is a need for better partnerships…Oftentimes non-profits know a lot about what is going on. Despite all the information the clinics had, law enforcement never really reached out to them or spoke with them until much, much later." Clearly, groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center and others are in a position to provide valuable information to law enforcement and often do, but the non-profit sector still lacks the tools available to government agencies authorized to pursue full-fledged criminal investigations.

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[60] The scope of this chapter does not permit a thorough investigation of the myriad issues associated with implementation of the Attorney General's guidelines, including the significant civil liberties implications, but for a useful and relatively current treatment of the subject, see: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, *The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Compliance with the Attorney General's Investigative Guidelines*, September 2005.

Deficiencies in Forensics and Inter-Agency Cooperation

According to Moore, who has extensive firsthand experience working bombing and arson cases, lab analysis was often significantly delayed and evidence analysis impaired by a shortage of chemists and forensic experts. "It just took way too long. A lot of the labs were—and are—totally backlogged and you had to wait around for weeks sometimes to get results and that would slow down the investigation," she said

Experts also cited a well-known shortcoming in intelligence circles: the reluctance or outright refusal on the part of some law enforcement agencies to share information and related turf conflicts that prevent cooperation.

Failure to Prosecute Criminal Conspiracies

Recognizing that certain cases may be particularly challenging to investigate, experts still call for more effective prosecutions—to move beyond simply securing a single conviction and to undertake prosecutions that are geared to disrupt as many elements of the network as possible. "There really has been a failure to conduct comprehensive investigations that reach further and deeper into the network of individuals involved so that the network can be held responsible for the overt criminal acts that are seemingly perpetrated by just one or two individuals," says Saporta. "There also has been a failure to maintain continuity of investigations between different incidents that may involve related people or groups over time."

While Saporta acknowledges that it is important to avoid making martyrs out of individuals in the movement, she believes that "it is a mistake to err too much on the side of caution and therefore miss the opportunity to deter future criminal actions through effective, aggressive prosecutions, long prison terms, and substantial monetary penalties."

Failure to Monitor Prison Communications

The failure to closely monitor communications—especially letters—between incarcerated activists and their supporters is a significant shortcoming that could lead to the effective interdiction of future attacks. Experts cited a significant volume of correspondence between violent actors in the anti-abortion movement prior to their arrest and individuals already incarcerated. Similarly, significant relationships often are cultivated between incarcerated white supremacists and their supporters that lead to violence. Given the time and energy that imprisoned activists devote to recruiting and motivating outside supporters, failure to more closely monitor these communications is unfortunate.

Seeing Criminal Activity and Violence as the Only Danger

While the criminal justice system is charged with preventing illegal activity or apprehending and prosecuting violators of the law, the challenges posed by white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups, as well as certain religious social movements, are much broader than the crimes they advocate or those that their members might actually commit. According to Zeskind, it is important to avoid isolating the danger posed by criminal activity from the potential damage done to society by the ostensibly "non-violent" social movement from which these violent actors spring. In fact, Zeskind notes, when increased pressure is brought to bear on the violent wing of these movements, it can often result in an expansion to more "acceptable" forms of activity that still might prove harmful to society in terms of limiting the rights of others. The fact that these political expressions cannot and should not be curtailed through the mechanisms of law enforcement should not make challenging them in other forums any less of a pressing concern from the vantage point of advancing democracy, equality, and strengthening civil society.

Militarization of Conflict

Several experts interviewed were adamant about the negative effect of the militarization of the police and other law enforcement agencies in confrontations with violent groups. "This only plays into their hands," explains German. "All terrorist groups see themselves as engaged in a war with the government or other sectors of society and to the extent law enforcement agencies conduct military operations and behave like storm troopers, this only further legitimizes these groups' claims." "Waco is perhaps the clearest example of this kind of mistake," echoes Potok. "Do not militarize what should be a law enforcement situation."

Along these lines, government officials and those in the criminal justice system should avoid using war references and instead focus on the essential criminality of the behavior and actions of the groups in question. "This undermines the credibility and legitimacy that such groups deeply crave," says German. Whatever the response, it must be carried out "with a clear sense of proportionality," emphasizes Zeskind.

Potok also stresses the importance of maintaining some avenue for dialogue, especially if things are likely to develop into a standoff situation. "It is a mistake to assume that there are no 'friendlies' in sight," he says, citing the April 19, 1985 (another anniversary date of significance preceding the Oklahoma City bombing) surrender by Jim Ellison and demobilization of the CSA compound, which was negotiated with one of Ellison's top lieutenants, Kerry Noble.

ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS IN COUNTERING VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM

Based on the key mistakes identified by the experts interviewed and outlined above, as well as other factors, the following best practices are suggested as key elements of a successful strategy to counter religious violence and extremism:

Avoid militarization of conflict and ensure transparency of criminal prosecutions

The militarization of conflict, use of covert paramilitary, and/or extra-legal operations should not be employed. Like undercover operations, however, covert law enforcement activity is effective if the ensuing prosecutions are public and above-board. Ensure proportionality in any law enforcement response. Recognize that the transparency of prosecutions is essential to establishing government legitimacy and undermining the claims frequently made by extremist groups that extra-legal conduct by government justifies military-style operations against government targets and civilians.

Decouple political ideology from criminal actions

Law enforcement and policymakers with responsibility for security issues need to understand the theology and social history of the groups involved, but they must discard the notion that they are being asked to take sides in a political debate and focus instead on effective prosecution of criminal activity. Toward that end, law enforcement must be trained to clearly separate the criminal behavior from a group's message and ideology. It is the criminal conduct that requires investigation, followed by a transparent prosecutorial process. And, where possible or appropriate, the underlying social issues and demands must be dealt with through the political system.

See the threat as broader than criminal activity

It is essential for NGOs, opinion leaders, and policymakers alike to erect a moral barrier against political and social movements and campaigns whose goals are to deprive individuals and groups—especially racial, social, ethnic, and religious minorities—of non-derogable and inalienable rights. Civic and political leaders must do more than simply call for the prosecution of those who engage in criminal activity. They must work within the framework of civil society to build and promote countervailing ideas and values in an acceptable human rights framework that can be effectively embodied in executable policy.

While it is important to weigh the potential liabilities associated with generating increased visibility for violent groups and associated social movements—and thereby facilitate their legitimacy or acquisition of recruits—it is critically important to recognize that silence itself can be interpreted as a form of passive endorsement. In contrast, effective communication, organizing, and education campaigns by NGOs and other entities that directly address the moral, political, economic, and values issues involved are absolutely essential if such movements are to be challenged effectively.

Take these groups seriously

Investigators, analysts, and experts should study the background of these movements and track current propaganda and public communications. As hindsight has clearly shown, many of the principle actors within these movements have regularly disseminated information leading to the identification of persons later responsible for violence. Resist the inclination to stereotype movement activists or blame the violence on psychologically or emotionally disturbed individuals. Criminal justice agencies should cultivate relationships with NGOs, academics, and other sources that can provide them with additional background and analytical information on religiously-based social movements likely to commit domestic terrorism and criminal violence. Remain vigilant. Just because there may be a lull in violent activity does not mean it will not recur.

Challenge collusion or permissiveness by local officials

When local elected officials, law enforcement, or prosecutorial authorities engage in conduct that plainly encourages law breaking or political activities likely to result in the deprivation of rights, they should be taken to task, both publicly and privately, and their actions sanctioned, where possible and appropriate, through formal and informal means.

Challenge the credibility of the group

Use the media and other venues to expose the heretical and inaccurate nature of the groups' beliefs, as well as the hypocritical conduct of members and leaders. Highlight how these beliefs naturally lead to criminality and are associated, where applicable, to extreme violence. Utilize the Bible and other relevant religious texts with specificity to expose mistakes in their theology where appropriate. Public knowledge of the perceived moral failings of key local or national leaders (especially divorce and family abandonment) has sometimes been significantly demoralizing to participants in the movement, especially in cases where those leaders have based their legitimacy on religiously derived moral authority.

Counter messaging

Find ways to utilize peer-based constituencies to communicate a message that challenges the legitimacy and claims of the targeted group. Young people, not establishment figures, are obviously best suited to carry a counter message to potential skinhead recruits. When financially distressed farmers were joining the Christian Identity movement and associated paramilitary groups in the farm belt in the 1980s, the strongest antidote came from farm organizations and rural community leaders themselves. Had groups like the National Rifle Association taken a stand against the militia movement instead of effectively embracing it, the movement would likely never have gained the following it did. Yet no significant effort was made to persuade the NRA to do so.

Emphasis should be placed on communicating with younger people, whose idealism, desire for change, and lack of social constraint can sometimes make them particularly susceptible to recruitment.

Engage more religious leaders

A more concerted effort should be made to reach out to religious leaders to get them to denounce violence and encourage perpetrators to desist and turn themselves in. In 1987, clinic bomber Dennis J. Malvasi (a Vietnam Veteran and fireworks expert) turned himself in to the authorities less than 24 hours after Archbishop John J. O'Connor broadcast a plea for Malvasi give himself up. "The cardinal is my shepherd," said Malvasi at his subsequent sentencing, after pleading guilty to bombing one clinic in Manhattan and to trying to bomb another in Queens. "If he tells me I cannot, that's an order. I cannot do it because that would get me in trouble with the Almighty." Sentenced to seven years in prison, Malvasi served five and was paroled but was re-arrested in 2001 for his role helping James Charles Kopp, the killer of Dr. Barnett Slepian, evade federal authorities.

Cardinal O'Connor's plea was the first and only time a prominent religious figure in the United States stepped forward to ask those in the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement to turn themselves in. While many religious leaders have issued public statements condemning political violence, these declarations are not usually aimed at participants and perpetrators, nor do they usually include emphatic religious pleas to desist from criminal activity.

In the case of Malvasi, Cardinal O'Connor's plea was particularly effective given the nature of hierarchy within the Roman Catholic Church. When addressing Protestant audiences, Blanchard believes that "statements from the pulpit countering violent activity might have an effect on the local congregation, but are unlikely to go much further than that." Still, they should be pursued.

Enforce existing law

At a minimum, ensure proper enforcement of existing law, especially in the case of lower level crimes. Failure to do so is often seen as tacit approval and license to commit additional and escalating crimes.

Just as the application of federal civil rights and conspiracy statutes have aided in the effective prosecution of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups, passage of the FACE Act has been the single greatest factor in reducing protest activity and anti-abortion violence. Before FACE, abortion protestors could frequently count on local judges to do little more than put them in jail overnight, if that. This leniency encouraged people to commit additional acts, which often escalated into violence. In contrast, the stiff fines and sentences associated with FACE significantly lowered the rate of clinic invasions and blockades. This provided a means to disrupt the path to more extreme violence because when protestors were saddled with serious consequences for their initial activities, they were less likely to escalate to the next level of violence. FACE also provided an avenue for clinics to participate more effectively in the security process and deter violence by videotaping individuals likely to violate federal law. Nonetheless, FACE and other federal statutes remain significantly under-enforced.

The enactment of new criminal laws may sometimes be necessary but is not in and of itself a worthy goal. Care must be taken to address issues of privacy, freedom of association and belief, due process, and other legitimate civil liberties concerns; however, within this context and as evidenced by the passage of FACE, new measures sometimes are called for.

Provide proper incentives for gathering good intelligence

Identification and apprehension of perpetrators and their prosecution after-the-fact are essential to any successful campaign to counter violent extremism. These tasks are made much easier, however, with good intelligence. It may seem axiomatic, but proper institutional incentives must, therefore, be provided to ensure the collection of good intelligence that enables authorities to accurately identify those individuals most likely to engage in criminal activity.

Encourage proactive investigations

Since September 11, there has been greater recognition of the need to dismantle broader networks and support systems, but there has not necessarily been adequate follow-up to the task. Where adequate criminal predicate is present, relevant agencies should

take the appropriate proactive steps to investigate. Along these lines the government can and should be held to a manageable and enforceable standard that protects civil liberties and political rights but gives it the tools to pursue cases where there is a reasonable belief that criminal activity is occurring or is likely to occur. Adequate investigative and prosecutorial resources should be made available in order to diminish the incentive for lenient plea, bargaining, or truncated investigations simply to ensure a single or limited number of conviction(s).

Monitor prison communications effectively

Careful monitoring of prison communications can lead to the effective interdiction of future attacks, as well as additional general intelligence of value. Resources must be allocated to ensure effective processing of prison correspondence and monitoring of Internet and other web-based communications.

Monitor local developments, emphasize greater collaboration

What happens at the local level is very important and can reveal information that is useful and relevant nationally. Conversely, federal authorities, who sometimes have a better and more comprehensive understanding of the groups and dangers involved, can sometimes more effectively motivate and equip local law enforcement. By drawing the involvement of federal authorities, the FACE act and other federal laws have prompted local law enforcement to be more active and effective in some instances. This has helped to deter violence and increase the likelihood of apprehending those who committed it.

Recognize the role of new technologies

The development of new technologies such as thorough surveillance outside clinics or houses of religious worship can be effective in deterring violence. At the same time, however, new technologies also are being employed to further the cause of violence, such as the online posting of photographs and biographical information about clinic workers and even people seeking reproductive health services.

Use civil courts

As evidenced by the work of a wide variety of organizations and attorneys, the use of civil suits to obtain monetary damages against those responsible for political violence can be extremely effective in both deterring violence and depriving individuals and groups of the resources to commit additional acts. Courts are sometimes not as assertive as they should be in pursuing collection of fines and costs.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 30 years, there has been a widespread failure to respond comprehensively to religiously motivated violence carried out by white supremacists and opponents of abortion in the United States. Although much of the criminal activity associated with both groups easily meets the definition of domestic terrorism, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies have generally failed to allocate the resources necessary to either interdict the violence or proactively disrupt the clearly identifiable networks of religious extremists involved. Although a small community of non-governmental organizations and scholars has made it a priority to study these movements, understand their theology and motivation, and identify the violent activists involved, law enforcement agencies have devoted only limited resources to the problem, except when responding to significant or large scale attacks. After the dust settles and the presumed perpetrators are identified and brought to justice, the accumulated knowledge is often set aside and rarely brought to bear on future efforts.

Although religious institutions and leaders can be counted on to issue the requisite statements of condemnation in the wake of more serious attacks, there are few, if any, consistent programs of theological intervention designed to significantly challenge the use of religious rhetoric to instigate or justify criminality and violence. Additionally, there have been numerous instances when abortion opponents were either dealt with passively or encouraged by high-ranking city officials to organize major protests, despite the certainty of illegal activity that had the potential to escalate into violence.

Some of the shortcomings are obvious and ought to be easily rectified. Aside from the resources required, a better effort to adequately monitor incarcerated extremists' prison communications would have no political or legal obstacles and would be likely to yield some measurable benefits. Likewise, more aggressive collection of court-ordered fines may require prioritization of the task, but there is no reason for this to be opposed. Resolving institutional conflicts and jurisdictional tensions between law enforcement agencies, providing better incentives for gathering good intelligence, and ensuring more—and properly executed—proactive investigations aimed at disrupting larger networks, may certainly pose a greater challenge. Likewise, the call for more aggressive enforcement of existing laws such as the FACE act, despite the law's proven effectiveness at drastically reducing clinic violence, has hardly been greeted with resounding enthusiasm in recent years, even in the wake of September 11. And training policymakers and law enforcement leaders to avoid militarization of conflicts may meet considerable resistance in certain situations, especially following attacks where significant blood has been shed.

In addition to debating and pursuing more effective law enforcement approaches it is absolutely essential for NGOs, religious groups, opinion leaders, and policymakers to reach well beyond the issue of security strategies. Civic, religious, and political leaders must do more than simply call for more effective or aggressive prosecution of lawbreakers; they must work within the framework of civil society to advance those values, social structures, and inalienable human rights that these militant groups and their violent actions would otherwise seek to dismantle, whether by violence and bloodshed or by other means.

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Dallas Blanchard is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Anthropology, University of West Florida, and the author of numerous publications on religious violence and the anti-abortion movement, including three books, *The Anti-Abortion Movement: References and Resources*. (New York: G. K. Hall Co., 1996); *The Anti-Abortion Movement and the Rise of the Religious Right: From Polite to Fiery Protest* (Twayne Publishers, 1994); and *Religious Violence and Abortion: The Gideon Project*. Primary author with Terry J. Prewitt (University Press of Florida, 1993). Since 1975, Blanchard has been involved as an expert witness in 13 legal proceedings in state or federal court and in Canada.

Michael German served as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 16 years. He has a Bachelor's degree in philosophy from Wake Forest University, a Juris Doctorate from Northwestern University School of Law and has served as a counter-terrorism instructor at the FBI National Academy. He is currently Policy Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, Washington Legislative Office, where he is responsible for developing policy positions and analyzing pending legislation on issues relating to national security, privacy, and immigration policies. He is the author of numerous articles on terrorism related issues as well as *Thinking Like a Terrorist* (Potomac Books, 2007).

Sharon Lau has been the director of Clinic Defense and Research for the National Abortion Federation (NAF), the professional association of abortion providers in the United States and Canada, representing approximately 450 reproductive health clinics, since 1998. She works daily with clinic staff and law enforcement officials to prevent and respond to incidents of violence and disruption at clinics. Prior to joining NAF, she has held Congressional staff positions and worked as a health care lobbyist.

Margaret M. Moore is Director of the National Center for Women and Policing at the Fund for a Feminist Majority in Arlington, Virginia, where she has worked since 1999. A former Special Agent in Charge with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), Moore retired from the ATF after 23 years of federal service as the highest-ranking female agent, with the title Deputy Assistant Director for Science and Technology. Moore holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City and is a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Mark Potok is editor of the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) *Intelligence Report*, an award-winning quarterly magazine reaching more than 300,000 subscribers, including more than 70,000 law enforcement personnel. Potok has testified before the U.S. Senate, the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights and in other national and international venues. Before joining SPLC in 1997, Potok spent 20 years as an award-winning journalist at newspapers including *USA Today*, the *Dallas Times Herald* and *The Miami Herald*. While reporting for *USA Today*, he covered the 1993 siege in Waco, the rise of militias, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the trial of Timothy McVeigh.

Vicki Saporta has been president and CEO since 1995 of the National Abortion Federation (NAF), the professional association of abortion providers in the United States and Canada, representing approximately 450 reproductive health clinics. Recognizing the need to address violence against these clinics and providers, Saporta expanded the security services NAF offers its members, successfully advocated to improve law enforcement response to clinic violence, and assisted clinics in improving their own security measures.

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Leonard Zeskind is an internationally recognized expert in the field of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups and the author of numerous articles and publications including, *The "Christian Identity" Movement. Analyzing Its Theological Rationalization for Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence*. Published in 1986 by the National Council of Churches, this was the first monograph of its kind to identify the role of Christian Identity theology in religiously motivated violence. In 1998, Zeskind received a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Award for his research, writing and advocacy work in the field of human rights.

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2. VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG JEWS IN ISRAEL

Dina Kraft

Israel is no stranger to conflict. But the unique danger posed by violent Jewish extremists, small in number as they may be, has become a disturbing puzzle for both Israeli authorities and society as a whole. At the very root of the small Jewish extremist movement is a potential threat to the Israeli secular state as it exists today. Its most militant adherents call for an end to the country's modern democracy and replacing it with a biblical-era theocracy. Again and again in interviews with moderate rabbis, human rights activists, security officials, and even radical activists themselves, the issue of the rule of law comes up as a major bone of contention. "I don't have a prime minister, I only have God," one teenage activist said.[1]

Emboldened by Israel's victory in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, in which Israel captured areas considered the heart of the biblical "Land of Israel," Jewish extremists believe the Jewish people are currently living in a messianic age—a time of redemption that can be hastened by their own acts. That said, the number of radicals appears to be low and they certainly do not attract the support or sympathy of the vast majority of the Israeli public. Throughout Jewish history there have been eruptions of messianic fervor that were eventually quashed and later seen as an embarrassment. The question of the current situation is whether or not these fringe few will succeed in finding their way to an act or series of acts that could endanger the country or, given the political landscape in the Middle East, even the entire region.

For years, the greatest fear of Israel's security establishment has been that a Jewish extremist may try to provoke war with surrounding Muslim states by attempting to destroy the mosques built in Jerusalem's Old City on the site where the Jewish temples once stood thousands of years ago. "The dream of the extremists should give us sleepless nights," said Avi Dicter speaking at the time as the director of Shin Bet, Israel's security service. "They want to replace the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians with a conflict between 13 million Jews and 1 billion Muslims in the world," he said, referring to past and possible future plots to blow up the Dome of the Rock and Al Aksa Mosques.[2]

To date, the peak of violence carried out by radicals in the name of "saving the state of Israel from itself" has had long-term consequences. The country and region are still coming to terms with the results. That violence is represented by two watershed events: the Hebron massacre of February 1994, when Brooklyn-born Jewish doctor Baruch Goldstein gunned down 29 Palestinians while they prayed at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the Hebron shrine revered as the burial place of Abraham and other biblical patriarchs and matriarchs; and the November 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a young ultra-nationalist Jew, Yigal Amir.

Since 1967, the messianic elements of Israel's far right have elevated the commandment to live in the biblical land of Israel to the highest goal of present-day Judaism. This element is well exemplified by Rabbi Dov Lior, the spiritual leader of Kiryat Arba, the West Bank settlement adjacent to Hebron, who is considered one of the more extreme rabbis in the settler movement, For Lior, the most important focus for Jews today is Redemption.[3] And, according to Lior, settling the Land of Israel is the first condition of Redemption.

Some more moderate rabbis see the elevation of this commandment above all others as a perversion of Judaism. For a religion that was founded as a reaction against idolatry, it is unthinkable that the land itself has become the subject of worship.[4] In addition, placing the commandment to settle the land of Israel above all others leads to the easy blurring or outright rejection of the Israeli state's rule of law.[5]

Before radical settler activist Netanel Ozeri was killed by Palestinian terrorists who knocked on his door and sprayed him with gunfire in January 2003, he summed up his life mission on camera, saying: "We believe that Jews should live in the land of Israel. It's a matter of sanctifying God's name, as opposed to desecrating it. And it's only a matter of time until the war, with God's help, will begin, and it will begin with us. And in the

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[*] *Note on quotations*: Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are derived from interviews conducted by the author. See list of interview subjects at the end of this chapter.

[1] Author's interview with a Jewish teenager in Gaza protesting the Israeli withdrawal, August 2005.

[2] Dicter comments at the Herzilya conference in 2002. Transcript of remarks available at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/israel/etc/script.html

[3] Redemption is a central concept in Judaism that refers to the Messianic Age. It is believed to be a time of peace and prosperity when the Messiah will come and rid the world of evil. According to Jewish thought, Jews themselves can, through their good deeds, hasten the coming of the Messiah. Strongly nationalist Jews, including radicals, believe settling all of the biblical Land of Israel, including the West Bank, will help bring on Redemption.

[4] Rabbi David Rosen (international director of interreligious affairs, American Jewish Committee) interviewed by author, March 2007.

[5] The borders of the land promised to the Israelites by God are somewhat hazy. Different borders are given in different sections of the Bible, but greater Israel is believed to generally include lands that are part of present day Jordan and even Iraq.

end, we'll win. We'll inherit the land and expel the people who are in it."[6]

To understand the violent Jewish extremist fringe in Israel, which is motivated both by religious insularity and a fear of Arabs, it is essential to understand the legacy of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane. The highly charismatic Kahane, an American from New York, founded the extremist Jewish Defense League. Along with a group of loyal students, many of them from broken homes and for whom he was a father figure, he immigrated to Israel in 1971 and advocated the expulsion of Arabs from the country. He taught that Jews were superior to Arabs and that violence against them was not only condoned, it was encouraged.

Although the political party he founded was banned by the Israeli Supreme Court and although he himself met a violent death—gunned down by an Egyptian in New York in 1990—his teachings and influence live on in small groups formed as offshoots from his original organization (which incidentally also had been listed by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization). Goldstein himself was once one of Kahane's most favored pupils. Both Goldstein and Amir, Rabin's assassin, would eventually act out of a desire to halt peace efforts with the Palestinians, which, if successful, would have led to the Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank and Gaza. To relinquish any part of the Land of Israel, land they view as their biblical birthright from God, was seen as a disaster.

The most recent generation of radicals has been dubbed by the Israeli media as the "hilltop youth." The name comes from their decision to live on illegally seized isolated West Bank hilltops. Emboldened by the romantic, biblical feel of the landscape—olive groves, terraced hillsides, herding flocks of sheep, and tending to organic gardens—they consider themselves the authentic Jewish Zionists, following in the path both of their biblical ancestors and the Jewish settlers of the early 20th century who became the founding fathers of the state of Israel.

June will mark forty years since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War and almost as long since the first Jewish settlements were established in the West Bank. Many of the more radical youth have only known life in the West Bank and have been raised among the smaller, isolated, and more ideological communities. Their sense of detachment from the state and Israelis living inside the "green line" (Israel's pre-1967 borders) has been exacerbated by their geographic isolation. This disconnect could prove to be a dangerous one as they increasingly see themselves as separate from Israeli society, including its rules and norms. Ahead of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005, some Jewish children in the settlements played a game reflective of that hostile detachment. The game, which enacted the upcoming withdrawal, was called "cops versus Jews." At a demonstration in 2006, some Jewish protestors in Hebron yelled out "the Israelis have come to kick out the Jews" as security forces removed settlers from illegal encampments.

There are concerns that, fringe as the radicals may be, they are tapping into a feeling of general disillusionment with the state expressed by Israel's national religious sector—especially following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and a small part of the northern West Bank. The questions become: will the support of the radicals grow as the government is increasingly dismissed across the political spectrum as weak and corrupt? And, if that support grows, will Israel be facing a group of radical activists intent on raising the stakes and escalating the violence? Or, despite all the tensions, will the violence remain at a relatively low intensity, kept in check by more mainstream elements of Israel's national religious community?

Crucial to answering those questions is how Israeli authorities and society itself choose to address the Jewish extremists—as pesky nuisances or as a threat equal to or greater than that of their Palestinian counterparts.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Today the political environment is as volatile as ever, shaped most prominently by the scars of last summer's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, the 2005 Gaza withdrawal and the Second Intifada, which began in the fall of 2000 and continues to feed into long existing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians.

Currently, the country as a whole is steeped in a deep, almost passive malaise, wondering how so many things could seemingly have gone wrong at once—the bitter aftermath of last summer's war in Lebanon, a slew of government scandals, mayhem in Gaza, and the threat of Iran gaining a nuclear capability. There is a feeling that this is a country without a compass—a feeling that vindicates the extremist camp and its view that the state is not the true authority and that only a state based on Jewish law can be deemed legitimate. Some of the more extreme rabbis and their followers say the country's present day woes are divine retribution from God for the withdrawal of troops and settlements from the Gaza Strip over the summer of 2005. This extends even to then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's collapse into a coma just months after the withdrawal.

For the religious extremists, most of whom are either settlers themselves or at least aligned with the settler movement, the Gaza withdrawal is the pivotal event shaping their most recent political reality and perceptions.

[6] Ozeri interview for PBS documentary "Israel's Next War." Transcript available at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/israel/etc/script.html

The Gaza withdrawal was the first evacuation of Jewish settlers from Palestinian areas seized during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The settler movement thought the evacuations could be stopped through demonstrations or perhaps even an act of God. Instead, the evacuation of over 8,000 residents in addition to thousands of supporters took place and fairly smoothly at that—within four days the last of the settlers were removed from their homes and taken across the border back to Israel proper. Despite all predictions otherwise, the sky did not fall, and the national religious movement, of which the extremists are a fringe section, was left adrift and angry.

The settler leadership, known as the Yesha Council, was scorned by many in the settler community for its policy of restraint. It had implored the settler community to refrain from violence, to focus instead on winning the hearts and minds of the Israeli public in order to force the government's hand against the planned withdrawal. Despite their grassroots campaign, their mostly non-violent demonstrations, tears and pleading, the evacuation did take place. Furthermore, much to their horror, it happened with the support of the majority of the Israeli public.

For the national religious sector, the Gaza withdrawal showed that the unimaginable could happen—people could be forcibly removed from their homes by Israeli soldiers and police. The lesson that the more radical elements took away was clear: If there is a next time, if there is a withdrawal from Jewish settlements in the West Bank, there will be a need for a different response—it is liable to be a violent one.

The national religious sector has also claimed to have been proven right in its opinion that leaving Gaza would not end Palestinian attacks, pointing to the ongoing rocket attacks on southern Israel by Palestinian militants. The government's relative inaction further justifies a feeling among the radicals that official policy is leading Israel to ruin and that drastic actions may be needed in order to save the Jewish nation from its enemies—and itself. Those feelings of betrayal were first exposed after the Oslo peace process began in the mid-1990s, but the Gaza withdrawal, known by the right wing as "the expulsion," seems to have cemented it. "There is great bitterness, disappointment, and estrangement," said Elyakim Ha'etzni, considered a leading member of the intelligentsia of Israel's extreme right and one of the founders of the Jewish settlement in Hebron. "The camp is in disarray; they still have not gotten over the treachery."

The settler youth are especially disaffected. They feel betrayed not only by the government but by the community's leadership, which held them back from more forceful confrontations with the security forces. The clearest example of their rejection of the path of peaceful civil disobedience and a possible sign of things to come took place last February, when Israeli police came to clear out Amona, an illegal West Bank outpost. About 4,000 mostly young religious Jews faced off against the police who had been sent to demolish nine houses, hurling stones and cinder blocks at them in what became the most violent clashes to be seen in years between Israelis. More than 200 people were injured in the fighting.

Just a few weeks before that hundreds of Jewish youths, many of them settlers, swarmed into Hebron ahead of warnings that the government planned to evacuate some Jewish homes there. They looked more like stereotypical images of angry Palestinian youths than typically Jewish ones as they hid their faces behind ski masks or keffiyehs while standing on rooftops and pelting Israeli soldiers with stones and eggs. At the time, Noam Arnon, the leader of Hebron's Jewish settlers, said, "This is the lesson they learned from the government: that terror pays and aggression pays."

There is a fear among religious leaders and officials that, with a leadership vacuum and no prominent moderate leaders in sight to lead the way, the small number of extremist elements will find a way to win over more supporters. Currently, the rhetoric of violence is again beginning to rise in volume, although an organized movement endorsing and committed to violence is less evident.

One example of such increasingly violent rhetoric is the recent order by a group of radical rabbis and scholars against Yair Naveh, the Israeli general in charge of the West Bank. The rabbis are part of the modern Sanhedrin, which they established about three years ago as an heir to the ancient Jewish court that died out 1,600 years ago. They issued a letter ruling that Naveh was a "moser," someone who informs against fellow Jews to the gentile authorities.

The "Din Moser" order against Naveh is an extremely grave and rare judgment that, according to Jewish law, can merit the death penalty. It was the first such order of its kind since the days of intense incitement leading to Rabin's assassination. The group referred to a ruling by 12th century Jewish philosopher Maimonides in issuing their verdict, which said "It is permissible to kill a moser everywhere, even in this time when the courts do not rule on capital cases." The police have since launched a criminal investigation of those who signed the ruling.

Jewish extremists have also taken advantage of the political atmosphere following the summer 2006 war in Lebanon and the crisis of confidence that followed Hezbollah's month-long rocket attacks on a third of the country. This reinforced the extremists' view that the state is weak and badly run. The spate of corruption investigations against top politicians, including the president, who faces possible rape charges, a finance minister suspected of embezzling money, and a prime minister questioned over his financial dealings also

reinforces the image of the government as morally bankrupt and void of spirituality or religious principles. The corruption is seen as proof that the state has lost its way. The prevailing notion is that the government gave up the Torah, so its fall is inevitable. In turn, the loss of faith in the state strengthens the extremists' own perception that they are potential saviors of the Jewish nation, armed with God's truth and the capacity to change things—even if that means employing violent acts.

The socio-economic atmosphere is less relevant in the Israeli case because the religious extremist scene is not connected to it. Most members of the radical religious right, including potential or actual members of violent groups, are middle class. Economic and social issues do not enter into their discourse in a significant way.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

The power and appeal of Jewish extremist groups begins with the simplicity of their message: they know the truth, and it is the irrefutable truth of God. The lure of the divine and the absolute can be especially appealing in modern times, when everything can be seen in shades of grey. The black and white message extremist leaders broadcast is one of a welcoming spiritual and intellectual home that speaks with great confidence about what God wants, a message that resonates especially among the young, who tend to see the world in fixed terms. It is a world of certainty and absolutes, of life made refreshingly simple despite the inherent sacrifices involved and at the same time more meaningful. There is also a sense of purpose and mission in being among the self-appointed few who have dedicated their lives to settling and actively protecting the land their biblical forefathers walked before Roman forces conquered the area and expelled the Jews 2,000 years ago. In fulfilling this birthright, they feel they are taking their directions directly from God. In turn, they do not necessarily need to ask themselves potentially complicated moral or practical questions. A potential peace deal involving painful compromise is not nearly as compelling as being promised absolute victory and control.

When Israel surprised everyone—including itself—and won its stunning military victory in 1967, a feeling began to take over the national religious camp that the victory did not just feel like a miracle—it truly was a miracle. Israel had pushed back Arab armies, destroyed the Egyptian air force, and seized East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. This was God's hand at work and a sign that redemption was at hand. A messianic fervor took hold in which some religious Jews felt they could hasten the coming of the Messiah by settling the West Bank. For some this takes on extreme dimensions—that anything is justified, even violence, in the name of redeeming the land.

The feeling that the messianic age has come is key to understanding the potential for violence. The peace process that began with the Olso Accords and promised an eventual Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank was seen as blasphemy. "Rabin was killed because he was stopping the Messiah, therefore violence was necessary," said Daniel Robinson, a researcher of Israeli social history. Or as former Justice Minister Josef Lapid, a major critic of the role of religious Jews in Israeli politics, said, "They believe prophesy can come true in their lifetime … the moment you are sure you are acting on behalf of God, you have free reign to be inhuman."

The concept of the biblical Land of Israel has not only become more important for the radicals than the state of Israel itself, but also often more important than other religious commandments. If the state of Israel, once seen as a holy vessel for bringing Redemption, turns its back on the mission of settling the Land of Israel, then violence is seen as not just justified but essential. Based on interviews with radicals, there is a sense that they believe that they are part of a holy process to hasten the coming of the Messiah—a process that by its very nature is to be bloody and violent. Even the language that describes the coming of the Messiah is the same terminology used to describe labor pains, as Dr. Idit Zertal points out. Some of the most radical and violent elements of this generation say that, in order for Redemption to occur, the country has to change its direction to one of all-out war, with an army motivated by revenge and the understanding that Jewish life comes first.

For people who feel displaced and uprooted, the radical Jewish movement can become a substitute for a home, a place of identity, authenticity, and belonging. Often, it is connected with following a charismatic leader who provides a strong sense of mission and a clear enemy against which one can define oneself in opposition. Today's most prominent example of this is the members of the so-called hilltop youth, who are drop-outs of yeshivas and Jewish religious seminaries, and who often come from broken homes. Avri Ran, a former kibbutznik who found religion, is a leader of the hilltop youth and has attracted a close following of young men from such backgrounds. Similarly, the group of devoted disciples that emigrated from New York in the 1970s together with Kahane were also known to be troubled.

"Avri Ran and Kahane are similar; they are charismatic figures who take these miserable kids and turn them into crazies," said Carmi Gillon, former head of Shin Bet. It is deeply compelling to feel part of a movement with meta-historical importance dealing with issues of redemption and the coming of the Messiah. In the case of those Jewish settlers living in the West Bank who refer to the area by its biblical name, Judea and Samaria, the place itself is one of deep spiritual meaning as it forms the heart of the biblical Land of Israel. They take meaning from its rugged hills and

stones, placing a sacred value on settling it. They feel they are heirs to the biblical heroes. Their sense of being important actors in Jewish history and destiny is fed, they say, by living in places like Shiloh (where tradition says the Holy Ark was temporarily housed by the Jews after they crossed in from exodus in Egypt) and Hebron (where Abraham, his sons, and all of their wives are said to have been buried).[7] They dismiss those who live inside Israel proper in cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa, places that were not part of biblical Israel. As one settler scoffed in an interview, "Tel Aviv is in Philistine!"[8]

Adding the Bible to the equation and casting themselves in the role of modern day biblical heroes can be an intoxicating mix for the extremist. In a way they are idealists, seeking a path to the fulfillment of their ideals, even if it can mean violence.

In a pamphlet to young people, distributed both at synagogues and on-line, called "Small World," a settler activist called on the youth to take part in an attempt to retake a former West Bank settlement that was evacuated in 2005 as part of the government's Disengagement Plan—even though the government warned that any attempts to stay would be considered illegal. "The next chapter of Israel's history is still empty, waits for you and us to write it. Don't tell us we did not let you know," wrote Menora Hazani, an activist in the "Homesh First" movement.[9]

Those who grew up in the Jewish settlements, especially the more extreme and isolated ones such as in Hebron or near Nablus, were raised not just in isolation from mainstream Israelis and Israeli society, but also in a setting that indoctrinated them that they were learning absolute truth and justice. Their upbringing does not teach them to care for non-Jews, and certainly not for their Palestinian neighbors. Instead, they are raised with violence as part of the ethos of their upbringing according to Idit Zertal, a historian. "They cannot see others' points of view. Their idea is to settle political problems through violence… by fighting others they define themselves."

"If you put people in a situation in which you demonize people, this will undermine any sense of universal morality; it's a recipe for a fascist mentality. They seek to portray themselves as righteous and this is the irony. They are self righteous without any sense of self-criticism," said Rabbi David Rosen, a long time activist on interfaith relations.

The culture of violence and death is not unique to the extremist groups. Rather, some researchers say it is a larger manifestation of what Israeli society as a whole experiences with its ongoing wars and control of Palestinian areas. Before his younger son was killed in this past summer's Lebanon war, David Grossman, one of Israel's most renowned novelists and a major peace activist, wrote "Death is our way of life. Violence is our way of life."[10]

For Rabbi Yuval Sherlow, a prominent rabbi considered a moderate in the national religious camp and who preached against violence during the Gaza withdrawal, the attraction of groups that endorse a radical and/or violent ideology is clear—it gives meaning and a sense of purpose to those who join them. "It speaks to the young who feel this is their time to influence things and create a revolution. It taps into an adolescent way of seeing things in black and white," he said.

Violence can be used as a means to carry out ideals. In the case of Jewish extremism, that can mean being violent as a way of protecting a hold on the Land of Israel.

There is a feeling that violent actions lend the actor control. For someone who feels they cannot articulate themselves fully in verbal ways, violence can have a special appeal, says Rabbi Sherlow. He points out the similarity between the Hebrew word for violence, "aliymut" and the word for a mute, "ilmut." "People who cannot find full expression in thoughts and words will turn to violence as a way of expressing themselves," he said.

Rabbis who preach that the commandment to resettle the Land of Israel outweighs all others provide additional clarity to the mission of the extremists. There is an attraction to such an ideology. "There is something almost fun in being an extremist," explained Rabbi Shirlow. "You are focused on your truth, rooted in the ancient words of the Bible, convinced you are on the side of God." In recent years in the extremist camp there is a feeling that all other avenues for action have been exhausted, making violence seem more viable and appealing. The clashes in Amona last year are one example of that turn to violence; Yigal Amir's assassination of Rabin is another.

It is also easier to be extreme in isolated, homogeneous societies like those found in the West Bank. If everyone thinks like you, your thoughts no longer seem extreme, they seem normal. There is little critical discourse as most people hold similar views: namely that the land was given by God and that secular Israelis have lost their way and given into American style capitalism and individualism. They listen to their own pirate radio stations, read their own

[7] Dr. Hillel Cohen (historian, Hebrew University of Jerusalem) interviewed by author (March 2007).

[8] Elyakim Ha'Etzni (former Knesset member and leading settler ideologue) interviewed by author (February 2007).

[9] Homesh First is a movement that pushes for the resettlement of the evacuated West Bank settlement of Homesh in a bid to pressure the government against further withdrawals from outlying settlements and outposts in the West Bank.

[10] Grossman's speech in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv in November 2006 marking the 11th anniversary of Rabin's assassination.

newspapers and largely tune out alternate opinions. What is important, they say, is Zionism and Judaism—two concepts that cannot be separated. Young people especially seem to feel alienated by the Israeli elite, which embraces Western values of liberalism and globalization when what they seek is separatism and a return to some sort of biblical-era glory. The more that people feel alienated and distanced from the mainstream, the shorter the path is to committing violence.

In the aftermath of the Rabin assassination, the far right was lambasted by the left for allegedly creating an atmosphere of incitement that facilitated the killing of the prime minister. Feeling demonized by Israeli society has exacerbated the feeling of being outsiders. Feeling themselves outcasts has played a role in radicalizing the right. It is an alienation and anger that can be easily turned to justification for carrying out violence.

Professor Hillel Weiss, a Hebrew literature expert, is a member of the Sanhedrin and among those who signed the recent religious judgment condemning General Naveh as an informer, enacting the ancient and potentially grave sentence of "Din Moser." For his role, he has repeatedly been summoned by the police for questioning. He claims to actually enjoy the process of being investigated. "It's like a chess game … a ping pong between the investigator and the one being questioned. It's like an adventure. My stance is clear. There are felonies I could be charged with like incitement and being threatening but I stand behind what I say. I even told the police detective questioning me that he should resign because he is representing an evil authority, a state that is persecuting Jews."

He downplayed the potential for violence that could follow the passing of such a powerful judgment against Naveh—himself a religious Jew. He said the judgment was a form of civil disobedience, not a call to arms.

But Chezi Kalow, former head of Shin Bet's Jewish desk, sees grave danger in the order of "Din Moser" issued by Weiss and his colleagues. "In my eyes it's very serious, a return of what happened with Rabin," he said. Moderate rabbis are also concerned by the ruling. They say that, in private, rabbis and yeshiva heads consider the judgment nonsense, but none of them have condemned it publicly. The order against Naveh is part of an increasingly violent discourse.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, an activist in the late Rabbi Kahane's "Kach" movement until it was banned and today a well-known figure in the Israeli extremist scene, said he was slowly but powerfully drawn to a radical ideology as a teenage boy. He came from a secular family in a well-to-do Jerusalem suburb, but during the first Intifada he became increasingly interested in politics. He read the daily headlines about Israeli-Palestinian clashes and started asking questions. "I started getting involved, asking 'what will happen now?' You see one attack and then another and ask how this will be solved."

In the search for answers he found his way to the Temple Mount Faithful, a group that seeks to restore the Temple in Jerusalem. In the early 1980s, a Jewish underground movement plotted to blow up the mosques on the Temple Mount, an act that would have had the potential to start a war with Muslim states. "I told myself I would be active, but not join Kach. I thought they were crazy but, slowly, I realized they were not crazy. That their ideology is based on Torah and a love for Israel and that the logic was very accessible," said Ben-Gvir. He said he found Rabbi Kahane's preaching of a doomsday scenario where Arabs would outnumber Jews in Israel was plausible and that they needed to be expelled from the country before that could happen. "We can either say let's go back to Auschwitz … or we can build a real Jewish state, but we cannot build a state with two nations," he said. "It's either us or them."

TRIGGERS

In the case of Israeli Jewish extremists, the trigger that can push an individual or group towards violence seems to take two main forms: revenge for attacks against fellow Jews or an effort to affect change (specifically to prevent government actions deemed disastrous for the future of the Jewish people). When Jewish radicals feel threatened by the political process, it puts the entire community under severe pressure, giving them the feeling that they are no longer helping shape history. That sense of dire emergency helps justify drastic measures.

The backdrop of the Diaspora, viewed by radicals as a long period of oppression and a time when Jews were not in control of their own fate, always feeds into present day agendas and desires for revenge. Every attack by a Palestinian contributes to the notion that they are present-day versions of the Nazis or the biblical Amalek, groups bent on Israel's destruction. Now that there is a state of Israel, the feeling is that it should be defended—even if that means taking pre-emptive violent measures. There is also a desire to differentiate oneself from the image of the weak, non-violent Jew of the Diaspora. Just as the early Zionists championed the idea of the muscular, proactive "New Jew," so the Jewish extremists cast themselves as modern-day heirs to those original pioneers. They present themselves to the local Palestinian population as rugged, gun-toting cowboy types with itchy trigger fingers and not to be provoked.[11]

Key to understanding the Israeli psyche, and, in turn, the more radical fringes of the society it has produced is the long shadow cast by the trauma of the

[11] Dr. Idit Zertal (author and historian) interviewed by author (February 2007).

Holocaust. Jews in the Diaspora felt that as stateless people they were not active players in their own history. The sense was that they were hapless victims of persecution from generation to generation—from inquisitions to pogroms and eventually the Holocaust. The Holocaust underlined the need for a Jewish homeland as a place where Jews could build their own society and also be active players in carving out their own destiny.

The religious messianism seen in the extremist Jewish camp did not come out of nowhere. It emerged from the political messianism characteristic of Israel's founders, argues historian Idit Zertal. The very memory of the Holocaust was incorporated to shape the interpretation of the new conflict on the ground with the Arabs and to be used as a justification of the use of force, she says. After 1967, especially among the religious, there was a sense of divine intervention in Israel's swift military victory that brought parts of biblical Israel under Israeli control. The ideology became one where any thoughts of territorial concession were linked with annihilation of the Jews. In the weeks and months preceding Rabin's assassination, he was depicted in posters by the radical right as an S.S. officer in uniform.

Revenge—specifically revenge for the Holocaust—is a cornerstone of Kach ideology; the slogan of Kahane's original organization, the Jewish Defense League, was "Never Again." Kahane preached the importance of physical revenge for humiliations and attacks by non-Jews. His message that a Holocaust-like disaster is looming and action and violence are needed to prevent it is still influential.

In the 2005 PBS Frontline film on Jewish extremists, *Israel's Next War*, Yarden Morag, imprisoned for planning to blow up a trailer outside of a Palestinian girls' school, explained how acts of violence in the name of revenge can spiral. "If they shot a few rounds at you, you go to their village and shoot a few more. These were simple reactions. If they damaged an orchard, you damaged ten. Two eyes for an eye, teeth for a tooth. And then there was an escalation to where I crossed all the red lines. From a desire to scare the Arabs off, you get to attempted murder. All the way, big-time," Morag said.

Israel's former national police chief Assaf Cheffetz said investigating Jewish extremists was a different type of process than investigating violent criminals because their motivations were based on ideology, not on material gain or the thrill of committing an illegal act. Still, he noted that they, like criminals and even police officers themselves, can become desensitized to violence and in some cases may grow to "enjoy" it. Group dynamics also play a role, he said. "When you find a group that identifies with violence, then exerting violence becomes part of belonging to that group…the group dynamic is very important, especially when involved in a part of society that is very isolated."

"These are people who are prepared to kill for an ideal. They are the most dangerous people of all. Others don't break laws because they don't want to get caught, but these people don't care, they are past the limits of what is normal or rational. They are idealists in the most extreme meaning of the word," said Carmi Gillion, former director of Shin Bet.

Hundreds of settler youths roamed the West Bank hillside chanting "Revenge! Revenge!" at the 2003 funeral of hilltop youth activist Netanel Ozeri. In a fascinating mirroring of the Palestinian streets, where Islamic fundamentalists hoist their war dead with their faces exposed, shouting for revenge, here, too, Ozeri's body was placed on a cot and his entire face was left exposed. Usually in Jewish tradition a shroud covers the entire body, including the face. The idea is to remember the person as they were in life, not in death. But in this case, showing the face of the body was considered to be a more powerful call to revenge.

Baruch Goldstein, once one of Kahane's most favored students, was considered to be motivated in part by revenge for the spate of terror attacks that killed several friends and neighbors in the early 1990s. A doctor, Goldstein had been at the scene of many of the attacks, treating the wounded. Some close friends even died in his arms. Beyond the personal motivations for revenge, there was also the much broader trigger of the Oslo peace process. He believed that by launching an attack he would help thwart the process and the disaster that he thought would follow. Investigations following his attack found that he felt that the government had forsaken the mission of settling Judea and Samaria and that the army had ceased to protect the Jews living there.[12]

Goldstein strode into the Tomb of the Patriarchs and fired his Uzi on Palestinian worshippers as they were bent over in prayer, killing 29 people before he was beaten to death. He was convinced he was acting as a savior of the Jewish people. He viewed his sacrifice as nothing short of saving the Jewish people from another Holocaust, a holocaust called the Oslo Accords.[13] Elyakim Ha'Etzni, a leading ideologue of the settler movement who was a neighbor of Goldstein, describes him as a fanatic and a stray. "I was scared of him, his passion was something frightening. But I never imagined he would do something like this," he said.

His act, savage as it was, could be seen as successful by extremist Jews. Israeli opinion began to turn against the Oslo Accords when, in response to Goldstein's massacre, the Palestinian extremist Islamic camp decided to unleash a series of revenge attacks in the form of suicide bombings of Israeli civilian targets. Until Goldstein opened fire in the Tomb of the Patriarchs,

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[12] Based on author's interview with Akiva Eldar (columnist, *Haaretz),* March 2007.

[13] Based on author's interview with Daniel Robinson (researcher of Israeli social history), February 2007.

the Muslim religious figures leading Hamas had debated whether or not it was permissible to use suicide bombers on Israeli civilian targets. Goldstein's act ended the debate. Forty days after the attack, following the final day of Muslim mourning for the dead, a Hamas suicide bomber exploded himself on an Israeli bus, killing seven. Goldstein unleashed a genie of violence that led not only to suicide bombings but laid the groundwork for more political violence and incitement, part of a ladder of escalation that led to the assassination of Rabin, according to Yizhar Beer, who heads Keshev, an Israeli NGO that monitors extremist Jewish movements.

The Hebron massacre is often cast as the act of a lone madman. But as the late Ehud Sprinzak, a leading expert on Jewish violence, noted, Goldstein's association with the radical Kach movement alters that perception. He wrote, "It acquires, instead, a political meaning; it becomes a collective act by proxy, a colossal demonstration of political violence expressing a crisis of an entire fundamentalist milieu." Zertal, who has studied and written about the radical right movement in depth, said the same is true of Rabin's assassin, Yigal Amir. "By saying that Yigal Amir is just a bad seed is a way to anesthetize disaster."

"The power of the pistol and political violence is a dramatic veto power," said Beer, noting how the actions of fundamentalists on both sides of the conflict increase along with the political activity of their leaders during times they try to push forward a peace agenda. Rabbi Yoel Ben-Nun, who was harassed by his fellow settlers for speaking out against their part in the atmosphere of incitement in the months leading up to Rabin's assassination, said Israelis have been taught that violence pays. "In Israeli society there is a feeling that if you don't use violence, you lose. And this encourages people."

The principle concern among policy makers, religious leaders and activists is the question of additional withdrawals from the West Bank. The working assumption is that, if the country thought leaving Gaza was a challenge, leaving the West Bank will precipitate an entirely different level of confrontation, both because the settler movement learned that civic disobedience failed in Gaza and because the West Bank is considered holier ground. (Gaza was not considered by many to be part of the biblical Land of Israel, whereas Judea and Samaria certainly were.)

Nadav Shragai, a journalist for the daily *Haaretz* who covers the settler movement and has written a book on the Temple Mount Faithful, said a very different reaction can be expected to any withdrawals from the West Bank. The question is not one of whether there will be violence, but what kind of violence. The range of possibilities extends from settlers attacking soldiers to even a sort of Masada-style communal suicide.

For Ben-Gvir, the radical activist, the answer will lie with the youth themselves. They understand the lessons of Gaza, he said, as they demonstrated in Amona. He has extensive contact with them as he lectures and teaches groups of them. "The message is that they need to take destiny into their own hands, especially now the leadership is in crisis," he said. He describes today's settler youth as "even" more radical than himself, with a deeper ideology than his peers. "They don't believe in state institutions, they are less naive than we are perhaps."

During the Gaza demonstrations, for example, a large group of teenage girls were arrested. Most refused to cooperate with officials, saying they did not acknowledge the court's sovereignty. Such talk, including Ben Gvir's call to action to take advantage of a situation of weak settler leadership, is exactly what concerns the security establishment.

RECRUITING AND LOGISICAL SUPPORT

The pool of religious extremist actors tends to come from the small, more isolated West Bank settlement communities. There is no need to actively recruit as most players come from within. They come to know each other through family ties, yeshivas, synagogues, or from within the network of their tightly-knit communities. In their small world they are suspicious of outsiders. Knowing they are being monitored by Shin Bet makes them even more wary.

In a small country like Israel, it is easy to check out newcomers and see if they are potentially dangerous, i.e., connected to Shin Bet. One "test" given is to discuss a false secret mission with the newcomer present. If arrests or questioning follow soon after they can know the newcomer was likely an informant.[14]

"The Shin Bet tries to watch them, but as in every inbred society, it is difficult to put agents on the inside. Israel is a small society, if someone new approaches you can find out about him," said Yosef Lapid, a former justice minister. Extremists' caution was elevated after the Rabin assassination, when it was exposed that a leading far-right student activist and friend of Yigal Amir was actually working as a mole for Shin Bet. There have been repeated attempts by Shin Bet to infiltrate such groups with agents who themselves have a religious background but it is difficult to get them to the inner circles of leadership. Furthermore, those who do not know the community's "internal codes" are easily exposed. The groups usually rise organically from within the yeshivas and synagogues.

Ben Gvir said he was brought into the Kach group after attending right wing rallies. He started to get to know

[14] Hillel Cohen (historian, Hebrew University of Jerusalem) interviewed by author (February 2007).

its leadership, was taken by their explanations, and eventually joined their ranks. He did not grow up religious or within the more rightist fringes of the settler movement, so his inclusion and prominence in Kach and other groups is in some ways an exception. There is great suspicion within extremist groups of people who come from the "outside"—that is, outside the world of yeshivas and West Bank settlements. They bring each other into the fold of what is already considered to be a trusted circle. There is a focus among the group's usually charismatic leaders on recruiting people with strong beliefs and good mechanical abilities. As difficult as it is to trace group members and their activities, it is even harder to track potential violent actors like Amir who act alone.

The movements, if they supply logistical help, would most likely provide it in the supply of weapons. In the West Bank, many settlers have authorized firearms and it can be easier to get permission to obtain automatic weapons like Uzis and M-16s as well. Sometimes the weapons are stolen from army caches locked up in settlement storehouses for use by settlers in case they come under attack. As Jewish Israelis, they arouse less suspicion than their radical Muslim counterparts. They have access to weapons, can travel anywhere, and are not questioned extensively when traveling.

There is also help and guidance for those who are arrested and face interrogation for extended periods of time. Israel employs something called "administrative detention" for security prisoners. This allows authorities to hold suspects for up to six months without pressing charges. These provisions go back to the British Mandate period. Although Palestinians are the usual subjects of administrative detention, it is occasionally imposed on Israelis as well.

Noam Federman, a leader of one of the splinter groups that originated with Kahane's Kach group, has written a handbook for activists on how to persevere through interrogations. In the handbook he advises those being interrogated not to cooperate at all, including not speaking to the investigators if necessary. Despite the interrogators message that they are alone and only a confession will help them avoid long jail terms, Federman writes that they should remember that they are not alone—that God is with them and if they want to "talk" to someone it should be God and not the investigators.

The method seems to be effective and many suspects have been released because of lack of evidence in turn. Yossi Ben Baruch, a settler radical who Shin Bet suspected of being the mastermind behind the plot by the Bat Ayin Group to blow up the Palestinian girls' school in Jerusalem in 2003, was released after spending 600 days in administrative detention without saying a word to the investigators. He said he locked himself into prayer and cut himself off completely, not even opening his eyes to look at them. Emerging from prison he told waiting supporters and reporters, "I felt that it was a battle of faith against apostasy. There were times when they asked me, 'Why bother praying? Your prayers can't penetrate the concrete here.' I felt like I was battling enemies of God."[15]

The faith of radicals is stronger than that of the mainstream and this is one of their main assets. "It's impossible not to respect the power of faith and personality that can survive these interrogations. The security service needs to understand what kind of people they're up against, how strong they are in their personality and faith. It's similar, in some cases, to fundamentalist Islamic terrorists. Ideologies like these provide immense strength," said Ami Ayalon, a former head of Shin Bet, in the earlier referenced PBS film on Jewish extremism.

EMPLOYING THE LANGUAGE OF RELIGION

Leaders on the extreme Jewish fringe draw entirely upon religious language to justify actions, both violent and non-violent. Extremist actors and groups will not act without the authorization of rabbis who will back them and give them the theological and ideological permission to carry out their activities. For example, Amir said that if he had not had the backing of the public and the rabbis he would not have carried out the assassination of Rabin. In the Jewish texts one can find passages in support of violent action as well as passages against it. This battle over sources is not unique to Jews. What is interesting is the radicals' almost complete disregard for more universal or humanistic texts in favor of the most insular and violent ones.

Also important to note is that in normative Jewish history, biblical battles were described as historical moments, not practical guides for how to act today, said Rabbi David Rosen. "For the first time with religious national extremism, the texts that were seen almost as prehistoric in a sense and part of a historical legacy are now being brought back for use in the current context and used to justify attacks and pre-emptive strikes," he said. For most Jews, idolaters and Amaleks do not apply to the present day but now they are "being plucked out of the past and planted in the political present."

Charismatic leaders, like the American-born Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, who heads a yeshiva in the northern West Bank, have a loyal following of extremist youth who are drawn to their message that the Bible justifies the use of violence. Ginzburg wrote in a memorial book of essays called *Baruch the Hero,* published in memory of Baruch Goldstein, that Jews must be avengers despite the famous biblical instruction not to

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[15] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/israel/etc/script.html.

kill your fellow man. He cites the revenge motive as a founding event in Jewish history, citing the Book of Numbers, verse 3, chapter 3: “And Moses spoke to the people, saying, Arm some of you, and set yourselves in array before the Lord against Madian, to inflict vengeance on Madian from the Lord.” He also employs the biblical phrase that it is good to kill a thief to justify Goldstein’s killing of the Palestinians.

Ginzburg is among the more extreme rabbis who repeatedly tell their followers that fulfillment of God’s prophecy to resettle the Land of Israel is supreme to all other commandments. Another rabbi who contributed to Ginzburg’s book is Ido Elba. In an article entitled "Examination of the Rules Concerning the Murder of Non-Jews," he concluded that the murder of non-Jews can be permitted despite the prohibition against killing in the Ten Commandments. Citing examples from the Book of Joshua, he said the exception is that a Jew can kill a gentile who may eventually kill Jews. Elba ended up serving a brief jail term after the state found him guilty of incitement for publishing the article. Rabbi Yoel Ben-Nun calls *Baruch the Hero* “a dangerous book, and a satanic book. Like too many rays of uranium, it could very negatively influence the youth.”

Yehuda Shaul, a religiously observant political activist who served as a soldier in Hebron, now speaks out against what he saw there. He said he is deeply troubled by the use of religious language in support of violence: “It’s prostituting religion for the sake of nationalism.” He said that, during his time serving in Hebron with his army unit, the soldiers would ask the settlers about violence and why they insisted on breaking the law repeatedly. They told him that there was no law, only Jewish interests to consider. “When the Land of Israel becomes everything, racism and national chauvinism also become everything and from there the distance to violent actions is short.”

Rabbis are not the only ones who employ the language of religion as justification for violence or even a suggested political policy. Lawmaker Benny Elon of the far-right Moledet party said that his idea for a peace plan is based on the idea of mass expulsion of the Palestinians. Elon justified it with a quote from the Book of Numbers (ch. 33 v. 51-52) citing God's words to the Israelites: "When you cross the Jordan to the land of Canaan, you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you."

Sociologist Gidon Aran said that the Jewish tradition itself is one of internal contradictions and tensions, with everything to either justify violence or peace. “When it comes to religious texts, there is an endless reservoir. You can selectively retrieve everything,” he said.

PROSECUTION: MISTAKES MADE, LESSONS LEARNED

Prosecution of crimes committed by far-right religious Jewish extremists has been infrequent and ineffective. There is a feeling of frustration on the part of security officials and human rights activists that the rule of law is continually flaunted. Officials said in interviews that the government, justice ministry, police, and attorney general have not responded as they should. By contrast, Israeli authorities have been very effective at tracking and foiling attacks by Palestinian Muslim fundamentalists. Some suggest the police and Shin Bet borrow from what they have learned in dealing with Palestinian militants. But because these extremists are Israeli citizens, the authorities have less legal leeway with them than with Palestinians, who are not privy to the same rights.

Despite what are termed the “wake-up” calls of the Hebron massacre and Rabin’s assassination in the 1990s, Jewish extremists are still not seen as a major threat, especially when compared with the ongoing threat of suicide bombings and other attacks by Palestinian militants. “Jews who are religious fanatics and are aggressive and violent are not considered by the majority as endangering lives,” said Amnon Rubenstein, a leading Israeli legal expert and former education minister. Furthermore, when it comes to addressing the Jewish extremists there are not just the practical issues of arrests, investigations, and prosecutions—there is also the crucial issue of political will.

Even though Jewish extremists are by no means supported by the Israeli establishment, there are right-wing members of the Knesset and the politically influential settlers’ council who speak out regularly and impose political pressure when security officials crack down with administrative detention orders. In rare cases they even ban certain individuals from entering the West Bank. Following the arrest this April of a rabbi on suspicion of incitement, the Yesha Council, which represents the mainstream of the settler movement, said in a statement, that the arrest was “religious persecution, which reminds us of dark ages in which rabbis were persecuted for edicts that failed to please Israel's enemies.”[16]

Most of the extremist camp resides in Jewish settlements in the West Bank, a region referred to often in Israeli circles as “The Wild West,” a reference to its reputation for lawlessness among the settler population. Soldiers and police are often criticized for turning a blind eye to settler violence and vigilantism against Palestinians. Effective prosecution requires solid investigation but the police force in the West

[16] March 12, 2007 statement from the Yesha Rabbinical Council, as reported by *Yediot Ahronot* (http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3375381,00.html).

Bank lacks both the manpower and the budget, human rights workers active in the area say. Files are often closed quickly, if they are opened at all, and the evidence usually gathered is thin and inconclusive, according to a Yesh Din report. Because extremist activists know the odds are low that they will be convicted in a court for injuring a Palestinian or his property, they have the incentive to do as they please. A Yesh Din report published in 2006 found that 90 percent of complaints by Palestinians to the police in 2005 and 2006 about Israeli civilians harming them or their property ended with the case itself being closed or the investigation file lost.

In addition, police and soldiers stationed in the West Bank are not given much incentive to be tough on violence committed by Jews. They know that the punishments tend to be light and that, if they turn a blind eye, their advancement will not be negatively affected. On the contrary, taking on violent settlers might only hurt their careers because of the political clout and pressure of the settler constituency, despite its relatively small size.

Security officials say that it is difficult to monitor extremist activities because of civil liberty laws, including the need to get permission for wire taps. Among such highly ideological and closed groups intelligence gathering is very challenging, say former Shin Bet officials, arguing for greater freedom to monitor them legally using advanced technology. Meanwhile, some even warn that the lack of law enforcement by Israeli authorities is leading to the formation of a state within a state among settlers in the West Bank; that without realizing it, Israel has entered into a battle over sovereignty. Army officers have said that in some areas like Hebron, they feel they are not in control of the situation, according to a report by the group Keshev. Danny Rothschild, a retired major general who was formerly the Israeli army's coordinator of activities in the West Bank and Gaza, said, "We have sometimes closed our eyes, believing that things are going to settle down, and they are not. …It's not raining, they are spitting on our heads."[17]

Concessions to radical groups can lead to a vicious circle that begets more violence. Some experts point to the example of right-wing activists in the early 1970s who illegally took over the first sites in the West Bank, sites that would become settlements following government capitulation. This set a pattern in which the law would be flaunted and eventually the government would give in. It began with property issues and has now escalated to include physical violence.

One issue is how those crimes are defined. Carmi Gillon, the head of Israel's security service at the time of Rabin's assassination, said he had repeatedly warned before Rabin's death that there needed to be tougher laws and enforcement against crimes of incitement. For example, he said that Yigal Amir was very much encouraged by the incitements he heard from rabbis and right-wing leaders at rallies and in interviews in the months ahead of November 2005 when he decided to assassinate the prime minister. "We gave into them politically and legally and we pay a heavy price for that," Gillon said.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert himself recently told the government that the authorities have been lenient for too long with settlers who are breaking the law, but little action has followed. The government and its typically sluggish response to developments and the failure of successive governments to take a firm stance on radicals—either for reasons of political weakness or lack of determination—has encouraged the hardcore elements among Israeli extremists.

The one exception was how the government of then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon handled threats to topple plans for Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. The lesson learned there was that a respect for authority follows when the establishment presents a strong and determined front. For about a year ahead of the withdrawal, thousands of security forces trained ahead of the evacuations. Masses of them were on the ground when the evacuation began, dressed in black jumpsuits and instructed not to respond to verbal assaults by demonstrators. If they were physically provoked they responded swiftly with arrests. Their sheer force of numbers seemed to play a major role in deflecting demonstrators, who realized they were outnumbered, from carrying out dangerous acts. Furthermore, Sharon's reputation for being a strong and tough leader who would not tolerate any action beyond civil disobedience also seemed to send a message.

Today, tough questions are again at hand—ones neither Israeli society nor government are in a rush to answer—that target the very character of the state both as Jewish and democratic. How the state reacts when both of those central tenants are challenged from within is an ongoing concern. Some argue that the threat posed by Jewish radicals is the real threat to the country, more than Palestinian attacks, because in the dispute between a secular democratic Israel and those looking for a theocracy are the seeds of possible civil war. Political activist Yehuda Shaul is among those sounding a warning bell: "In my opinion if we don't do something soon, we won't survive as a society."

POSSIBLE COUNTER-STRATEGIES

Stuttered starts and stops and much waffling has accompanied the Israeli establishment's approach to dealing with the threat posed by Israel's far right, which include a small number of radical, potentially violent individuals and groups. Most key in a successful

[17] Interview with author, January 2006.

counter-strategy would be setting and sticking to a firm policy that would deal decisively with infringements of the rule of law. The other key component of a successful strategy is for the authorities to understand the radicals as much as they can—their faith, mentality, background, history, and ideology.

The West Bank is the main problem area when it comes to law enforcement. The rule of law needs to be enforced there as it is inside Israel proper. Among the first things that would need to happen there is for the army, which has a much larger presence on the ground than the police, to take a more active role in cracking down on Israeli citizens who carry out violent acts.

Soldiers should be instructed to intervene when it comes to assaults on Palestinians and take suspects to the closest police station so investigations can begin. Currently the army focuses on a policy of "securing the area," but does little to protect the local Palestinian population.

The police and army need to work as closely as possible inside Israel proper and in the West Bank—a physical presence on the ground backed by arrests and investigations when needed can send a powerful message. The police and army also have to coordinate closely with Shin Bet. All three bodies need to share intelligence and coordinate investigations and operations. Following more effective investigations the public also needs to know that the end result will be harsher punishments. Just as Palestinian or Arab Israeli threats are closely monitored and prosecuted, so, too, should threats from the radical Jewish sector.

Key to any counter-strategy would be outreach to the moderates in Israel's national religious sector. Their voice needs to be strengthened in their communities; otherwise, space is left for the extremists to fill the void. A dialogue between the authorities and the moderates can also help raise the profile and prestige of the moderates. The more the moderates feel involved and valued by the state, the more they will act to help preserve its stature in their communities. Coordinating with the moderates also provides valuable information and insights into their communities—what is driving them, what is frustrating them, etc. Moderate rabbis, teachers, and community leaders have the best chance of reaching out to their youth, especially the potentially dangerous disaffected ones, showing them that there are alternatives to embracing a radical ideology. In the meantime, those yeshivas or institutions that receive state-funding but preach violence and radical acts against the state should have their budgets cut off.

Because intelligence gathering is often cited as a major problem for the security service, strengthening of legislation such as wire-tapping provisions should perhaps be considered in some cases. State of the art technology for both monitoring those deemed dangerous suspects and for protecting important sites will also be important in the future. For example, the mosques on the Temple Mount need to be guarded not just with standard police and army forces but with top security technology.

Finally, a strict procedure for the licensing of weapons, specifically automatic weapons, should be in place across Israel—including the West Bank, where it is considered easier to get a license for a weapon. Already the community there is heavily armed, which poses the threat of local militias in the future.

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Gideon Aran is a sociologist at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has researched Jewish extremism in Israel as well as religious fundamentalists abroad and was a participant in the University of Chicago's "Fundamentalism Project."

Rabbi Arik Asherman is director of Rabbis for Human Rights, a group that promotes justice and freedom, while campaigning against discrimination and inhumane conduct.

Yizhar Beer serves as executive director of Keshev, The Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel. Keshev tracks Jewish extremist movements.

Rabbi Yoel Ben-Nun is a leading moderate figure in the Jewish settler camp. He is among the original founders of Gush Emunim, the founding organization of the settler movement. Ben-Nun was criticized for his moderation after Rabin's assassination.

Itamar Ben-Gvir is a far-right activist who holds multiple criminal convictions. He works closely with youth activists aligned with groups splintered off from Kach.

Assaf Cheffetz was head of the Israeli national police force from 1994 to 1998. Cheffetz founded the police's counterterrorism division.

Hillel Cohen is a historian of Israeli history and a researcher at the Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Akiva Eldar is a political columnist at *Haaretz*. He cowrote a book on the settler movement with Idit Zertal (also interviewed for this project—see below).

Dror Etkes of Peace Now is the director of the organization's Settlement Watch program, which tracks settlement activity in the West Bank.

Carmi Gillon directed Shin Bet from 1995 to 1996. He was dismissed after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. He is also former director of Shin Bet's Jewish desk and oversaw arrests of the Jewish Underground in the mid 1980s.

Elyakim Ha'Etzni is a former Knesset member and leading settler ideologue.

Israel Harel is a founder of the settlement movement. He is also a columnist for *Haaretz* and is considered a moderate in national religious circles.

Chezi Kallow was head of Shin Bet's Jewish desk from 1993 to1996.

Yosef (Tommy) Lapid served as justice minister under former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. He also led the secularist Shinui party.

Hanan Moses is a doctoral student at Bar-Ilan University studying streams in religious Zionism.

Daniel Robinson is a researcher of Israeli social history.

Rabbi David Rosen, the former chief rabbi of Ireland, is international director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee based in Jerusalem.

Amnon Rubenstein served as education minister. A long-time Israeli politician, he is now retired from politics.

Yehuda Shaul is a religiously observant political activist who served as a soldier in Hebron who now speaks out against the behavior of the Jewish settlers there.

Rabbi Yuval Sherlow heads a yeshiva in Petach Tikva. Sherlow is among the leading moderate rabbis in the national religious sector.

Nadav Shragai covers the Jewish settler movement for *Haaretz*. Shragai wrote a book on the Temple Mount Faithful.

Lior Yavne directs Yesh Din, an Israeli non-profit group that monitors the human rights situation in the West Bank.

Hillel Weiss is a member of the modern Sanhedrin, which claims to be renewing the ancient Jewish high court in anticipation of the rebuilding of another Jewish Temple. He is also professor of Hebrew literature at Bar-Ilan University.

Idit Zertal is an author and historian of Israeli social history. Zertal coauthored (with Akiva Eldar) *Masters of the Land*, a history of the Jewish settler movement.

3. VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thalia Tzanetti

INTRODUCTION

The London bombings in 2005 raised challenging and urgent questions as to how to address the increasing radicalization and extremism of young British Muslims and the potential security threat this radicalization poses. A lot of effort has been put into better comprehending the complexities behind an individual's choice to commit violence in the name of Islam. Motivations, triggers, justifications, and underlying factors have been at the center of research and analysis, which have provided a better and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of violent extremism in the United Kingdom. But, in turn, new and more complex questions have been raised.

This chapter will explore the reasons behind the appeal of the extremist message, the indoctrination and recruitment mechanisms, the level of logistical support from the extremist movement to violent actors, tipping points to violence, the use of religious language to justify violent acts, as well as lessons learned. The analysis that follows has been informed by the existing literature, a number of interviews conducted especially for this project, as well as the author's previous interviews and research.

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify the specific target population on which this chapter focuses. We are interested in examining not extremism among Muslims in general, but violent extremism in particular. Although only a minority of extremists is likely to commit violent acts, the focus is exactly on them and what makes violence possible. Also, we are deliberately concentrating on the 'foot-soldiers' and not the leading figures of radical Islam. The motivations and triggers for violent action are not the same for the two groups and leading figures are not very likely to commit violent acts (at least not anymore). Despite their involvement in facilitating, inciting, or glorifying violence, it is the 'foot-soldiers' who are more likely to resort to violence and thus they will be our focus here

The chapter outlines the historical background of Muslim communities in the Kingdom, as well as the current socio-economic and political context in which they exist. It then explores the rise of Islamic revivalism among young Muslims and analyzes the radicalization process and the choice to commit violent acts. Finally, the policy implications are synthesized from the research findings.

BACKGROUND

The first sizeable Muslim populations arrived in the United Kingdom after World War II. Post-war reconstruction needs in Britain meant there was high demand for unskilled and low-skilled labor. Soon after, the first restrictions on immigration were introduced after the economic recession of the 1950s. One of these restrictions, the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, ended up having the opposite of its intended effect of curbing immigration. During the years before the Act, as restrictions were considered imminent, there was an increase in economic migration. Immigrants already in Britain were also reluctant to visit their home countries since there was no guarantee they would be able to return. As those who had arrived earlier were predominantly men who had left their families behind, a second immigration wave followed shortly afterwards, triggered by family reunification programs that were widely used in the 1960s. As a result of this second wave, immigrant communities no longer consisted primarily of men but of families. This contributed to these communities becoming permanent as whole families now resided together. Later, in the 1990s, the most recent influx of Muslims took place. This time however, the motive was not economic migration; most of the new arrivals were refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict and oppressive regimes in their home countries.

Since the settlement of the first Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, relations with non-Muslim communities have witnessed numerous crises and tensions. Some of the most prominent examples of tension included the demands for better schooling, housing, and job opportunities in the 1980s, and the 2001 race riots in Oldham, Leeds, and Bradford that followed inflammatory moves from the British National Party (BNP).[1] Another event that became a milestone for intercommunity relations was the "Rushdie Affair." The publication of book *The Satanic Verses*, which included implied insults to the Prophet Mohammad, resulted in angered demonstrations by Muslims, demands for the withdrawal of the book from circulation, and a book-burning ceremony.[2]

Most recently, foreign policy has been at center stage, with many Muslims (and non-Muslims) loudly voicing their disapproval of their government's policies. As

[1] Malik, *Islam and Modernity*, 82.
[2] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*.

Pnina Werbner points out, "[t]he fact that British Muslims feel secure enough in Britain to enunciate a discourse of political dissent in times of crisis attests to their rootedness in British society."[3] At the same time, however, ongoing tensions are clear evidence of deeply rooted problems that call for urgent attention and carefully chosen policies.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CLIMATE

Recent data and analysis have shed some much-needed light on important aspects related to the socioeconomic and political climate facing Muslims in the United Kingdom, and they have also clearly demonstrated the importance of the religious identifier for Muslims. According to the 2001 census, 95 percent of Muslims consider religion to be 'very' or 'fairly' important in their lives. Among all minority religious groups, only family was placed higher than religion when respondents were asked about the most important factors in describing themselves.

Most importantly, the inclusion of the religious affiliation question in the 2001 census, along with recent research, has allowed for the gathering of valuable data nationwide on the quality of life of Muslims. These data have, to a large extent, confirmed previous estimates and assumptions regarding the relative deprivation and vulnerability of Muslims. The 'Muslim penalty' is particularly evident when examining indicators such as economic activity, education, and household size,

According to official figures, Britain's 1.5 million Muslims (3.1 percent of the total population) is the youngest and fastest-growing faith group in the country. The Muslim community's large number of younger adults also reflects continuing immigration to the United Kingdom, as less than half of the country's Muslim population is native-born. The large numbers of people in the 'prime' economically active age reflects high birth rates in the 1960s and 1970s following primary immigration.[4] In addition to the influence of these factors, the young marrying age of Muslim women (the youngest average marrying age for women in any faith group in the United Kingdom), also has some effect. One study cites average family size of approximately four children for Pakistani-British and five children for Bangladeshi-British women, compared with 1.8 for white British women.[5] In terms of ethnic origin, 43 percent of British Muslims are reported to be of Pakistani origin, 17 percent Bangladeshi, 9 percent Indian, 12 percent white, 6 percent other Asian, 7 percent black, 4 percent from 'Other' ethnic groups, and 4 percent report to have one white parent. This great diversity within Britain's Muslim population necessarily means that we really should be talking about Muslim populations rather than assuming a unified community when none may really exist.

Economic figures clearly confirm fears of relative economic deprivation of Muslims. As Muhammad Anwar notes, "If Muslims are disadvantaged in the workplace, they are disadvantaged both economically and socially in a society that defines status largely by references to employment."[6] Muslim populations appear to have low participation rates in the formal labor market and the highest male unemployment rate, while their occupations appear to be skewed towards blue-collar jobs. The unemployment rate among Muslims aged 16-24 was nearly 18 percent in 2001 and for those 25 and over, the rate of unemployment was just under 14 percent (while the national average for the 25-plus age group was only 4 percent). The vulnerable profile of the Muslim population is also evidenced in the occupational composition of the Muslim male population aged 25 and over. Muslims have the lowest proportion of men in white-collar positions (42 percent), compared to a national average of 50 percent, and the highest proportion of men in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations (33.7 percent).[7] Also, there is often little prospect of career progression due to the high percentage of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men who work in trades such as taxi driving and restaurants.

A key factor of the economic marginality of the Muslim population when compared to other faith groups is the low representation of women in the workforce. According to the latest census, only 29 percent of women 25 and older are economically active, while the national average for the same age cohort is 59 percent. The low female participation rate may be a consequence of relatively early and almost universal marriage for young women, early start to reproduction, and large family size. Around half of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were looking after the home or family full-time, with a further quarter permanently sick and disabled or out of the labor market for other reasons.[8]

It has also been observed that Muslims have the highest dependence on social housing, the highest degree of flat living, the highest degree of over-crowding, and a high degree of concentration in areas of economic difficulty and social deprivation. In 2001, the average household size for Muslims was 3.8, compared to a national average of 2.4. Research suggests that overcrowding is an indicator of low income and also possibly unhealthy physical and

[3] Werbner, *The Predicament of Diaspora.*
[4] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities*, 17.
[5] Sporton and White, *Population Projections by Ethnic Group*.
[6] Anwar, "Muslims in Britain," in Abbas, Muslim Britain, 35.
[7] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities*, 19.
[8] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities*.

mental living conditions. It is believed that the higher the percentage of children brought up in overcrowded conditions, the poorer the living conditions of a community and the worse their children's life chances.[9]

In terms of education, the picture remains grim but with a few noteworthy changes. Among people aged 16-64, 41 percent of Muslims still had no educational qualifications in 2001. This is by far the highest figure among faith groups nationwide. The next lowest group was Sikhs, at 32 percent. For all other religious groups, the figure was less than 30 percent. At the same time, however, younger Muslim women tend to be better educated than older Muslim women. Recent research has demonstrated that young Muslim women are not prevented from engaging in higher education as much as in the past and mothers appear anxious that their daughters should have an academic qualification, which would help facilitate their returning to work after having children.

Research has also demonstrated that Muslims feel they lack sufficient and effective representation in the political process. As Ira Lapidus has pointed out:

"[I]n the 1990, Muslims in Britain still participated in politics, and won increasing recognition in British public life. An umbrella Muslim council of Britain was created in 1997, and the first Muslim MP was elected. Three Muslims have been appointed to the House of Lords. In 1998 Muslims won the same rights to state-funded schools as Christians and Jew; the 2001 census included a religious affiliation question and Islamic studies are burgeoning in British universities. There is an active Muslim press. Despite the gains, the sense of alienation remains very strong, as do antagonisms between Muslims and other Britons."[10]

In short, despite the unquestionable progress made since the settlement of the first Muslim communities in Britain, the picture of relative economic, political, and social deprivation remains. Mainstream Britain, as many other European societies, still struggles to deal with the permanent presence of a sizeable Muslim population and the subsequent effects and dilemmas.

EMERGENCE OF ISLAMIC REVIVALISM

The first generation of immigrants from Muslim countries, although they naturally identified with the culture of their native countries, chose to maintain their "religious and cultural norms hidden within the private realm or community spheres."[11] By making the choice to leave their home countries, it was assumed that they would have to "submit to cultural, social and political dominance by a non-Muslim majority" for evident economic benefits.[12] The sacrifices and cultural concessions were viewed as a prerequisite for a better future.

Unlike their parents, however, the younger generations have grown up in Britain, they have been educated in British schools, and have very good knowledge of their social and institutional environment. They have limited experience of their parents' homeland, and the "traditional points of reference" of their parents have become obsolete."[13] They have the natural assertiveness of their British upbringing, yet they are still considered, to a great extent, more as outsiders than British and a significant incongruity between their aspirations and the available opportunities remains. For these generations of Muslims, it is difficult to fully belong to and identify with either the native or the adopted country of their parents, since they borrow elements of both. David Morley has pointed out that "[t]he rhetorical country of a person or a character ends where his interlocutors no longer understand the reasons he gives for his actions, the criticisms he makes or the enthusiasms he displays. …Home is where you can be recognized (as the particular person you are and as one of the category of normal persons) by others... One of the most deeply wearing effects of exile is the undermining of a person's dignity and self-confidence as a result of the predominant lack of such recognition."[14] The limited first-hand experience with the parents' homeland, despite the continual renewal of ties through marriage, travel, and improved communications, does not allow young British Muslims to fully identify with their parental heritage. The lack of or problematic recognition by the British mainstream and British institutions makes it hard for young Muslims to identify with their parents' adopted country.

Young Muslims in Britain try hard to mediate between two identities but can fully identify with neither.[15] It is worth noting that such a process is highly individualized and it is difficult to predict its outcomes. "[I]n reality, an individual chooses to emphasize certain identifiers while discarding others as insignificant."[16] Through this process of identity formation or reconstruction, some are encouraged to "take up the 'struggle' more vigorously, while others seek to adopt more Western values."[17] We can safely say though, within the current context, there seems to be a strong need for an identifier that is based on "a multidimensional notion of an individual's distinct self-awareness."[18]

The primacy of religion in self-description for Muslims,[19] which has been highlighted and analyzed

[9] Ibid.
[10] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*.
[11] Abbas, "British South Asian Muslims," 13.
[12] Khan, "Muslim Presence in Europe," 37.
[13] Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds*, 193.
[14] Morley, *Home Territories*.
[15] Malik, *Islam and Modernity*, 65.
[16] Husain and O'Brien, "Muslim Communities in Europe," 1-13.
[17] Abbas, "British South Asian Muslims," 16.
[18] Husain and O'Brien, "Muslim Communities in Europe," 1-13.
[19] See Modood, et al.,"Ethnic Minorities in Britain."

by researchers for several years, was confirmed by Britain's 2001 census. Religion has undoubtedly emerged as a major social signifier among young Muslims, but not primarily as an "outcome of parental or community influence."[20] Muslim youth do not identify with the Islam of their parents, which they often reject as archaic or embedded in local traditions and cultural practices. On the contrary, it is the lack of a welcoming and sufficiently representative alternative that makes the Islamic identity (as each individual defines it) particularly appealing to many Muslims; "religion has become a stable and fixed identifier in a sea of changes marked by migration, sociocultural differences, political upheaval and economic globalization."[21] For the Muslim youth that choose an Islamic identity, Islam provides a much-needed sense of belonging, solidarity, and a means of political mobilization.[22] Islam constitutes a chosen identity for many by emphasizing difference.[23] Kepel has also argued that by choosing Islam, young Muslims choose a collective identity that enables them to negotiate and improve their position.[24] Poston has suggested that Islam is appealing because it offers "a structure to individuals' lives at a time when they feel their life chances are determined wholly by external forces over which they have no control."[25]

The raised international profile of the faith is likely also adding to the popularity of Islam as an identifier for young Muslims.[26] Islam is not only internationally visible today but it is also perceived as the primary 'other,' thus developing into a resistance identity for those seeking one.[27] As one scholar explains, "what attracts is the idea of resisting the dominant, negative hegemony. Islam provides the vehicle for political mobilization in relation to economic exclusion, and group solidarity in connection with social exclusion."[28] Olivier Roy also points out that this appeal is not limited to Muslims: "for a rebel, to convert is to find a cause."[29]

Islam is also proving particularly appealing to younger generations of Muslims due to their sense of 'statelessness.' Islam is by its nature a supra-national institution. Belonging to the global community of Muslims, the *umma*, is not a matter of being British, Pakistani, or recognized as such.[30] The terms of reference change altogether and ethnicity and geography are rendered irrelevant.[31] Young Muslims "strongly identify with the message of Allah because it transcends them all."[32]

FROM ISLAMIC REVIVALISM TO EXTREMISM

As young Muslims question the 'purity' of their parents' religious faith and practices, they attempt to reinvent or redefine "an Islam free of local traditions and cultural practices."[33] According to Olivier Roy, this rejection of family and communal tradition "privileges self-instruction and an insistence on emotional faith rather than theology and traditional rituals" and in this way "intellectual and theological debates give way to the expression of a personal relationship to faith, deity and knowledge."[34] This personalization of the faith can make it ideal as an identifier for individuals who are in search of an identity and also find traditional ethnic or national affiliations insufficient. For similar reasons, though, neofundamentalism and extremism seem to be enjoying a disturbing popularity among Muslim youth. "Neofundamentalism is particularly appealing to alienated youth because it turns their cultural alienation into a justification for forging a universal Islam stripped of customs and traditions and thus adaptable to all societies... [F]undamentalism offers a system for regulating behavior in any situation."[35]

Radical Islam has benefited significantly from this turn to religion and has very successfully utilized to its advantage the frustrations and concerns of its target audience, as well as this need for a 'personal relationship' with the faith. Although radicalization paths may vary and in most cases can only be identified as such and examined with hindsight, they rarely involve exposure to the radical message from the beginning. Radicalization seems to be gradual, with the conversation, in the early stages, focusing on issues of common or personal relevance that can eventually be tied to Islam and serve as an entry-point to a more radical rhetoric.[36] Issues like how to be a good Muslim in a non-Muslim country, unemployment, or how to stay away from drugs and crime can be of great concern to young Muslims and focusing discussions on such issues at the outset can also result in building trust and credibility. After identifying the most relevant concerns and issues, "[activists] are careful to let the individual come to his or her own conclusion about the issue through conversation and dialogue... The objective is to give the individual ownership over his or her decision to look deeper into Islam."[37]

Gradually, disparate issues are framed as evidence of a "widespread war against Islam" and a "simple

[20] Peach, "Muslims in the UK, 12.
[21] Husain and O'Brien, "Muslim Communities in Europe," 1-13.
[22] Akhtar, "'(Re)turn to Religion' and Radical Islam," 165.
[23] Robins and Morley, Spaces of Identity. According to Robins and Morley, "difference is constitutive of identity."
[24] Kepel, *Allah and the West*.
[25] As mentioned in Kepel, *Allah in the West.*
[26] Peach, "Muslims in the UK," 18.
[27] Ameli, *Globalization, Americanization and British Muslim Identity*.
[28] Akhtar, "'(Re)turn to Religion' and Radical Islam," 169.
[29] Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 49.
[30] Akhtar, "'(Re)turn to Religion' and Radical Islam," 168.
[31] Schmidt, "Islamic Identity Formation among Young Muslims," 31-45.
[32] Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bomb*, 186.
[33] Husain and O'Brien, "Muslim Communities in Europe," 1-13.
[34] Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 28-29.
[35] Ibid.
[36] More on this in Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising.*
[37] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 97

parable of oppressors and victims" is built up.[38] "Radical Islamic groups can capitalize on the social and economic disaffection of individuals, or political grievances, and unite these together in simple moral terms. ... All Muslims everywhere are depicted as the victims of one credible oppressor. Oppressive regimes and social, economic, and symbolic exclusion are merged together under the banner of discrimination against Islam from the 'West'... Radicalism is thus presented as the only alternative enabling individuals to influence power structures and, in so doing, better their life chances." [39] Thus, "[r]adical Islam [becomes] the only alternative to 'the system.'"[40]

Radical Islam is also benefiting from the relatively limited knowledge of Islam among many younger British Muslims and a prevalent 'authority gap' Many from the younger generations seeking religion lack the necessary understanding of Islam to be able to evaluate the accuracy of the rhetoric they are exposed to. Many are exploring their faith for the first time.[41] They are therefore in a poor position to assess what they are introduced to or to compare the radical rhetoric with alternative voices. Their questioning of their parents' version of Islam, along with a sometimes deeply-felt generation gap, is often translated into suspicion against the religious institutions, as well as the community's institutions and organizations. The resulting authority gap has been very successfully utilized by radicals.

Several factors can contribute to an individual's process of radicalization. Social networks and the influence of spiritual leaders remain significant, but important changes have been taking place in the recent years. Due to the attention given to and the widely known surveillance of public figures or places with known links to extremism, extremist networks have adopted new methods to indoctrinate and recruit—primarily moving from the public world [mosques] and into private homes or other non-affiliated locations.[42] Mosques are rarely used openly for preaching anymore. Extremists may still operate on the margins, although with increasing difficulty. Youth clubs, gyms, Islamic bookshops, and other locations have also been used for indoctrination and group bonding. Another common feature for several cells seems to be the use of outdoor activities. Activities like rafting, camping, canoeing, boyscout trips, or paintballing can serve a number of purposes, depending on the participants. They can be used to identify candidates for indoctrination, group bonding or "for more direct indoctrination or operational training and planning."[43]

Radicalization does not necessarily take the form of close association with a radical cleric or a radical group. As extremists try to escape the attention of intelligence and law enforcement agencies, the radical message is more often disseminated through personal mentors or written and audiovisual material. The Internet has also been widely and increasingly used by extremists—a trend this report has noted in the other case studies. Sermons, religious texts, websites, chat rooms, and blogs addressing a variety of issues can relatively easily be found, as well as detailed manuals on bomb-making, physical training, and other material. Extremists have benefited from easy access to the web, and the anonymity it can provide, and have managed to reach a very wide, diverse, and predominantly young audience. The extensive use of this medium by extremists, along with the incapacity to effectively monitor online discussions and activity, is a serious concern in the United Kingdom.

Another serious challenge for intelligence and law enforcement agencies, for which the extensive use of Internet has served as an important enabler, is the emergence of the phenomenon of self-radicalization. Increasingly, "the first crucial steps of radicalization—reading books, surfing the net, talking with likeminded friends—do not have to be masterminded by [an extremist] network. Individuals can start the journey alone, or within a small group of friends, at a local sports club, youth centre, or in a student society at university."[44] In addition to top-down radicalization and indoctrination processes, which may still be active, new bottom-up processes have emerged. Young Muslims can discover and explore radical Islam on their own or with friends and they feed off each other's radicalization. Group bonding and increasing radicalization often go hand-in-hand as groups get familiar with the teachings of radical clerics or access extremist websites and blogs. Bottom-up radicalization is especially worrisome due to the obvious difficulties of detection. Individuals and small groups may be entirely self-radicalized, without any links to known extremist networks. They may be meeting in private homes, youth clubs, bookstores, and gyms and in this way avoid raising suspicion and thus detection.

FROM EXTREMISM TO VIOLENCE

As we saw above, in earlier stages, the message is rarely openly radical or clearly religious. Although many arguments are often perceived as religious, due to the way they are framed or the source of the message, most times they have little to do with religion and more to do with real and perceived injustices and grievances of Muslims, domestically and

[38] House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*, 32.
[39] Akhtar. "'(Re)turn to Religion' and Radical Islam," 165.
[40] Ibid., 176.
[41] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 127.
[42] House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*, 31.
[43] Ibid., 17.
[44] Mirza, Senthikumaran and Ja'far. *Living apart together*, 14.

internationally. Despite the exaggerations, conspiracy theories, and Manichean terms that we tend to associate with religious rhetoric (e.g., 'Crusaders against Islam,' 'war against Islam,' etc.), the main message is usually centered on discrimination rather than theology.

At later stages, though, as individual commitment has already been strengthened, the religious justification for action, and particularly violent action, becomes of greater importance. Even if the "grooming" of earlier phases is successful, either through bottom-up (e.g., self-radicalization through the Internet or among group of friends) or top-down (e.g., with the guidance of a mentor, radical groups' activities aimed at indoctrination) processes, it may encourage some kind of mobilization but it will not necessarily lead to violence or self-sacrifice.[45] Individuals are not likely to accept such "high-risk activism" even when the motivation for action is already present.[46] Religion therefore becomes instrumental for radical Islam in two ways: justifying violence and introducing rewards for those who choose to take up such action, thus changing the assessment of the involved risk and cost.

A practical example of such rhetoric and how it is received is the video statement of Mohammed Siddique Khan, who was one of the four suicide bombers of the London attacks on July 7, 2005. He was the oldest of the group and the assumed ringleader. The text of his statement was as follows:

"Our driving motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer.

"Our religion is Islam—obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Mohammed...This is how our ethical stances are dictated.

"Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters.

"Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. Wearer at war and I am a solider. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation....

"I myself, I make du'a[*sic*] to Allah....to raise me amongst those whom I love like the prophets, the messengers, the martyrs and today's heroes like our beloved Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and all the other brothers and sisters that are fighting in the...of this cause."[47]

As in most cases of extremists already determined to take up violent action, the motivation seems to be a "fierce antagonism to perceived injustices by the West and a desire for martyrdom."[48] An interesting aspect of Khan's video, which also points to the instrumentalization of religion by radical Islam, is his focus on "the importance of martyrdom as supreme evidence of religious commitment."[49] By presenting religious justifications for violent jihad in the Quran and the Hadith, radicals provide a significant catalyst for violent mobilization since they introduce a framework in which natural concerns and reservations become irrelevant. Committing violent acts or even killing oneself, which in most cases is not a legitimate act in an individual's mind, is suddenly presented through a different lens and is glorified. Also by emphasizing the rewards awaiting martyrs in paradise, violent action becomes more than high-risk, high-cost mobilization for a sacred cause; violent action becomes desirable since it involves what one scholar calls 'spiritual self-interest.' As he explains:

"The cornerstone of the culturing process is the initial premise that one must fulfill God's command and follow *tawhid* or risk individual salvation. For the movement, God's commands include risky activism. Socialized to deeply believe this premise, individuals who internalize the norms are likely to accept high-risk activism. Serving God is the only way to salvation... In fact, for individuals who become 'intellectually affiliated' (i.e. have accepted the movement ideology), deviations from the ideological template will jeopardize their prospect of salvation and thus self-interest. In short, *inaction violates self-interest.*

"Action is indeed influenced by belief in a set of religious values and all the accompanying divine commands, but individuals are still driven by spiritual self-interest."[50]

Notions like jihad and tawhid[51] have had numerous interpretations and they are not fixed concepts. The interpretations each individual chooses is significantly influenced by how such notions relate to his or her own experiences and concerns. As Ansari explains "[the] understanding of the role of violence...would seem to be shaped in complex and fluid ways. In essence, they would seem to be influenced more by individual and collective experiences and perceptions of the political contexts, both domestic and international, than by acceptance of some reified and homogeneous

[45] House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings.*
[46] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising.*

[47] House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*, 19.
[48] *Ibid.*, 26.
[49] *Ibid.*, 19.
[50] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 200.
[51] Tawhid is the Islamic assertion of monotheism and the unity of God, specifically to discount the idolatry and polytheism that was common in Arabia during the life of the Prophet Muhammad

prescriptions from the past... [I]nterpretations and understandings of issues such as *jihad* and martyrdom must be located in the context that exists at any given time for their impact to be properly and fully understood."[52] Radical Islam is successful in identifying and reinforcing this context. Activists have proven very good at identifying, reinforcing, and highlighting the personal relevance that notions like jihad and martyrdom can have for individuals. By making them relevant and linking them to issues or personal and common concern, they have managed to create an explosive mix that can be sufficient for some to choose violent action.

Within this context, the return of jihad veterans to the United Kingdom has reasonably been a very serious concern. British Muslims returning from jihad fronts in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Chechnya combine religious credentials, since they have proven their determination to die for their faith, the appeal of a fighter, and they have also practical operational experience, often in urban warfare. In other words, they can serve as mentors, role models, or just offer their know-how to aspiring violent extremists. Radicals in general tend to present themselves as positive role models and if upon their return, jihad veterans set an example and become role models for young Muslims, violence may become an easier and more popular choice.[53]

Given the asymmetry involved (disproportionately limited resources needed to achieve great numbers of casualties), the commercial availability of material needed for attacks, the available know-how, and the recent trend of small, autonomous cells, external support is no longer a prerequisite for violent or terrorist acts. Especially with the increased risk of detection while trying to approach known (to aspiring violent activists as well as the authorities) extremist networks along with the pivotal role the Internet plays, groups can and in many recent cases have indeed chosen to act independently. The marriage of decentralization and increased radicalization among Muslim youth has dramatically changed the threat environment not only in the U.K. but in several European countries. Intelligence and law enforcement agencies have repeatedly warned that "[w]ith the growing breeding ground for radicalization among young Muslims, in combination with the increasing role of the Internet and the apparent ready access to expertise on home-made explosives provided by this medium, the risk that more self-radicalized individuals will materialize is growing. Radicalized individuals with sufficient technical skills should be considered capable of preparing and committing terrorist acts independently or with the help of a virtual network."[54]

Despite the observed decentralization and increased autonomous capabilities, we should not conclude that centralized structures are becoming extinct. Due to greater surveillance, new legislation, and the intensified efforts of the authorities, it has become more difficult than it used to be for large organizations to plan or openly support operations without being detected and thus endangering their own survival. But this does not mean that there has been a permanent shift of radical groups' attention away from such activities and it does not mean that they will not use any future gaps in the authorities' attention to resume their activities and further their cause. Therefore, the only safe conclusion from recent cases and research is that hierarchical structures are not a prerequisite anymore for individuals to become radicalized, for groups to become operational, and for attacks to be carried out.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To identify specific policy recommendations on issues like housing policies, amendments of the recent anti-terror legislation, or representative organizations of British Muslims lies beyond the capabilities and scope of this chapter. Any practical recommendations would need the expertise of a number of disciplines and would be very specific to the situation in the U.K. to be of value to a comparative study like the one this project attempts to make. It cannot be denied, though, that the British case has important lessons to offer both in terms of good practices in policy development and implementation, and policy experiments that have not produced the intended results. Therefore, a number of policy implications can be identified within a number of important policy areas that could influence the future evolution of the phenomenon of violent extremism.

UNDERLYING CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Economic, social, and political factors paint a picture of relative deprivation of Britain's Muslims. When taking into account indicators such as income, employment, social welfare, health and disabilities, women's participation, household size, housing, education, and others, the situation is quite worrisome. The 'Muslim penalty' remains, despite some exceptions and limited positive trends. As it has been mentioned in this report, real and perceived injustices may not only develop into motivations for violent action but they are also used very effectively by extremists as entry points to their target audiences and, consequently, any efforts to effectively address the issue of violent extremism cannot afford to overlook them.

It is important to note, however, that special attention needs to be paid to the potential unintended effects of existing policies. 'Positive' discrimination and policies addressing exclusively a single community's needs have proven counterproductive, since they can further

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[52] Ansari, "Attitudes to Jihad, Martyrdom and Terrorism among British Muslims," 162-163.
[53] Akhtar. "'(Re)turn to Religion' and Radical Islam," 171.
[54] General Intelligence and Security Service, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*, 49.

marginalize the community and increase its sense of victimhood. Instead, amending existing policies that seem to be insufficient or problematic in order to ensure that all citizens can and are encouraged to benefit from them might be a preferable alternative to policies designed for a specific community. The United Kingdom has a number of good practices and lessons learned as policymakers and academics have been struggling with such issues for several decades. A number of issues are likely to be raised, especially in terms of limits, when one community's rights may violate another's, and the experiences of societies who have dealt with such dilemmas in their judicial, financial, or social systems can prove valuable.

EMPHASIS ON POLICING, INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Undoubtedly, the role of intelligence gathering, policing, and law enforcement cannot be overemphasized. Violent extremism poses a clear security threat and a variety of measures need to be employed for violent acts to be avoided. The current security environment has created significant new challenges for intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The decentralization of radicalization, the emergence of self-radicalization and self-recruitment, the extensive use of the Internet along with the inherent difficulty to monitor its use effectively, the wide availability or operational expertise, and the expected return of a significant number of jihad veterans are all demanding agencies' attention and resources.

In addition to the increased demands that the current security environment has created, intelligence and law enforcement agencies need to be particularly careful of possible unintended—and negative—consequences of their work. Careful attention has to be paid to communities' sensitivities in order to avoid alienating them and thus discouraging their future cooperation with the authorities. Recent police operations have demonstrated that this is already a major concern. Results still remain disheartening at times, largely due to the lack of confidence and mutual suspicion that can be hard to fight.

Especially in terms of intelligence gathering, the role of the community is crucial. Providing intelligence to the police is still perceived in many cases as a betrayal and the resulting lack of cooperation can significantly hinder police operations and investigations. Muslims remain underrepresented in the intelligence and law enforcement agencies, although their numbers seem to be rising and their visibility has significantly increased. Their in-depth, contextual knowledge about Muslim communities and the simple fact that they are members of these communities can be valuable not only in helping provide a better understanding of all the complexities that an outsider cannot as easily identify and comprehend, but also in substantially facilitating community cooperation with the police, community intelligence, and, clearly, more easily infiltrating radical groups.

FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy issues provide easy ammunition for radicals who seek to exploit inconsistencies and strengthen their own arguments. In addition to the frustration created by the strong disapproval of certain policy choices, the failure to acknowledge that foreign policy indeed plays a role in domestic radicalization has added significantly to the mythology created around issues like Palestine or Iraq. Regardless of the religious affiliation of the population voicing such frustrations or the links they may feel they have with certain parts of the world, there is an underlying democratic deficit that cannot be ignored and can prove threatening. A large (and growing) part of the citizenry feels that state policies are not representative of their views and concerns. They cannot identify with a specific and isolated decisions or with the rationale driving foreign policy as a whole. This phenomenon is a crucial challenge for democratic institutions and parties, as well as a recipe for increased future tensions. Democracies are not unfamiliar with internal dissent and have historically developed ways to deal with it, but it needs first to be acknowledged and addressed, especially as the 'Muslim vote' will be of increasing importance in the years to come.

ENGAGING WITH MUSLIMS

The political participation of Muslims and their 'investment' in the political process needs to be encouraged. It is important that all citizens feel they can participate and play an active and effective role in determining their own future if they are expected to identify with their country of citizenship. The danger of disaffected and disengaged communities is that “diaspora Muslims in the West will increasingly withdraw from positive engagement with their English neighbours, and lose faith in the capacity of their country of settlement to recognise what they perceive to be their deepest moral commitments and aspirations.”[55] Greater participation of Muslims in mainstream institutions is essential to promote positive engagement. Relations with community leaders, organizations, and institutions need to be established and consistently maintained. Invariably, all these actors are more likely to have leverage among Muslim populations and their role can prove critical for a wide spectrum of issues—from intelligence gathering and law enforcement to the communities’ receptiveness to policies and initiatives.

[55] Werbner, “The Predicament of Diaspora and Millennial Islam.”

ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Along with engaging with the communities' leadership and institutions, it is important to ensure that as large a part of the Muslim populations as possible feel that their concerns are effectively voiced and listened to. Authorities need to monitor how representative proclaimed constituency organizations and institutions are and encourage both a greater degree of representation in existing community institutions as well as the effective positioning of new initiatives in the spectrum of established, accepted institutions. Existing organizations and institutions often fail to effectively represent youths' needs and concern as many were designed to serve a different constituency—the first generation of Muslim immigrants. This thus creates a crucial 'authority gap' that can, and often has, been filled by radicals. This 'authority gap' has allowed radicals to remain practically unchallenged in promoting their own radical version of Islam, fueling existing grievances, and, most importantly, providing religious justifications for violence. In order to undermine this increased visibility and influence, community institutions, leadership, and organizations need to be able to address the younger generations' needs. Among them, the role of imams can be pivotal, as they are the first ones who might be able to offer an alternative religious voice to that of the radicals. Today, imams often struggle to meet the needs of young people, "since [the imams] themselves speak little or no English and are often strongly influenced by the cultural environment of the subcontinent and therefore unable to understand the children's experience of British culture."[56] Therefore, imams who are familiar with the new environment, needs, and challenges that Britain's Muslim youth face today can be instrumental in allowing communities to resist violent extremism. Finally, civil society initiatives are often better-positioned to understand and address needs of Muslim populations. Therefore, such initiatives can prove valuable in dealing with extremism and resulting violence.

FRAMEWORK AND TERMS OF DEBATE

The terms, definitions, and framework used for the debate on extremism or related public debates need to be carefully chosen in order to avoid generalizations that may backfire and prove counterproductive or alienate target populations. Terms like 'Muslim,' 'Islamic,' 'terrorism,' 'Islamism,' etc., can have very powerful effects on the public mind, particularly on Muslim populations, depending on the framework and connotation. The way the public debate is conducted can be crucial for preventing (or failing to prevent) violence, especially in times of crises or intercommunity tension

Also, given the inherent position of power of the government and state agencies and institutions, it matters how Muslim populations are addressed and who becomes an official interlocutor of the state on behalf of Muslims. The politics of recognition can be vital and can influence greatly the evolution of the situation. Whether choosing to engage with the Muslim populations on the basis of their faith, ethnic background, other proposed frameworks, or simply as citizens, the decision needs to be carefully weighed so that government strategies do not become self-fulfilling prophecies.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to explore certain aspects of the phenomenon of violent extremism in an effort to draw some conclusions, when conclusions were possible, in order to be used in a comparative study of violent extremist across the three Abrahamic religions.

As this chapter and the ones preceding it made clear, and as has been reiterated in the existing literature and research, the paths to extremism and violence are highly individualized with no universal norms or profiles. Although it is debatable whether it is possible to identify with certainty an individual's motivations at every part of the radicalization process or the exact tipping points to violence, there are nevertheless important factors that seem to influence the process to a greater or lesser degree in each case.

By following the process from the initial stages of Islamic revivalism to extremism, and, eventually violence, it has been demonstrated that the message, the possible explanations why young Muslims find it convincing, and the needs it addresses, do not remain the same throughout the process. In the early stages, the Islamic message, which is not necessarily extremist, seems to be a very appealing response to an identity crisis that many young Muslims are facing today. Gradually, existing frustrations and grievances are fuelled and framed as part of a 'widespread war against Islam,' thus pushing susceptible individuals closer to an extremist agenda.[57] Therefore, we see that in these stages radical Islam utilizes the turn to religion and pre-existing frustrations to its benefit. Radical religious arguments seem to be instrumental when it comes to choosing violence. The religious justifications for violent action, when they come after a process of inciting perceptions of the aggressiveness of the West and the victimhood of Muslims around the world, have proven sufficient to push some toward committing violence.

[56] Kepel, *Allah in the West*.

[57] House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*, 32.

It has also been highlighted in this and other chapters that this process of radicalization leading to violence does not require external guidance as it did in the past. Several recent examples have confirmed previous warnings about the emergence of self-radicalized cells and individuals. Especially with the extensive use of the Internet, individuals increasingly get radicalized on their own or among groups of friends, feeding off each other's radicalization. The operational expertise available online also makes it possible for such self-recruited, self-radicalized cells to plan and execute violent acts with no or with limited outside help, thus making their detection extremely difficult. In other words, in addition to the previously known top-down structures, hierarchies, and indoctrination in radicalization, new trends of bottom-up radicalization and self-recruitment have emerged and create significant challenges for intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Within this general framework, some more specific aspects of which this chapter has explored, a number of policy implications have also been identified in policy areas of importance for the future evolution of the phenomenon of violent extremism.

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4. TOWARD A SYNTHESIS VIEW

Compiled by Stephen Tankel

The foundation of the three movements on which this report focuses is a Manichean worldview. Regardless of faith, culture, ethnicity, geography, or socio-economic status, for all of the cases EWI examined it is "us" versus "them," where "them" can be members of the same faith and those willing to compromise "pure" beliefs are branded as apostates. For example, Yitzhak Rabin, Mahatma Gandhi, and Anwar Sadat were all assassinated by members of their own faith on the premise that they had betrayed their co-religionists.

Such an unforgiving worldview is attractive precisely because it offers simplicity in a complex world, as well as certainty to its adherents that they are on God's side because of their belief in how civilization should be ordered. Often, these extremists are already isolated, and as they become more radicalized, they further isolate themselves in an attempt to recreate even a microcosm of their ideal world. In all three cases, there was, at times, a drive to ultimately establish an idealized, theocratic society. Some will commit violence to remake civilization, while others will lash out violently, simply to exact divine retribution against what they consider to be "failing" societies.

Theology is employed in defense of a notion of the way things *should* be and God is seen as a defender of that particular civilization. The message is appealing in its simplicity: follow the path of God and you and your community will gain (or regain) dominance. It provides a vision of what civilization should be, a roadmap for making it so, and the justification to do whatever is necessary to either defend or upend the status quo accordingly. This is an incredibly accessible message and one that offers seemingly immutable logic to explain a recruit's position in this world and the opportunity to improve his or her position in this world or the next. This redemptive element was present in all three cases. So, too, was the notion of power: over one's self, over one's enemies, over one's land, over co-religionists who stand idle rather than acting to remake civilization, and ultimately over one's own destiny (if not in this world, then in the next). Finally there was an oppositional element against both the state and specific members of one's own society.

The research undertaken for this project found this mind-set and worldview present in all of the case examples. In Israel, victory in the Six Day War in 1967 and the capture of land in the West Bank were viewed through the same prism of divine intervention and with the same pride that many Muslims felt the victory in Afghanistan over the Soviet Union. This was a sign that God was with them and that redemption of the land of biblical Israel was at hand. For Jewish extremists within the settler movement, the idea of compromising with the Palestinians and ceding the land back is thus seen as heretical. To the true believer, a potential peace deal involving painful compromise is not nearly as compelling as being promised absolute victory and control, as well as winning the role of heroes to the Jewish people. Viewed through the prism of power, concession is also akin to going "back to Auschwitz." The extremist camp believes and propounds that territorial concession is nothing short of voluntarily paving the way for Jewish annihilation.[1]

The ideology of Christian Identity does not just say *why* white Christians should be the "dominant race," it also explains why they are *not* currently in a superior position. The belief system is conspiratorial in nature and particularly appealing to those looking to create an enemy and for someone to blame. The government is seen as having either betrayed white interests to the "lower races," or to have been infiltrated and manipulated by them. Thus, it is incumbent upon the true white, Christian Americans to wage war, both against the government that has betrayed them and the "lower races" that have infested their country.[2] The small numbers of extremists who commit violence in the name of the anti-abortion movement view themselves as God's soldiers on earth, sent here to protect the unborn and preserve a moral way of life. They must act because the state and others have not. Those who commit anti-abortion violence derive comfort from a message that signifies them as

[*] *Note on methodology*: The findings compiled here represent multiple syntheses: first, by each of the individual researchers of their interview subjects; second, by EWI of the researchers' reports in the discussion paper for the conference, and finally, by EWI of the different opinions proffered at the conference. Because the conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, specific individuals are not cited unless they were already identified by name in the research reports submitted to EWI or agreed during subsequent discussions to be sourced directly.

[1] Itamar Ben-Gvir (far-right activist) interviewed by Dina Kraft (EWI Researcher), February 20 2007.

[2] Leonard Zeskind (president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, and an expert on the Christian Identity movement) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

defenders of the innocent who will be rewarded in the next life.[3]

Despite the exaggerations, conspiracy theories, and Manichean rhetoric the initial message proffered to Muslims in the United Kingdom is generally focused around injustice, powerlessness, and humiliation. Recruits are offered a rationale for their relative economic and social plight, as well as someone to blame. Disparate issues are framed as evidence of a "widespread war against Islam" and a "simple parable of oppressors and victims" is established.[4] The puritanical form of Islam these recruiters preach is presented as both the only alternative of resistance "the system" and as the civilization envisioned by God. This message further erodes the bonds a recruit feels to what he may already consider an indifferent or unjust state. As individuals start feeling more and more "Muslim" and see themselves as belonging to the *umma* rather than to British society, different events, policies, and life circumstances are tied together under the banner of a "war against Islam."[5]

Clearly, violent extremists across the three faiths each have distinct and discrete grievances, often grounded in local concerns including: the possibility of losing the land on which they lived, difficulties integrating socially and economically, or changes to the status quo that threaten their socio-economic or political positions. On an individual level, those who eventually embrace violence in the name of religion have come to see their grievances not in secular, local terms, but as part of a civilizational struggle or "cosmic war."[6] This is a grand clash between the cosmic forces of good and evil, and religious extremists see themselves as warriors of God and agents of historic change. It is thus very much an issue of identity, but not just as a Jew, Christian, or Muslim. Rather, it is the belief system, and especially, it is the actions a person is prepared to undertake for their belief through which extremists define themselves.

Rabbis in Israel have issued rulings sanctioning the killing of other Jews—Yitzhak Rabin being the most famous example. The four Muslim men who exploded themselves on three London tubes and a bus in July 2005 were prepared to kill other Muslims as readily as non-Muslims. Christian Identity believers have branded mainstream Christians as race-traitors and have suggested that killing them was acceptable, while those who have killed doctors who perform abortions have done so regardless of their victims' religious affiliation. In short, those willing to compromise "pure" belief or "essential" action risk being branded an apostate and becoming part of the world against which religious extremists define themselves.

The process through which recruits are selected—or in some cases self-select—and become indoctrinated with such a belief system varied across the three case examples, with Israel as the outlier. The religious extremists there tend to come from the small, more isolated West Bank settlement communities. There is no need to actively recruit, since most violent actors come from within.

In the United States and United Kingdom people are recruited into the violent wing of extremist movements in stages. Recruitment takes place through a broad range of normal avenues and conventional social activities: family ties, business and professional relationships, social gatherings, religious worship, meetings, rallies, protests, picketing, leaflets, books and other publications, electronic and broadcast media, online communities, web-based propaganda, and many others. One of the greatest challenges to counter or undermine pathways to violent extremism is that, but for the content, there is little unique to these avenues.

There is a concerted effort by extremist movements to separate the broader, above ground movement from recruitment and violence. In the United States, as a general rule, recruits enter through broader and more public networks and movements, and are then funneled toward the violent wing as they become more willing to commit violent acts, and as recruiters screen and identify those most likely to follow through. In the United Kingdom, the first steps of radicalization—reading books, surfing the net, talking with likeminded friends—increasingly do not have to be masterminded by an extremist network. As extremists try to escape the attention of intelligence and law enforcement agencies, the radical message is more often disseminated through personal mentors and at private locations. In both cases, prison has consistently been an effective avenue for recruitment. In addition to recruitment by fellow prisoners and some radical religious leaders preaching within the prisons, there have also been cases of religious extremists who were not in prison reaching out to incarcerated individuals.

The Internet also plays a significant role in bridging the divide between top-down and bottom-up recruiting. This is more the case for Muslim extremism in the United Kingdom than for Christian extremism in the United States. One tactic for which the Internet has been useful to both groups is the lionizing of "heroes" and "martyrs." This is a form of passive recruitment, lauding fallen warriors and presenting to potential recruits an identity they may already be looking to embrace.

Increasingly, the process is not as simple as a recruiter inveigling a disaffected individual, or a person or group self-recruiting in isolation. In the United States, the

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[3] Army of God Letter issued in 1997.
[4] House of Commons. *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*.
[5] Researcher with close ties to the British security services, interviewed by Stephen Tankel (EWI Fellow), August 2007.
[6] Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War*, 155.

radicalization of Timothy McVeigh illustrates this hybrid situation, while in the United Kingdom speculation continues regarding the trip by two of the July 2005 London bombers to Pakistan, as well as their associations with other actors in the United Kingdom. In both cases, the bombers appeared to have recruited themselves, but in neither case did they act alone. Instead they sought logistical support from a wider network. As important, if not more so, than logistical support is the moral support provided by the movements. This held true in all three cases, where the movement provides deeply needed political and ideological succor to the violent actors in the operational part of the movement.[7]

Ultimately, even if the grooming of earlier phases is successful, either through bottom-up or top-down processes, it may encourage association and mobilization, but will not necessarily lead to violence or self-sacrifice.[8] Individuals are not likely to accept such "high-risk activism" even when the motivation for action is already present.[9] Religion therefore becomes instrumental for justifying violence and for altering the individual's calculus of the involved risk and cost. In each of EWI's case studies, religion was rarely the objective cause of violence. Instead, religion was distorted into a rationale and sanction for the commission of violent acts and to incite recruits to commit violence.

Religion is used, or misused, to provide a rationale and justification for violence in a way that increases the likelihood that a disaffected individual will engage in violence. By introducing religious justifications for violence, extremist leaders create a framework in which normal constraints become irrelevant. Religion alters the cost/benefit dynamic, removing biological and material self-interest and replacing it with what has been termed spiritual self-interest.[10] Serving God, in this case through violence, becomes a central means for salvation, the true reward.[11]

The individual is not only promised spiritual benefits, but also indoctrinated to believe that a failure to act means risking their own salvation and possibly allowing satanic forces to prevail. Extremist movements are adept at using the religious nature of their message to convey this sense of personal obligation and responsibility to act. Individuals who accept this premise are willing to undertake high-risk actions because failure to do so would "jeopardize their prospect of salvation and thus their self-interest. In short, *inaction violates self-interest.*"[12]

Creating a war mentality in which these actors take on the identity of soldiers of God also removes the criminality involved in the commission of violence. Soldiers are meant to kill the enemy, and doing so in the name of God makes the war just. Religion eclipses and supersedes the state in its authority over the commission of violence, and as God's law trumps man's law, this breaks the state's monopoly over violence. Extremists of each faith thus commit violent acts with a full sense of legitimacy.

Once an individual is spiritually primed to commit violence, the act itself is most often triggered by any number of tangible and temporal motivations including:

- A desire for revenge, generally viewed by extremists as justice;
- The desire to mark a symbolic date;
- The belief that the enemy is encroaching, and a failure to act would be catastrophic; or
- The assumption that all non-violent means of action have failed, and something must be done.

Additionally, group dynamics often play a role, and just as an individual may have a tipping point that pushes or pulls him toward violence, so too may a movement.

In searching for an answer as to how religion can be such a force for good and also used to support such evil actions, one of the most important variables is language. Language plays a larger role than simply the passive sanction of violence within the movement. In each of the three case studies, EWI's research also found numerous instances in which language was used to publicly incite violence or provide ideological support for the commission of violence. This type of sanction is critical in Israel, since extremist actors and groups will not act without the authorization of rabbis who will back them and give them the theological and ideological permission to carry out their activities. Yigal Amir has said he would not have assassinated Rabin without sanction from the rabbis, who issued the order of *Din Rodef* [the Law of the Pursuer] against the prime minister. This judgment decries that it is a person's obligation to kill a "pursuer" in order to save the "pursued." It is a rare and grave judgment in modern times, given that is essentially a death sentence. Essentially, by branding Rabin, these extremist rabbis helped to incite, and certainly sanctioned, his murder.[13]

[7] Mike German (former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, current policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 200.
[10] See Wiktorowicz.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid, 200.
[13] See Chapter 2 in this report (Kraft).

Both anti-abortion militants and Christian Identity believers arrogate texts from the Bible to justify violence. In the case of Christian Identity adherents, the religious language citied to justify extremism is part of a greater formula that already places adherents outside of mainstream society, as they tend toward language that they believe argues in favor of their vision for Aryan dominance. In the case of the more traditionally conservative political orientation of anti-abortion militants, passages such as Acts 5:29 ("We must obey God rather than men") and Genesis 9:6 ("Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed") are often cited. A bloody effigy of Dr. David Gunn, with this Genesis passage inscribed on it, was used at a protest attended by Michael Griffith. Shortly thereafter, Griffith would commit the murder of Dr. Gunn.[14]

In the United Kingdom, the recruitment message centers upon injustice and powerlessness rather than theology, but the issue is framed in distinctly religious terms—'crusaders against Islam' or 'war against Islam.' The solution proffered is violent jihad.[15] In reality, the word jihad literally means, "to strive, to apply oneself, to struggle, to persevere."[16] Extremists have commandeered the concept of jihad, suggesting that Islam itself is under attack. They attempt to redefine the waging of war as the only true form of jihad, and to suggest that those who do not wage war damn themselves in the next life. External references to violent extremists from the Muslim faith as jihadis or jihadists only reinforces the notion that waging actual war is the truest form of jihad. It confers on these extremists a legitimacy that defies the reality of their actions. Likewise, recruiters are also adept at using terminology that equates Islam with terrorism to buttress their rhetoric that the West is at war with Islam.

Language both supporting and opposing violence can be found in the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament, and the Quran and Hadith. In the case of extremists across all three religions, there is an almost complete disregard for more universal or humanistic texts in favor of the most insular and violent ones. The religious passages do not determine the worldview, but rather the worldview determines the religious passages to which one relates. In this regard, the language religious extremists favor is fully representative of the worldview they share: insular, violent, devoid of humanism, and Manichean.

[14] See chapter 1 of this report (Levitas).
[15] See chapter 3 of this report (Tzanetti).
[16] Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft*, 222.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

What makes the message so attractive?

Ultimately, the attractiveness of the message to potential religious extremists is the accessible and seemingly immutable logic it offers to explain a recruit's position in the world, the identity that it provides, and the opportunity to improve one's position in this world or the next. The lure of a black and white worldview is that it reorders and simplifies the chaotic and complex world, endowing the radicalized with a sense of certitude in their vision for societal reformation. This absolutism can be especially appealing in modern times where everything can be seen in shades of grey, and thus the appeal also lies in the simplicity of the message: they have the truth, and it is the irrefutable truth of God.

This can provide an element of control in an increasingly out of control world of mass migration, cultural fragmentation, reiterative low-intensity conflicts, and the negative externalities of economic globalization. The message always proffers an idealized civilization, an outline needed for realizing it, and the justification that any means are valid in ending (or defending) the status quo. Religion is used to provide the identity necessary for this justification: that of a soldier of God in a struggle to remake civilization according to God's principles and precepts.

In all cases, the message offered a redemptive element. In some cases, for people who might not otherwise be materially successful, taking action with religious justification brought value to their lives. For others, it equipped them with a divine formula for redeeming society and, through this, their place in it. For still others, redemption was to be found through revenge for the injustices they or their community had suffered. In most cases, redemption is guaranteed in the next life. Additionally, there was almost always the promise of power to the powerless, and control over one's enemies, land, 'apostate' co-religionists, and, ultimately, control over one's destiny in this world or the next. The oppositional element against the state and society attended this taste of power as a logical companion.

Extremists within the settler movement consider themselves the authentic Jewish Zionists. Disgusted by what they saw as a betrayal of the Jewish people by the state of Israel when it evacuated Gaza, and cognizant of the failure of the civil disobedience of the settler leaders there, they have vowed violence should the "Israelis come to kick out the Jews" from the West Bank.[17] For them, this is an essential distinction: they

[17] According to EWI researcher Dina Kraft, this was the language of protest used at a demonstration in 2006 in the Jewish area of Hebron where security forces evacuated settlers from a Palestinian market area into which they had illegally moved.

view themselves as the true Zionists settling the biblical lands of Israel.[18] Such an identity exists against the backdrop of the Holocaust and the Diaspora experience, viewed by radicals as a long period of oppression and a time where Jews were not in control of their own fate. The radical Jewish movement offers identity, authenticity, belonging, a strong sense of mission and a clear enemy against which one can define oneself in opposition, especially for people who feel displaced and uprooted in a country being repopulated by the Diaspora,

Within the extremist movement, there is the belief that swift and overwhelming victory in 1967 came by divine intervention, which secured those parts of biblical Israel that have since been settled under Israeli control.[19] The thought of acceding to the territorial claims of the Palestinians is seen as a prelude to a second Holocaust. Viewed through a lens of strength and power, extremists claim that conceding the West Bank settlements would be akin to going "back to Auschwitz."[20] In the weeks and months preceding Rabin's assassination, for example, he was depicted on posters by extremist elements as an SS officer.

The state is, thus, considered guilty of treason for agreeing to the Oslo Accords, and guilty also for its mandated Gaza withdrawal. Loss of faith in the state strengthens their own perception that they are potential saviors of the Jewish nation, armed with God's truth and the capacity to change things—even if that means change through the help of violent acts. In fulfilling this biblical birthright, they feel they are taking their directions directly from God and do not need to ask themselves complicated moral or practical questions. A potential peace deal involving painful compromise is not nearly as compelling as being promised absolute victory and control, as well as winning the role of heroes to the Jewish people.

In the United States, Christian Identity theology offers an explicitly racial and biblically based explanation for what recruits see and experience. The message is attractive because it invokes theology in defense of the way things should be in an idealized civilization in which Aryans reign supreme and presents God as the defender of that civilization. According to Leonard Zeskind, an expert on the Christian Identity movement, that ideology includes both the argument that Christians are inherently the "dominant race" and explains why their dominance and supremacy has waned. In its earlier 18th and 19th century form as British Israelism it was an ideology of domination and superiority and was given credit by its adherents for the success of the British Empire. It now has become an ideology of dispossession that teaches that "the stranger"—who in biblical terms, according to Christian Identity extremists, means Jews or non-whites—is ruling over them. These religious beliefs are conspiratorial in nature and are particularly appealing to those looking to create an enemy and for someone to blame for their position in life.[21] In this case, the government is seen as having either betrayed white interests to these "lower races," or to have been infiltrated and manipulated by them. Thus, the pathway back to power is through belief and action—action against the government and both the manipulating Jews and the "inferior races." Moreover, it suggests that these other groups are in league with Satan, thus making them a strong enemy but one that must be defeated using any means necessary.

The group identity and power components are different, but no less obvious, for Christian Reconstructionists and other Christian extremists who commit violence in the name of halting abortion. In this case, abortion is often a stand-in for satanic archetypes in a grand morality play. The small numbers of extremists who commit violence view themselves as God's soldiers on earth, here to defend the innocent. They must act because the state and others have not. Those who commit anti-abortion violence derive comfort from a message that signifies them as defenders of the innocent, and carries with it an element of moral redemption.[22] For those who commit violence, the religious message may also be attractive because it reinforces their preference for traditional gender roles, where men are dominant.

In the British case, the message is framed in religious terms, but in reality has little to do with religion and more to do with real and perceived injustices and the grievances of Muslims, domestically and internationally. The initial message is usually focused around injustice and powerlessness (and the attendant humiliation that can come with this), rather than on theology. The extremists' strategy aims to create a schism between national identity and religious identity and focuses on social and economic discrimination.

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[18] Some within the settler movement dismiss as not true Zionists those who live inside Israeli cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa, places that were not traditionally part of biblical Israel. To them, those places have nothing to do with the mighty Jewish past. As one settler, Elyakim Ha'Etzni (former Knesset member and leading settler ideologue), scoffed in an interview with Dina Kraft (EWI researcher) in February 2007, "Tel Aviv is in Philistine!"

[19] This notion of divine intervention is not dissimilar from the one many extremist Muslims hold regarding victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan.

[20] Itamar Ben-Gvir (far-right activist) interviewed by Dina Kraft (EWI Researcher), February 20 2007. Ben-Gvir said he found Rabbi Kahane's preaching of a doomsday scenario, where Arabs would outnumber Jews in Israel, to be plausible and that they needed to be expelled from the country before that could happen. "We can either say let's go back to Auschwitz … or we can build a real Jewish state, but we cannot build a state with two nations," he said. "It's either us or them."

[21] Leonard Zeskind (president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, and an expert on the Christian Identity movement) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[22] Margaret Moore (former special agent in charge with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and now director of the National Center for Women and Policing at the Fund for a Feminist Majority) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), April 2007.

There is a difference between the initial message with which an activist or recruiter may approach a recruit and the arguments a 'foot-soldier' will ultimately espouse. The initial message is more personally relevant and will generally target the recruit's sense of powerlessness, cultural alienation, injustice, or humiliation. Recruiters will approach with questions such as: are you not tired of being called a "Paki"; or are you not upset about not being able to get a job worthy of your skills? Islam—in this case a radicalized version—is promoted as the solution.[23] Recruits are attracted by the idea of resistance. The message contains a power element as the extremist form of Islam is presented as the only means to influence power structures and thereby improve their opportunities in life. Ultimately, recruits are led to view this extremist version of Islam as the only legitimate way of ordering society according to God. Again, the message is appealing in its simplicity: follow the path of God and you and your community will ultimately regain dominance. Material success does not matter for a true soldier of God. For someone feeling powerless over one's life, such empowerment is difficult to resist.

Muslim extremism also proves particularly appealing to younger generations of Muslims due to their sense of 'statelessness.'[24] Belonging to the global community of Muslims, the *umma*, is not a matter of being British or Pakistani. Further, by offering recruits a very personalized faith, recruiters present an identity to those for whom traditional ethnic or national affiliations are insufficient. The message of universalism fills the void created by cultural alienation. It also weakens bonds to a state with a government already seen as indifferent to Muslims' concerns. Groups like *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*, *Al-Muhajiroon*, and *Al-Ghuraba* contribute to this identity transformation. For example, a *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* promotional video stated, "Muslims in this country need to answer some very serious questions. Where does their allegiance lie?" The speaker on the video left no doubt where his allegiance lay, saying "I think Muslims in this country need to take a long, hard look at themselves and decide what is their identity. Are they British or are they Muslim? I am a Muslim. Where I live is irrelevant."[25]

As individuals start feeling more and more "Muslim" and see themselves as belonging to the *umma* rather than to British society, different events, policies, and life circumstances are tied together under the banner of a "war against Islam." The state is conflated with the West, and both have conspired against Muslims to exclude them politically, economically, and socially, and, in the case of foreign policy, to conquer them militarily. Moreover, recruits are offered a rationale for their suffering, as well as someone to blame, as disparate issues are framed as evidence of a "widespread war against Islam" and a "simple parable of oppressors and victims" is established in the mind of the recruit.[26] Over time, the plight of Muslims in the world—especially when inflamed by pictures of slaughtered Muslim children and burned houses in other countries—become a stronger source of motivation than their own relative deprivation. It is still a message of injustice, but it takes a different form.

What are the tipping points that can push or pull someone toward committing violence?

In each of the case studies, religion is distorted into a rationale for the commission of violent acts, but is rarely if ever the objective cause of violence. Rather, religion is used as a sanction for violence and to incite recruits to commit violence. Their faith outstrips fealty to government and claims to break the state's monopoly on violence: to these extremists, God's law clearly trumps man's law and they view themselves as soldiers of God. It is in the spiritual self-interest of soldiers of God to commit violent acts when "necessary."[27] This section examines how religion is used to sanction violence, and considers how the development of spiritual self-interest alters the normal calculus associated with risks and rewards regarding violence. The act of violence itself, however, is triggered by tangible, real world events, as examples taken from the previous chapters demonstrate.

Religion is the only social institution perceived to be legitimate in terms of challenging the state's monopoly in sanctioning violence.[28] Consequently, the development of a culture of resistance to the state and a "war mentality" within the "deviant" society—including, especially, resistance to the criminal justice system, law enforcement and the courts—also charges potential extremists to violence and provides legitimization for the religion's role in this incitement.

Building upon the belief that civilization should not be manifested in its current form, extremist movements present violent opposition to the state, specific communities and members of the population, and sometimes to society at large as part of a just and "defensive war." In the example of Israel, if the state—once seen as a holy vessel for hastening Redemption by the national religious camp—turns its back on the mission of settling the biblical land of Israel, then violence is not only justified, it is seen as essential. "Rabin was killed because he was stopping the Messiah, therefore violence was necessary," said Daniel Robinson, a researcher of Israeli social history interpreting Amir's actions and those who supported

[23] Witkorowicz.
[24] Olivier Roy (research director at the French National Center for Scientific Research) interviewed by Thalia Tzanetti (EWI Researcher).
[25] Found at "Hizb ut Tahrir" *BBC Newsnight*, August 27, 2003. Transcript available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/3182271.stm.
[26] House of Commons. *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*.
[27] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 200.
[28] Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War*, 33-4.

him. Baruch Goldstein similarly believed that by attacking and killing Palestinians he would help thwart the peace process and what he perceived to be the pending, consequent disaster of peace. Following his attack, investigations found that Baruch believed the government had forsaken the mission of settling Judea and Samaria (the biblical West Bank) and that the army had ceased to protect the Jews living there. He was convinced he was acting as a savior of the Jewish people and viewed his sacrifice as nothing short of saving the Jewish people from another holocaust, a holocaust called the Oslo Accords. [29] According to those familiar with Goldstein and his actions, however, he was apparently driven also by a desire to avenge the deaths of friends and neighbors killed by Palestinians.[30]

Eric Rudolph—currently in a maximum-security prison for his deadly bombings at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, and at a Birmingham, Alabama reproductive health clinic—has used the language of the Bible to justify his violent acts. Violence was necessary, he believed, because the state had allowed abortion and was defending homosexuality. Like others who argue that millions of babies are aborted each year and to interpose oneself violently is as justifiable as bombing a train to Auschwitz, Rudolph claimed the Bible condoned "military action in defense of the innocent."[31]

This pattern is also apparent in the case of Muslim extremism in the United Kingdom. The suicide bomb attacks of July 7, 2005, in London, had clear motivations and triggers within grievances and a sense of being positioned against, and in resistance to, the British establishment, the British state, and mainstream British society. Violent extremists saw a desire, a duty, and a responsibility to protect and avenge their Muslim compatriots in other countries, to act violently. In a video recording made prior to his execution of the July 2005 London bombing, Mohammad Siddique Khan, one of the suicide bombers, specifically cited perceived injustices as the incitement for this violent act of revenge. Yet despite the admission that his actions are driven by a perceived responsibility for "avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters," Khan justifies his action in the language of religion. Declaring that "[we] are at war and I am a soldier," he too relies on the notion of a justified war and states that his "ethical stances are dictated" by "obedience to the one true God, Allah." [32]

The inculcation of an identity as a soldier of God, and the adoption of just war theory by these movements, are essential components to strengthening the individual's commitment. Radicalization does not perforce trip radicals into violent extremism. Mobilizing passive or active support is not equivalent to violence, and such "high-risk activism" demands an equally high level of commitment and abnegation of the world, regardless of the motivations available. Religion transforms the cost-benefit dynamic. [33]

By appealing to an individual's non-material and non-temporal sensibilities and making spiritual and cosmic guarantees, the radical recruiter can bypass the functions of rational self-interest, replacing the rational with the spiritual. Yet crucially, the appeal to human nature remains constant across the rational and the spiritual: the appeal is to a person's self-interest. Violence becomes desirable because it involves spiritual self-interest. The offer of redemption and spiritual salvation, to be earned through the commission of violence, is not an easy one to refuse. Failure is not written off but rather condemns the failed violent extremist to the same oblivion as his infidel targets. There is, thus, a self-interested compulsion on the part of these violent extremists to take action so as not endanger their own salvation. To recall Wiktorowicz's earlier summation, "*inaction violates self-interest."*[34] Michael German (a former undercover FBI agent who has infiltrated terrorist groups) suggests that extremist movements are adept at using the religious nature of the message to convey this sense of personal obligation and responsibility to act. The individual is pressured, by being told, "We've educated you, you've accepted this, and now you have to take action."[35]

When these many different forces of radicalization have run their course, several different triggers can push the recruit to violent acts. These include:

A desire for revenge, generally viewed by extremists as justice;

The desire to mark a symbolic date;

The belief that the enemy is encroaching, and a failure to act would be catastrophic;

The assumption that all non-violent means of action have failed, and something must be done;

Group dynamics.

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[29] Daniel Robinson (researcher of Israeli social history) interviewed by Dina Kraft (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[30] Elyakim Ha'Etzni (former Knesset member and leading settler ideologue) interviewed by Dina Kraft (EWI Researcher), February 2007.

[31] Eric Rudolph's confession, issued by his lawyers April 13, 2005, See: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4600480.

[32] House of Commons. *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings*.

[33] Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 200.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Mike German (former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, current policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

Revenge

Revenge can be directed toward another group within society, as is seen with hate crimes directed at Jews and minorities by Christian Identity followers. The perception of the unjust perpetration of violence by the state also can spark or heighten the desire for vengeance and allows potential extremists to justify their own violent actions. Such was the case with Timothy McVeigh, the bomber on April 19, 1995 of the federal building in Oklahoma City. His attack was, in large measure, a response to the militarized response by the U.S. government during the Waco standoff in 1993, in which 79 people were killed. Generally speaking, the more disproportionate the state violence is to the actual offense, the greater the likelihood that there will be a violent response.[36] Revenge against an unjust or perverse society is also a significant trigger that can tip the extremist from rhetoric to violence. Violence perpetrated by Muslims extremists in the United Kingdom is driven largely by a desire for revenge. The main message to potential recruits, though cloaked in the language of religion, is about real and perceived injustices and grievances of Muslims, locally and globally. As noted above, Mohammad Siddique Khan, one of the attackers responsible for the July 7, 2005, London tube bombings stated his actions were driven by a responsibility to avenge his fellow Muslims.

A symbolic date

The desire for aggressive symbolism is another potential trigger for violence. Extremist violence generally includes an expressive element, and dates are an especially important signifier. The Hebrew calendar date on which Baruch Goldstein decided to attack was the Purim holiday. Purim celebrates the survival of the Jews after uncovering and undermining a plot in ancient Persia to exterminate them. The April 19, 1995, bombing in Oklahoma was on the two-year anniversary of the siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. Another date-specific symbol includes key court decisions. In Canada, many of the sniper attacks targeting doctors who performed abortions occurred around the national "Remembrance Day" holiday, which abortion opponents have seized on to commemorate their cause. And finally, the March 11, 2004, train bombings in Madrid took place on the two and a half year anniversary of 9/11.

Fear and Desperation

One of the most volatile triggers to violence is the extremists' calculation that the enemy is inexorably and closely approaching, or catastrophe is at hand. In this case, violent acts become a last resort, an act of desperation. Many of the individuals who commit violence have already moved a considerable distance away from mainstream society, either physically, culturally, or both. Despite asserting their distance, a perception that society is threatening and encircling them often dominates. For example, in Israel, when the political process with the Palestinians feels threatening to Jewish radicals, it puts the entire extremist community under severe pressure, creating a sense of dire emergency that helps justify the call for drastic measures. It was exactly this sense of urgency that incited Baruch Goldstein to attempt to halt the Oslo accords process by opening fire on Muslims in the Tomb of the Patriarchs. In the United States, Judy Thomas, an investigative reporter for the Kansas City Star, highlights the utilitarian justification for violence that the religious message provides when other avenues have failed: "These people were against abortion, but their movement had failed in the courts. *Roe v. Wade* was the law of the land and even the massive clinic blockades weren't effective. Frustrated by their inability to end abortion, they found Bible verses that would justify their actions. And to them, eliminating the clinics or the doctors [via bombing, arson, and murder] —which they considered the weak links in the abortion chain—was the only option left."[37] Muslim extremists in the United Kingdom appear to believe that violence is the only means to influence British policy. Most assuredly, other factors are at play, but as Siddique Khan's video testimony reveals there is a sense that this violence in Britain is a last resort against foreign policy that is seen as attacking fellow Muslims around the world. [38]

Group dynamics

Without question, the individual is always looking for some sort of self-gratification, be it social recognition, personal fulfillment, defense of self or family, or spiritual salvation. Whether someone commits violence is also related to the general level of violence carried out by peers in the movement. According to former Israeli national police chief Assaf Cheffetz, who is also the founder of the police's counter-terrorism division, "When you find a group that identifies with violence, then exerting violence becomes part of belonging to that group … the group dynamic is very important, especially when involved in a part of society that is very isolated."[39] This was the case with the bombers responsible for the July 7, 2005 ,attacks in London, who fed off of one another. This escalated their radicalization, priming them for violence and making the ultimate act that much "easier" to commit.

There is an individual tipping point but also a movement tipping point, and the latter is no less

[36] Ibid.

[37] Judy Thomas (investigative reporter for the *Kansas City Star*) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[38] House of Commons. *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings.*

[39] Assaf Cheffetz (head of the Israeli national police force, 1994 to1998, and founder of the police's counter-terrorism division) interviewed by Dina Kraft (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

important than the former; in fact, both can be closely related.[40] For instance, though a measure of public voice has, arguably, come to Muslims in the United Kingdom, it is further arguable that this newfound weight within society has only accrued after the collective tipping point of Muslim extremism in the United Kingdom has passed. In other words, potential extremism in Britain has long since tipped into actual extremism. Within a collective tipping point are many individual tipping points, and with the symbolism of 9/11 and then the execution of the suicide attacks on July 7, 2005, the tipping point of the collective extremist ideology in Britain has perhaps gained adequate momentum—certainly substantiated by recently foiled plots and cases brought to court—to be unresponsive to mainstream attempts to nullify violent extremism.

Recruitment

The expert consensus is that recruitment happens via myriad mainstream venues and social activities but the actual process of recruitment is the one area in which commonality did not exist across all three case examples, with Israel as the outlier. Because these Jewish extremists come from the small and isolated West Bank settlements, there is no pressure for proactive recruitment; most violent actors are found within. In their small world they are suspicious of outsiders, and with the knowledge of Shin Bet monitoring, these extremists are driven to be ever more insular and wary. They come to know each other through family ties, yeshivas, synagogues, or elsewhere within the network of their tightly knit communities. In this last regard, the process is not dissimilar to the United States, where familial bonds, community dynamics and social events can play a role. Of course, the use of synagogues as a venue for recruitment or indoctrination is mirrored by that of churches or free standing ultra-conservative congregations in the United States and of mosques in the United Kingdom.

Top-down recruitment

The operational activities of recruitment and especially violence are consciously separated from the wider movement in both the United States and the United Kingdom. For example, in both countries, during public protest events, activists or clerics will give voice to an extreme point of view. In order to maintain the separation between radical activists or clerics and the violent wing of the movement, separate recruiters will identify and approach those who come forward in response. The exception is the practice by extremist anti-abortion pastors who were quite active in direct recruitment and the incitement of violence.

In the United States, recruitment into the violent wing of the movement takes place in stages. Recruits enter via the broader and public networks of the movement, after which those recruits most likely to successfully undertake violent acts are quietly directed to that the radical wing of the movement. At the outset, the recruit, while disaffected, may not necessarily blame any specific group or see their struggle as part of a larger civilizational one. These movements often seek out people who are victimized. They could be whites who perceive they have been victimized by blacks, or individuals whose families have suffered an economic setback. A supportive culture is created for and around the individual, and the recruitment message is similar to that described in the previous section “What Makes the Message So Attractive.” Over time this creates and hardens an oppositional identity for the individual that suggests or reinforces the need and capacity for violence.[41]

In the United Kingdom, the early stages often entail a focus on issues of common or personal relevance that can eventually be tied to Islam and serve as an entry-point to a more radical rhetoric. These issues may include such as how to be a good Muslim in a non-Muslim country, dealing with unemployment or successfully avoiding drugs and crime. After identifying the most relevant concerns and issues, recruiters let the individual come to his or her own conclusion through conversation and dialogue. The objective is to give the individual ownership over his or her decision to look deeper into Islam.

The influence of spiritual leaders remains critical but does not necessarily take the form of close association with a radical group. There is great concern that the return of “jihad” veterans to the United Kingdom has provided a cadre of British Muslims who combine religious credentials, soldierly credentials, and practical operational experience to lead young Muslims from talk to action.[42] They will have the skills to serve as mentors and role models, or they may simply offer their particular expertise to aspiring violent extremists. Abu Hamza al-Masri, the radical cleric and former imam of the Finsbury Park mosque now imprisoned and awaiting extradition to the United States for inciting terrorism, provides an example of the type of prestige a “jihad” veteran can possess. Stricter legislation and surveillance now make its unlikely anyone could rise to the public level of Abu Hamza, whose appeal owed heavily to his “jihad” credentials and the respect he earned for having been willing to die for his faith in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviets. Thus, future veterans, while not

[40] Leonard Zeskind (president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, and an expert on the Christian Identity movement) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[41] Mark Potok (director of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Project) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), April 2007.

[42] The British government will likely find itself unable to block their return since they are citizens, and therefore cannot be denied entry. This is especially true for second-generation Muslims, who have had the citizenship since birth, rather than having applied for it after being granted asylum.

necessarily filling an operational role, would likely have success as mentors and facilitators of extremist recruitment.

Prison has consistently been an effective avenue for recruitment in both the United States and United Kingdom. Besides the recruitment of prisoners by fellow prisoners, and the occasional presence of a radical religious leader preaching inside a facility, there have been cases of religious extremists "on the outside" initiating contact with incarcerated individuals. It is not a stretch to say that the overwhelming majority of prisoners are, already, disaffected individuals. Many are looking for a supportive community during incarceration, and religious extremists are quite capable of providing this support. For Christian extremist recruitment, this appears to be geared towards surviving and thriving while in prison, as well as providing an avenue for support once the incarcerated person is released. For Muslim extremist recruitment, it may be that a prisoner is searching for a resistance identity. Prisoners may also be looking for an alternative to their past, and converting to Islam or rediscovering Islam can offer them exactly that. The problems arise because many of the self-proclaimed clerics in prisons promote radical versions of Islam only. According to Imam Sajid of the Brighton Islamic Mission, lack of funding and poor compensation has led to reliance on volunteer clerics, who may endorse extremism. According to Dr. James Beckford who has conducted extensive research in prisons in Britain, it is unclear how widespread this radicalization is.[43] This said, it remains a great concern among security officials. Further, once discharged many ex-convicts have no place to turn, and will reach out to the group that reached out to them in prison.

Bottom-up recruitment

According to a senior officer in the British government, the situation with regards to Muslim extremism is no longer what it was in 2001 to 2003, when there were specific nodes, such as mosques or imams. Years of police work have disrupted most of the structured groups, radical mosques, and known extremist recruiters. Additionally, stricter enforcement against incitement and tighter surveillance of known groups with formal or informal links to violent extremism have driven actors underground, creating a new paradigm of recruitment which is more ad hoc.

Groups espousing belief systems compatible with violent extremist can play a role in paving the way ideologically for recruits. Dr. Peter Neumann of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at King's College in London has suggested that Hizb-ut-Tahrir and other groups like it provide the ideological package that can be a precursor to violence. Individuals are led to embrace the same objectives as those motivating violent extremists, and are essentially primed for the day when a recruiter suggests it is time to move from talk to action.[44] Some mosques, formerly venues for recruitment, now provide the ideological motivation. These mosques have assumed an above ground position, preaching the ideology that supports violent extremism. There is enough information on the Internet and in the media urging young Muslims to take matters into their own hands and perpetrate violence that top-down recruitment is at times unnecessary.

Decentralized groups often self-recruit and gather together informally. Increasingly, individuals are beginning the radicalization process on their own, via books, the Internet, and social connections with radicalized friends. Group bonding and increasing radicalization often go hand-in-hand as groups feed-off of and further radicalize one another as they get familiar with the teachings of radical clerics or access extremist websites and blogs. Providing the ideological package is enough, akin to winding would-be recruits up and letting them go.

Marc Sagemen, who conducted a social network analysis of Muslim extremists who had committed violence, spoke of this bottom-up self-radicalization as the "bunches of guys" theory.[45] In his analysis, the situation is not that there are no groups, but, rather, there are too many groups because there are no extensive hierarchies. While the government is able to identify some specific groups and leaders, often these groups are very small, constituting no more than just a few friends "hanging out." With limited resources, the decentralization results in the intelligence and law enforcement agencies being overwhelmed.[46]

According to experts in the United States, homegrown extremism is not as common, although some homegrown Christian extremists engage in lone-wolf violence. Others will form small cells, but in this case it is generally by those recruited into the movement who are embracing the leaderless resistance concept in the hopes of minimizing detection by the authorities. Several interviewees point to an interesting reverse phenomenon in which radical activists embrace the ideology in isolation and then use the Internet to publicize their actions and to join with others in the movement.

[43] Professor James Beckford (professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick) interviewed by Thalia Tzanetti (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[44] Dr. Peter Neumann (director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at King's College, London) interviewed by Stephen Tankel (EWI Fellow), September 2007.

[45] Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.

[46] Government officer on background, interviewed by Thalia Tzanetti (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

Top-down and bottom-up recruitment

It is increasingly the case that recruitment is neither entirely bottom-up nor top-down. Rather, it often appears that violent actors may initially recruit themselves and then seek out operational support from a wider movement. Of course, even when this recruitment is done individually, actions cannot be divorced from the larger phenomenon of the movement at the time, which provided the necessary ideological framework to act. Examples of this can be found in the actions of Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City bombing and the perpetrators of the July 7, 2005, tube bombings in the United Kingdom as well as the attempted attacks by a number of British doctors.

McVeigh attended a number of rallies and other public and private venues associated with the militia movement and Christian Identity extremism, and met privately with others, including his later co-conspirators Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier, who themselves had ties to various parts of the movement. The four men responsible for the London bombings met frequently with one another, strengthening one another's resolve and planning the attack, even traveling together to train for the attacks. Richard Reid, the "shoebomber" who converted in prison but was radicalized following his release, provides another example. Toward the end of 1998, he is believed to have moved to Pakistan, and, before attempting to explode himself and the airplane in which he was flying, is believed to have possibly spent time in Afghanistan as well. It has been reported that a details of a scouting mission by Reid to identity targets were found on a computer allegedly used by al Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan.[47]

The Internet links top-down and bottom-up recruitment, allowing for coordination of recruitment regardless of the method. This experience has been especially true in the United Kingdom, where recruitment is often bottom-up and where discretion has become paramount owing the heavy focus on Muslim extremism today and thus the need to remain as virtual and intangible as possible. In United States, although the vast majority of significant recruitment activities by Christian extremists still take place in the physical, face-to-face space, newsletters, publications, and Internet sites devoted to extolling violence nevertheless still play a special role.

The Internet has allowed the creation of cults of "heroes" and "martyrs," creating passive recruitment by offering potential recruits the role models of the glorious dead. In the United States, this was originally done via events and gatherings to celebrate violent acts. Examples included the Aryan Nations World Congress events of the 1980s and the White Rose banquets of the 1990s, which honored and raised money for those imprisoned for anti-abortion violence, including murder. Both were useful vehicles to attract would-be extremists considering committing their own violent acts.

More recently, this has been done via the virtual world. The "Prisoners of Christ" webpage maintained on the Army of God website provides a vehicle for individuals to initiate or maintain contact with notable actors such as Eric Rudolph.[48] As a recent CNN report noted, Rudolph continues to taunt his victims from prison via that website, and his missives may incite further violence.[49] Muslim extremists have used the Internet to pay homage to "martyrs" since the 1990s. Martyrdom is used as a testament to the power of the Islamic faith, and websites present biographies of mujahadeen killed on various campaigns. These glorify the contribution and the death of the "martyr" and often suggest avenues for potential recruits to take if they, too, wish to embark on a military campaign. Clearly, this is not limited to the United Kingdom, although given the aforementioned influence of veterans from "jihad campaigns" with regards to recruitment, it is likely that many young Muslims in the United Kingdom are being steered toward these websites.

How much support from the movement or group?

Across all three of our case examples, experts concur that moral support provided by like-minded activists is critically important. They highlight the important role played by social movement structures and group activities to ideologically reinforce and build support for violent action. These public structures are generally successful at maintaining an effective dichotomy between the public face of the movement and its covert structure. "The above ground group is critically important because it helps sustain the political and ideological identity that participants in the violent underground deeply need. It also provides a vehicle for recruiting into the violent wing of the movement," notes Mike German.[50]

Such support is also useful for those whom are incarcerated. In the Israeli case, there is help and guidance for those who are arrested and face interrogation for extended periods of time. A leader of one of the splinter groups that originated with Kahane's Kach group, Noah Federman, has written a

[47] CNN, "Reid is al Qaeda Operative" December 6, 2003. Available at http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/01/30/reid.alqaeda/; BBC, "Who is Richard Reid?", December 28, 2001. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1731568.stm.

[48] See: http://www.armyofgod.com/favicon.ico.

[49] See: http://www.cnn.com/2007/LAW/05/14/rudolph.taunts.ap/index.html

[50] Mike German (former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, current policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

handbook for activists on how to persevere through interrogations. His methods seem to be effective as many suspects familiar with his group and writing have been released because of lack of evidence. In the U.S. example, the White Rose banquets and Army of God website provide essential support to those in prison and legitimizing violent actions in the eyes of those who wanted to follow in their footsteps.[51] And of course, the Aryan Nations and other groups that were or are associated with the Identity movement have vast networks of people incarcerated in prison. Less is known about support for prison Muslims incarcerated in the U.K. Part of this has to do with the suicide-nature of the successful operations to date, as well as the limited access to those apprehended in failed attacks.

The degree to which violent actors receive logistical support also varies. In the Israeli case, if the movements supply logistical help, it would most likely be in the provision of weapons. In the West Bank many settlers have authorized firearms and it can be easier to get permission to obtain automatic weapons. As Jewish Israelis, it is easier for them to arouse fewer suspicions than their radical Muslim counterparts. They have access to weapons, can travel anywhere, and are not extensively questioned.

In the United States, some violent extremists have benefited greatly from the movement's large networks in order to remain fugitives from the law. Eric Rudolph managed to evade capture for five years after being identified by the FBI, and it is believed by some experts that he had material support from sympathizers during that time. Gordon Kahl, a tax protestor and member of the Christian Identity influenced Posse Comitatus, evaded federal authorities for five months after killing two federal marshals in a shootout in 1983. Both received moral support from sympathizers as well, some of who wrote songs and sold t-shirts and other paraphernalia about them. In Rudolph's case, the slogan declared, "Run Rudolph Run." Kahl and Rudolph are only two examples out of many Christian extremists who have received material or moral support following the commission of violence.

In the case of the July 7 London bombings, the materials needed were easily obtainable and there was, obviously, no need for support after the fact. Manuals are available on the Internet for the preparation of explosives. As noted earlier in this report, there were clearly links to Pakistan for the July 7 London attackers and for shoebomber Richard Reid. The most likely scenario includes small cells either radicalizing themselves together or finding one another once radicalized, and then reaching back to Pakistan. Surveillance means that it is difficult for Muslim extremists in the United Kingdom to make use of an extensive network for logistical support, but nor is this necessary to plan and execute an attack. Rather, while networks do exist they are more likely ideologically-based than geared toward active support for violent attacks.

Detailed analysis of operational support is beyond the scope of this report. The focus here remains on the question of ideological and moral support. It is worth pointing out that at the leadership level, extremist groups have been known to compromise their ideology toward operational expediency. Commenting on the possibility of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups developing operational ties with Islamic extremists, Mike German observes that "[t]his is not a matter of time; it already has been attempted in the United States."[52] For opponents of abortion willing to commit violence, this tendency toward operational expediency is evident in the collaboration between Catholic and Protestant extremists, who have set aside huge doctrinal disagreements in favor of collaboration to support violent acts against clinics and health care providers. This type of collaboration was also evident with the Order—a highly effective criminal enterprise launched by white supremacists in the early 1980s that included Christian Identity believers, Odinists, atheists, and those with more mainstream Christian beliefs.

Use of religious language to incite and sanction violence

Analysis of religious texts can focus on language either glorifying or denouncing violent in the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament, and the Quran and Hadith. What counts is not the available interpretations but the utter dismissal by violent extremists of texts and interpretations that are universal or humanistic in favor of insular or violent passages. This language is often used not only to justify or sanction violence, but also to incite it.

Leaders of the extreme Jewish movement draw entirely upon religious language to justify actions, both violent and non-violent, as well as to justify their refusal to consider trading land for peace. Rabbi Dov Lior—the spiritual leader of Kiryat Arba, the West Bank settlement adjacent to Hebron—has said: "Other generations focused on Torah or charity, the most important focus for our generation is Redemption. And settling the Land of Israel is the first condition of Redemption."[53] Moderates warn that placing the commandment to settle the Land of Israel above all

[51] Judy Thomas (investigative reporter for the *Kansas City Star*) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[52] Mike German (former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, current policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007. See also German's testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on FBI oversight, March 27 2007.

[53] According to EWI researcher Dina Kraft, some moderate rabbis see this as a perversion of Judaism, which was founded as a reaction against idolatry and so the land itself should never be subject of worship.

others, leads to the easy blurring or outright rejection of the rule of law of the Israeli state.

The extremist movement has already used biblical law and language to challenge the state's rule of law and incite violence against state officials. Three years ago, a group of rabbis and scholars established the modern Sanhedrin as an heir to the ancient Jewish court of the same name that existed roughly 1,600 years ago. In the name of this new Sanhedrin, a group of radical rabbis recently issued a letter ruling that Yair Naveh, the Israeli general in charge of the West Bank, is a *moser.* A *moser* is a Jew who intends to turn another Jew over to non-Jewish authorities, and the order *Din Moser* is an extremely grave and rare judgment which, according to Jewish law, can be punishable by death. The group referred to a ruling by Maimonides, a 12th century Jewish scholar, in issuing their verdict, which said that, "It is permissible to kill a moser everywhere, even in this time when the courts do not rule on capital cases." Such license is crucial, because extremists need the endorsement and authority of the rabbis in the form of theological and ideological justification for their violent acts. The order of *Din Rodef* was issued against Yitzhak Rabin. This is another rare and grave judgment for imperiling the life and property of another Jew, and can lead to a death sentence as well. Yigal Amir, the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin, specifically noted that without sanction from the rabbis, he would not have acted. These rulings afforded exactly that warrant effectively clearly sanctioning and helping to incite his murder.

Amongst Christian extremists—both Christian Identity believers and anti-abortion militants—the texts of the Bible are used to legitimize violence. With Identity believers, the religious language of their extremism is parceled with the wider rhetoric that situates its adherents outside of the mainstream. These extremists use religious language that supports their belief in Aryan dominance. This may appear as a deviant perversion of biblical text, but they believe it nonetheless.[54] Moreover, this is, in many ways, just an extreme example of the manner in which all of these radicals arrogate some sections of scripture, abrogate others, and engage in exegesis whenever necessary to justify their worldview.

In the case of the more traditionally conservative political orientation of anti-abortion militants, Scripture is cited not only as justification for the criminal violence they endorse, but also their disobedience of general conventional laws. For them, passages such as Acts 5:29, "We must obey God rather than men," and Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed," are often cited. A bloody effigy of Dr. David Gunn, with this latter passage inscribed on it, was used at a protest attended by Michael Griffith. Shortly thereafter, Griffith would commit the murder of Dr. Gunn.

As noted earlier, the experience in the United Kingdom has pivoted round a sense of dispossession and injustice, and not theology. Yet the issues are framed in religious terms and the answer provided by extremists has been violent jihad. In reality, as argued by Khaled M. Abou El Fadl and many other scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, the original conception of jihad was not one of holy war. Islamic legal traditions have never allowed so clearly a notion of holy war.[55] The word jihad literally means, "to strive, to apply oneself, to struggle, to persevere." There is a greater jihad, *al-jihad al-akbar*, which endures over the course of a believer's life, and is concerned with their spiritual victory over baser instincts. It is the lesser jihad, *al-jihad al-asghar*, which is the waging of a defensive war, if one's life, liberty, or property is threatened.[56] Violent extremists have arrogated the principle of jihad, claiming that Islam is being assaulted by the West and by unjust Middle Eastern governments. They claim holy war is the only true form of jihad and that Muslims who refrain from undertaking or supporting violent jihad condemn themselves in the next life. Many violent extremists go so far as to label these Muslims as Kfir, or non-believers, who may be killed for their non-belief. When non-Muslims refer to violent extremists of the Muslim faith as "jihadis" or "jihadists," this perversely confirms extremists in their self-image. These labels are intended as denunciations in the West but, in fact, they afford violent extremists an extra legitimacy that neglects the truth of their violent acts. Recruiters also use these and other labels as proof that Islam and the West are locked in a "clash of civilizations."

CONCLUSION

As this report shows, religiously motivated violence exists across all of three of the Abrahamic faiths. The purpose of this research was to highlight the value of exploring the potential commonalities amongst these extremist movements, often seen as discrete, and to better comprehend and confront recruitment and incitement to violence, regardless of which faith is claimed as ideological justification. In addition to focusing on what compels individuals to take violent action in the name of religion, and to recruit others to do likewise—and in what manner religion plays a role in these decisions—this report lays the groundwork for a larger discussion about the movements to which these individual violent actors belong.

This is a discussion that, unfortunately, will likely need to continue for the foreseeable future. Violent

[54] Leonard Zeskind (president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, and an expert on the Christian Identity movement) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[55] Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005), 222.
[56] Ibid.

extremism perpetrated in the name of religion will almost certainly not disappear any time soon. In the short-term, governments must continue to take necessary and appropriate steps to protect their citizenry. However, in the long-term, no one government can prevent this threat on its own. In fact, governments are best advised to protect their citizenry, address existing risk factors, and look to civil society and leading persons of faith to undertake more proactive interventions.

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5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Compiled by Stephen Tankel

TOPLINE STRATEGY

This report does not consider how to protect against acts extremist violence, but how to prevent them. Other EWI reports have already made and will continue to make substantive contributions to protecting people and infrastructure. As Henry A. Crumpton, the former U.S. Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism (now a Distinguished Fellow at EWI), has observed on several occasions, the government must continue to protect against attacks and capture or kill the attackers, but until we are able to discredit these movements the problem will continue. Attacking the ideology, mindset, and the perversion of religion that leads to violence in the name of faith is ultimately essential to pursuing any approach that exists at the strategic rather than simply operational level.

No single constituency can prevent this threat on its own; not government, not leading persons of faith, not civil society. In truth government, which is most responsible for our security, may be the least well equipped to take positive action. One point of widespread agreement at EWI's conference was that any faith plagued by extremists must ultimately "get its own house in order," that faith leaders do not want outsiders "meddling in their religion" and that government is especially ill suited for doing so. The recommendations for policymakers in this report are geared toward promoting government policy and actions that create the space where moderate faith leaders and civil society can operate.

The consensus emerging from EWI's conference was that the role government appears best suited to play is a more traditionally liberal one: to protect civilians against attacks, enforce existing laws, address the pertinent risk factors, and leave proactive interventions to the relevant faith communities and civil society. This report recommends that governments: avoid militarizing conflict with extremists, follow the rule of law, take a consistent approach toward extremism and extremists regardless of the faith in question, and address asymmetries of knowledge. These may appear simple recommendations but, to paraphrase Clauswitz's famous observation about strategy, they may be simple but that does not mean that they are easy.

Leading persons of faith and civil society must then play the more active and interventionist role. Faith leaders are the best equipped to challenge those within their particular religion. They must be encouraged to do so by those outside the faith, and pressured to do so by leaders within the faith. For leading persons of faith, this report recommends: an increased focus on intra-faith efforts based along the inter-faith dialogue model, increasing religious literacy within their own faith, and mobilizing moderates, especially to "name and shame" those who preach hate and violence.

For civil society, this report recommends: providing alternative social movement structures for potential recruits, providing a framework for discussion and action, serving as an intermediary and mediator between communities and governments when tensions rise, and providing a framework for intervention.

The recommendations following this report are organized around the main three stakeholders and the following rationale: government policies must create the space for moderate leading persons of path to intervene within their own faiths; those moderate leading persons of faith must do so; and civil society must help facilitate this via both active and reactive means. There is, however, one over-arching recommendation made for all stakeholders, and this regards the appeal of a Manichean response to the extremist worldview.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Reframing Our Own Manichean Worldview

Trying to engage in a competition with religious extremists over who can offer a simpler answer to complex problems will be a losing proposition every time. Further, engaging in a war of words over who represents good and who evil situates the dialogue in the framework of the cosmic war in which extremists are engaged. Extremists—even as their criminal acts must be roundly condemned—should never be dismissed simply as evil. First, there is little chance of convincing them or their supporters that they are on

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[*] *Note on Methodology:* The recommendations compiled here represent multiple syntheses: first, by each of the individual researchers of their interview subjects; second, by EWI of the researchers' reports in the discussion paper for the conference; and, finally, by EWI of the different opinions proffered at the conference. Because the conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, specific individuals are not cited unless they were already identified by name in the research reports submitted to EWI or agreed during subsequent discussions to be sourced directly.

the side of evil. Second, it also risks pushing their active but non-violent supporters toward violence, further radicalizing their passive supporters, and alienating their co-religionists who do not support the movement or share the same Manichean worldview but may feel it is the religion rather than the extremists that is under attack.[1] This is especially the case when violent extremists may be articulating more widely held grievances or deeply held beliefs. As groups and societies come into closer contact than ever before and traditional values are confronted by post-modern ones, the old set of ethics of right versus wrong will continually give way to the more challenging paradigm of right versus right. A counter-appeal based on a right versus wrong paradigm regarding belief can thus be counter-productive, reinforcing the extremists' worldview and possibly forcing co-religionists to choose sides.

Nuance and a comfort with ambiguity are rarely as compelling as the simple logic of good versus evil. Those charged with beating back the appeal of religious extremism need to be armed with a black and white worldview that simultaneously evinces support for pluralism, an intellectual balance that is not easy to achieve. EWI recommends a two-pronged approach, one for government and one for leading persons of faith and civil society. It also recommends cooperation among the three regarding the definition and labeling of extremist threats.

The government must always separate belief and action and focus on the latter. To quote Mike German, a former member of the FBI who has infiltrated terrorist organizations, for governments: "There are not bad ideas, there is bad behavior."[2] It is impossible to enforce orthodoxy, but to say killing people is wrong is a message any liberal government should credibly be able to deliver. Regardless of the many responses governments may take in reaction to extremism, those who reside in a country and attempt or commit violence against the populace should be labeled as criminals, not soldiers or warriors.

Leading persons of faith and civil society must reinforce this message. They should also go further, and mount a counter-appeal that attacks religious extremists precisely for their Manichean worldview. Extremists should be indicted for arrogating and misconstruing the tenets of the faith to support their criminal acts, as well as for offering false truths and nostrums in response to complicated problems. For faith leaders, rhetoric must evidence an understanding of religious ideology and the counter-message must be calibrated to address specifically how extremists are violating both the law and the central tenets of their faith. Further, when religion is used as a vehicle or rationale for violence that is inherently political, rhetoric responding to that violence should focus on the core motivations and not the religious veneer. Civil society can play an active role here, drawing attention to these underlying risk factors and focusing public attention on them.

Regarding the definition and labeling of extremist movements, this may seem an academic indulgence. It is not. Combating violent extremism perpetrated in the name of religion is, at its core, an ideational struggle. For such an undertaking, words matter. Even as this report examines extremism across the three Abrahamic faiths, and uses terms that are equivalent linguistically —Jewish extremists, Christian extremists, and Muslim extremists—they are not contextually equal. Currently, different (and worse) connotations are associated with the term "Muslim extremists" than with the others.[3] Moreover, the former two terms are rarely used within Israel and the United States respectively. All of this has the dual effect of reinforcing the belief by many Muslims throughout the world that their religion is under attack, while simultaneously letting members of the Jewish and Christian communities off the hook with regard to addressing violence perpetrated in the names of their faiths.[4]

Finding ways of reducing the association between religion and extremism may be one way forward, and a possibly fruitful one given a goal of de-linking those who perpetrate violence from the religion in whose name they claim to act. This demands a new way of labeling all violent extremists that is faith-neutral, a potentially Herculean undertaking. Nonetheless, civil society and leading persons of faith, in concert with policymakers and academics, should make a determined attempt to employ new terminology that clearly reveals both the commonalities amongst violent extremists and what differentiates them from mainstream members of the groups they claim to represent. This new language should focus the blame for violent acts on narrow segments of a religious or ethnic group and not draw upon stereotypes and presumptions. The goal should not be to formulate value-free terminology, since we do want to make a value judgment about people who use violence.

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[1] Passive supporters include individuals who quietly sympathize with the insurgents but are unwilling to provide material assistance. Active supporters include those willing to make sacrifices and risk personal harm by either joining the movement or providing intelligence information, concealment, shelter, hiding places for arms and equipment, medical assistance, guides, and liaison agents. It also may include those who carry out acts of civil disobedience or protest that may result in punishment by the government. Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 94-96.

[2] Mike German (former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, current policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

[3] EWI is exploring this issue through a separate component of the project that focuses on the role rhetoric and language play with regard to violent extremism.

[4] Members of the Jewish and Christian clergy from Israel and the United States, respectively, made this point at EWI's *Towards a Common Response: New Thinking Against Violent Extremism & Radicalization* conference, June 14, 2007.

Rather, it is to facilitate conversation and agreement between groups against a common enemy that does not share the values of mainstream people from all groups.

It was suggested to EWI by those familiar with the U.S. government that, at least with regard to the "war on terror," a search for alternative language might be underway. The European Union already has working groups looking at developing a "non-emotive lexicon for discussing radicalization." This effort, however, remains focused for the most part on "terrorists who abusively invoke Islam,"[5] as opposed to "Islamic terrorists." To truly separate the terrorists from religion, a more holistic focus on multiple faiths is needed, since there remains the risk that any new term can be sullied if used inappropriately, i.e. by repeatedly being used only to describe extremists from one particular faith. Further, although governments must be on board with any language ultimately developed, such terminology will almost certainly have more cache with religious communities if proposed by those from these faith communities and then adopted by government. In concert with experts on rhetoric and communications and leading persons of faith, EWI is currently scoping out the parameters of a project to develop such a lexicon.

Examples of positive steps in this direction are beginning to emerge. In response to the 2007 plots to attack the Glasgow airport and a London nightclub, British Prime Minster Gordon Brown, only in office for a few days, referred to the conspirators simply as criminals, with no allusion to religion. As Mike German, the former federal agent, rhetorically asked at EWI's conference, why call them terrorists if we call them murderers? There are those who will quarrel with this, arguing the importance of categorizing threats as insurgents or guerrillas or terrorists or criminals. Such technical precision, where possible, may be important for governments internally. But there is no reason why internal security terminology needs to be the lingua franca in the public discourse over violent extremism. Many movements write lengthy treatises to demonstrate why they should not be placed in the same box as murderers or criminals or others who harm society. Our goal should be to counter rather than abet this and consign all violent extremists to that box, regardless of the faith they claim to represent.

It is important to reiterate that this is not an attempt at political correctness. The ultimate aim is to reduce violence and win over potential supporters and recruits. If calibrating the terminology used in this ideational struggle is necessary to avoid alienating target audiences—or worse, inciting them—before the argument has even begun, this is a small price to pay. Thus, such terminology should be seen as a pre-requisite for making a powerful argument against religious extremists, not as an apologia for them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

Take a rule of law approach.

Among its responsibilities, liberal government exists to make and enforce laws, and judge and punish those who break them without bias. There is no reason why government should treat those who break the law by engaging in or materially supporting violence in the name of religion any differently, both in terms of over-enforcement and under-enforcement of existing laws.

Over-enforcement is likely the more recognizable problem, where a government is overly harsh or represses an actor's rights in the name of security or to satisfy the citizenry's desire for retribution. Extra-judicial treatment in keeping with accepted norms and values can further radicalize an extremist movement and alienate its co-religionists who, while previously law-abiding citizens, now see their faith as being singled out.

However, the latter issue of under-enforcement is equally dangerous—if not more so. It can have the insidious effect of creating a climate in which extremism is allowed to ferment and may develop into a deadly brew. Most experts interviewed by EWI agreed that a failure to crack down on low-level crimes and violence, as well as a reluctance to use existing laws to disrupt extremist networks, ultimately creates an atmosphere in which it becomes even more difficult to prevent high-impact violence.[6]

EWI's research found under-enforcement occurring for three reasons: political sympathy with a movement's cause, as in the case of the anti-abortion and militia movements in the United States, and a combination of political sympathy and actual fear of the repercussions of enforcement, as in the case of the settler movement in Israel. All three cases are complex, but the systematic decision to take a hands-off response by the British government during the 1990s presents a particularly complicated case of how a course of under-enforcement, even when taken for strategic reasons, can create the conditions for extremism to flourish.

Experts within the United Kingdom have indicated to EWI that the security services believed it was better to allow inflammatory political speech for three main reasons: first because it served as a nonviolent outlet, second because it was assumed to be limited to

[5] David Rennie, "'Islamic terrorism' is too emotive a phrase, says EU," *The Telegraph*, April 12, 2006.

[6] A detailed accounting of how under-enforcement in each of these three cases contributed to the commission of extremist violence is found in the first three chapters of this report.

advocating external actions, and third because it was easier to monitor actors if they were not forced underground. The government is now drawing sharper distinctions between the advocacy of violence and supporting or condoning acts of illegal war (such as in Iraq).

There is a fear, however, that the pendulum might swing too far in the opposite direction and that government policy may be infringing too much on the rights of some Muslim communities, with the attendant problems discussed above. Additionally, consistent application and enforcement of the law could, in some cases, reduce the sense of victimization among Muslims. In some instances, attention must be paid to the potential unintended effects of policies with regard to Muslim communities. 'Positive' discrimination and policies addressing exclusively a single community have proven counter-productive since they can further marginalize the community and increase its sense of victimization.

To this end, it is crucial to fully enforce the spectrum of existing laws, including seemingly minor crimes. Failure to do so is often seen as tacit approval and license to commit additional and escalating crimes. Stricter enforcement may demand confronting a group of actors with strong allies in government or society. Where extremist movements have a presence, strict enforcement of all laws is essential, both at the individual and group level. For example, in the United States, from 1994-1996 the number of paramilitary groups grew from zero to approximately 370, with conservative estimates putting the number of individuals involved well in excess of 10,000.

Although militia movement members were prosecuted individually for a wide range of criminal activities such as the stockpiling of illegal weapons and explosives, not a single state attorney general took the initiative to bring an indictment against members of a militia group based on the fact that such groups constituted illegal private armies in 24 (out of 50) states, where such armed paramilitary groups were expressly prohibited by law. According to Leonard Zeskind, an expert on the Christian Identity movement, which heavily influenced Timothy McVeigh, the United States "would not have had the Oklahoma City bombing in the absence of the larger militia movement."[7]

It is essential that all enforcement is carried out with a clear sense of proportionality. Governments should be wary of both over-prosecution and under-prosecution. The punishment must fit the crime, and must always be the same across faiths. Governments should maintain oversight to ensure local policing and prosecution is consistent, fair, and proportionate in geographic areas where extremist sentiment is known to exist.

Vigilant enforcement and oversight do not end when those who have attempted, supported, or committed violence are incarcerated. More effective monitoring of prison communications is warranted to prevent the incitement of violence from prison, including monitoring all written communications by those convicted and imprisoned and monitoring the websites of extremist organizations to determine if they are communicating with incarcerated members, and then interdicting correspondence as necessary.

The issue of monitoring communications as a means to dissuade incitement is relatively clear-cut when dealing with communications involving those currently incarcerated. It is far less so with regard to the general citizenry, at least for any country that aspires to protect civil liberties. This protection must be balanced with the need to thwart the wider extremist movement in its attempt to incite violence directly. To avoid breadth at the expense of depth, EWI focused on confronting the incitement of violence and eschewed entry into the debate over appropriate levels of surveillance. As an organization focused primarily on issues of conflict prevention and security, this seemed a wise place to draw the line to avoid over-reach.

When violence directed toward a specific individual or individuals is threatened, suggested, or sanctioned, tools such as restraining orders, increased police protection, and, where legally feasible, prosecution should be used. This would apply in instances where a religious ruling or public decree sanctioned or demanded violence. Examples include the Jewish rulings of Din Rodef and Din Moser and Muslim fatwas. There is no exact Christian equivalent, but members of the anti-abortion movement who condone violence have made use of specific biblical texts—sometimes accompanied by bloody effigies of individuals—implying the need or sanction of murder and directed toward individuals, particularly abortion providers.

Where a clear and present danger to the citizenry exists, incitement must be prosecuted immediately. Both the U.K. and Israel have prosecuted extremists for preaching or promoting violence, though Israel has not been entirely consistent in its application of this law and the U.K. has only recently adopted this practice. In those instances where violence is not explicitly called for—and thus a clear and present danger does not exist—these cloaked incitements must be met with immediate government assurance that any violence will be prosecuted to utmost extent of the law. Too often verbal urgings to violence are not met with an equally adamant verbal response from the government. Ultimately, though, the best response to the incitement of violence will come not from government but from leading persons of the faith in

[7] Leonard Zeskind (president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights in Kansas City) interviewed by Daniel Levitas (EWI Researcher), March 2007.

question who must be responsible for publicly shaming any co-religionist who promotes violence.

Do not militarize conflict

Thematically, this recommendation falls within the larger rubric of taking a "rule of law" approach. However, all the experts that were consulted for this project judged it to be of such high importance that it merits distinct treatment. To be clear about terminology, militarization of conflict here means both the use of the military to contend with an internal threat and the assumption of a military style or character by internal police forces. Regarding the former, this report has already acknowledged that in those cases where the threat is external the military may need to be employed. Without widespread rebellion or the mass concentration of forces threatening to the citizenry, there is little reason why the military should ever be engaged for domestic law enforcement purposes.

The thrust here concerns mainly the militarization of the police and other law enforcement agencies. The use of covert paramilitary or extra-legal operations should not be employed. However, like undercover operations, covert law enforcement activity is effective if the ensuing prosecutions are public and above-board. When force is necessary to respond to the threat or commission of violence by an extremist movement, proportionality must be ensured. Generally speaking, the more disproportionate the state violence is to the actual offense, the greater the likelihood that there will be a violent response.

Domestic law enforcement should avoid portraying a military character. All of the extremist movements included in EWI's research, and most terrorist groups in general, see themselves as engaged in a war with the government or other sectors of society. When law enforcement agencies conduct military operations and "behave like storm troopers," this only further legitimizes these groups' claims in their own minds and among their supporters. When conducting raids or other law enforcement operations requiring a heavy show or use of force, rules governing law enforcement behavior and actions in these instances should be transparent and defensible. Governments should recognize that the transparency of prosecutions following such operations is essential to establishing legitimacy and undermining the clams frequently made by extremist groups that extra-legal conduct by government justifies military-style operations against government targets and civilians.

In all circumstances, government officials should avoid using war references or terminology. Even when dealing with an external threat, EWI recommends minimizing these references to the greatest degree possible. All of EWI's research, and copious supporting documentation, suggests that the violent extremists in question see themselves as soldiers and warriors undermine the credibility and legitimacy these actors and groups crave. Unless a formal declaration of war exists, the term should not be employed. Certainly internally, and in some cases externally, the focus should be on the *criminality* of the behavior. When special forces are necessary to address an external threat, such terminology is more problematic. Nevertheless, at the least there should be a concerted effort to avoid war references wherever possible. It may be that the best that a government can do in this situation is to minimize its military rhetoric. Even this is preferable to full-throated declarations of war.

Be consistent

To create the space for leading persons of faith and civil society to positively intervene to counter violent extremism and radicalism, governments must calibrate all actions to be consistent in order to avoid exacerbating feelings of injustice or promoting the tacit endorsement of any extremist worldview. The inconsistent application of rhetoric and action by liberal democracies is doubly detrimental because of the inherent hypocrisy. Such behavior is expected in dictatorships, but not liberal democracies. The failure to be publicly consistent in actions and language automatically de-legitimizes a government, making it more challenging to de-legitimize extremist actors. In the case of Christian or Jewish extremists, a lack of response is itself a form of legitimacy by default. It may be seen as tacit consent or an acknowledgement that their worldview is an acceptable one, and this can ultimately lead to an incitement to escalate violence. In the case of Muslim extremists, such as al Qaeda, the lack of legitimacy arises because the response appears hypocritical. This contributes to or confirms the sense of injustice among their potential recruits.

This report has already addressed the importance of a rule of law approach. It is axiomatic that implicit in such an approach is the consistent application of the law. Clearly, consistency of action is paramount to that of discourse. The manner in which government officials talk about policies will never have as much impact as the policies themselves. Consistency in public discourse is not without merit.

One U.S. government official with whom EWI spoke suggested the goal is to move from "you are either with us or against us" to "if you are against them, then we are with you."[8] This evolution would be a marked improvement. It will only be truly effective if the government defines "them" as violent extremists from any, and sadly almost every, faith. It is a struggle to reconcile the incongruity of threats from different extremist movements and the similarity of worldview. As acknowledged, today the threat from violent extremists proclaiming allegiance to the Muslim faith often dominates the discussion. It is right to question

[8] Conversation between Stephen Tankel of EWI and a U.S. government official who wishes to remain anonymous.

why the threat from this quarter appears disproportionately larger than from other religions. It is wrong to ascribe the problem to the religion. Here platitudes about not blaming the religion will no longer suffice. When public officials speak out, they need to make clear that no one group has the monopoly on hate or zealotry. And they need to use examples drawn from multiple faiths to prove that they get it. According to a Muslim representative from the media, Muslims know there is extremism in the United States and Israel, but from the news media it appears no action is taken. She said that when she and others see action taken, they perceive these governments to be more balanced in their approach toward combating violent extremism.

Where possible, government officials should coordinate with local and national law enforcement to more widely publicize successful law enforcement operations and prosecutions dealing with extremists from faiths other than Islam. For example, the U.S. Justice Department never made a high-profile announcement following the arrest of William Krar, a man with ties to the Christian Identity influenced militia movement, who had built a sodium cyanide bomb and was in possession of over 100 explosives, including pipe bombs specially disguised to fit inside suitcases. This contrasts sharply with then U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft's approach to the arrest of Jose Padilla one year earlier in June 2002. Ashcroft interrupted an overseas trip to announce Padilla's arrest. If the message the United States intends to send is that it opposes all terrorists, regardless of faith or ethnicity, they would be greatly helped by taking more seriously, and condemning more publicly, William Krar and those like him. It will put domestic actors in the United States on notice that the government remains vigilant against all threats, while also lending credibility to rhetoric that the United States is sincerely limiting its efforts to countering extremist violence and terrorism, and is not at war with Islam.[9] In Israel, a number of non-governmental organizations and media have been pressing for a more mainstream focus on and discussion of the threats posed by Jewish extremists. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* recently warned that the "ideological refusal to evacuate settlers is no longer a marginal phenomenon."

Address asymmetries of knowledge

An effort should be made to better understand the theology, texts, culture, and history of the religions. Law enforcement and policymakers with responsibility for security issues need to understand the theology and social history of the groups involved. Misunderstanding of group ideologies and strategies can degrade the capacity to prevent and respond to attacks and standoff situations. Further, many of the principal actors within these movements have regularly disseminated information leading to the identification of persons later responsible for violence. It is especially important to understand the strategic goals of the various groups as they relate to the possible targeting and timing of violent actions. Regarding the latter, non-governmental experts can assist in anticipating dates of significance so that governments can engage local law enforcement to increase awareness and surveillance as necessary.

Following an attack, the criminal conduct must be dealt with through the legal system and the underlying social issues and demands must be dealt with through the political system. Government officials must resist the inclination to stereotype movement activists or the religion in question, or blame the violence on psychologically or emotionally disturbed individuals. This can be very challenging, especially in the aftermath of an attempted or successful attack. Better understanding of the phenomenon of religiously sanctioned extremist violence in general and of the different movements specifically can only help in this regard.

Policymakers, security services, law enforcement, and criminal justice agencies should cultivate relationships with NGOs, academics, clerics, and other sources that can provide them with additional background and analytical information on religiously based social movements likely to commit terrorist acts and violence. Tutorials, seminars, and testimony from experts should cover all categories of religiously motivated violence across different cultures and faiths. Even experts in one category of extremist movements can learn from comparing them with others. All constituencies should be mutually involved in a process of continuing education, acknowledging that extremism is amorphous, often decentralized, sensitive to current events and prevailing policy, and thus an evolving phenomenon. The inclusion of media in these tutorials should be considered when open source information is being discussed.

Perhaps the most important piece of knowledge is that attacks will happen, but that even though an attack takes place that does not mean the extremist movement perpetrating it has won. Extremist violence will, unfortunately, be with us for the foreseeable future. In the long run, though, those groups embracing it have rarely, if ever, achieved ultimate victory. The mainstream majority must believe that the extremists will not win. And government policy must reflect this confidence.

[9] This recommendation leaves aside the greater issue regarding the original treatment of Padilla as an "enemy combatant" despite his status as an American citizen as well as his imprisonment in Guantanamo Bay and the attendant legal questions. However, one could argue that even publicizing Krar's arrest would raise questions about the different legal rights each received. Ultimately, the question of consistent legal treatment is one that must be resolved, and avoiding opportunities to publicize successful anti-terrorism efforts that do not just target extremists from the Muslim faith is not a solution to the greater problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADING PERSONS OF FAITH

Work within the faith

Interdicting financial flows, prosecuting incitements to violence, and monitoring or shutting down Internet sites are all important. Each of these addresses only the tactics of violent extremists. Material support is only a tool for extremist groups. Public incitements to violence are just one means of urging people to action. And the Internet is simply one tool for communications and recruitment, albeit one of growing importance. Extremist movements can continue to operate without any one of these. Without ideology, however, these movements cannot survive. The ideology of violence must be replaced, and the only people capable of executing this feat are leading persons within the faith.

It is always challenging for lay people to make recommendations of the following type to the faithful. The entire approach of these recommendations is predicated on the notion that those outside of a religion cannot effect change in that faith, but rather that change must come from within. EWI, a secular organization with no sectarian or denominational leanings, sought input from a number of leading persons of faith from various religions. The resounding recommendation that resulted from these exchanges is the need to shift emphasis from an inter-faith approach to an intra-faith approach. Which is to say, leading persons of faith dedicated to combating intolerance should stop devoting so much of their energy to speaking with people from other religions and focus more on promoting dialogue within their religion. To this end, all of the following recommendations are within the rubric of how leading persons of faith can best intervene to prevent violence by those claiming the same religion.

Deficits of tolerance and pluralism exist not only between faiths but also within them. A number of religious leaders have suggested to EWI that this type of intolerance is more difficult to address. A Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim can agree that they are all religious people of faith, even if their faiths differ. However, just as civil wars within countries tend to be more brutal than wars between them, intolerance is generally at its most vitriolic when found within a faith. The most orthodox elements may consider more liberal adherents to be apostates, while some liberals are inclined to view the ultra-orthodox as zealots or perhaps even extremists in their own right.

These gaps do not have to be overcome entirely. Rather, current inter-faith efforts should be adapted to create intra-faith models for dialogue, but with a narrower remit. For example, it is not necessary to increase cross-denominational awareness for congregants in the same manner that inter-faith efforts seek to expose faiths to one another. A wholehearted embrace of pluralism throughout the faith is not necessary and the perfect should not be the enemy of the good. There does not need to be acceptance, or even tolerance, of different approaches to issues ranging from dietary laws to evolution. In this instance, what is necessary is to promote ways to co-exist to the degree that they can collectively provide a non-violent alternative to those in thrall to violent extremist movements. That means a commitment across the clergy to preach what they want and teach what they want, provided they preach and teach that the central tenets of the faith never condone extra-judicial violence. It also means agreement that they will stand up and stand together to denounce violence when it occurs and where it is endorsed.

Before delineating specific recommendations, it is important to define the term that will appear throughout the remainder of this section: moderate. It is all too common to describe as moderate those who share our beliefs and leave it at that. However, the real moderates who make the most persuasive arguments against violet extremism may well be those who make both groups—the liberals and the orthodox—uncomfortable. These are leading persons of faith who speak from within the faith, seeking to reinterpret the fundamentals of the theology for the issues of the day. They do not speak a secular or liberal language, but nor are they bound by an entirely literal interpretation of scripture. In the estimation of this report, these are the true moderates. Firstly, they are legitimately found in the middle of the spectrum between secularity and orthodoxy. Secondly, they are likely those best equipped to moderate between the two extremes.

Finally, this report acknowledges that the following recommendations will not have equal utility across all situations involving religious extremism. Increasing young people's religious literacy as a safeguard against their being led astray by extremist recruiters will naturally have more applicability in those cases where low religious literacy is a problem. Likewise, in some instances, moderates are already more vocal than in others. Thus the following constitute a range of general recommendations to be adapted as necessary depending on the specific situation, region, faith, and community.

Improve religious literacy

Many young people vulnerable to successful recruitment into an extremist movement come to a crossroads in their lives—an identity crisis—in which they question what it means to be a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim, to take just the three faiths upon which EWI's initial research focused.[10] They are faced with

[10] In Israel, this is a structural problem and often radicalization of young people will be dictated by the yeshiva they attend. The solution here will require far more pressure from moderates, something that will be addressed in the section dedicated to mobilizing the moderates.

multiple identities and the choices they make will lead to different lives. Knowledge about their own faith and the person who meets these potential recruits at that crossroads can be major determinants of the direction they choose. Often idealistic and searching, young people will be found by religious extremists anxious to mold and train them in their own image. When a young person is met by a religious extremist and has little understanding of the true tenets of his own faith, he or she is particularly vulnerable to recruitment.

Most young people will, of course, be aware that religious extremism exists. Simply warning them of the danger will not suffice. Further, this dilemma does not argue for the avoidance of religious education. Rather, it cries out for the importance of proper religious education. The form that education takes will be as varied as the communities in which it occurs. However, it must provide young people with mentors with whom they can relate and teach them to think critically about how to relate religious principles to their lives. These are the same provisions generally proffered by extremist movements, but with a different message and by a different messenger.

There is no one approach to combating this problem. Recently in the United Kingdom, the government began sponsoring civics classes with a curriculum aimed at matching the messages from the Quran to challenges in British life. It has met with mixed reviews, with one of the main criticisms being that it singled out Muslim children. This is a strong argument for the importance of consistency of approach, especially when the government is involved. However, as important as what is taught is who teaches it. In all three cases, EWI's research confirmed the important role mentors played in extremist recruitment. Acknowledging finite resources—most notably money and time—all of those consulted by EWI agreed that there needed to be an even greater focus by leading persons of faith to connect with young people. Clergy need not be solely responsible for this, nor would they always make the best mentors. Again, each community will be different.

Imam Sajid, an imam in the U.K., has also identified the continuing education of clergy as a major issue. He is particularly familiar with the needs there, especially the continuing growth of mosques and Muslim organizations and the attendant dearth of qualified people to staff them. To a degree, this may be a problem more specific to this region than to others. The larger issue of qualification—both theologically and as an authority figure overall—is one with widespread applicability.[11] His recommendation, echoed by others at EWI's conference, was the institution of a qualifications system before a person could be registered to preach or teach. Of course, this works only insofar as the preaching or teaching is public and is not something the government could or should seek to legislate. Rather, again, the onus must be on leading persons of faith to come together and institute their own checks and balances. To this end, Imam Sajid recommended a yearly course, designed in collaboration with the state and the community, focused on civilian laws pertinent to the faith, i.e., everything from laws affecting life cycle events to counter-terrorism measures. The objective is for leading persons of faith to push themselves to continually reinterpret their theology for the issues of the day.

Finally, increasing religious literacy as a means of rehabilitating those enticed by extremist movements is also important. Clearly, finding and reaching such people is difficult, but there is one place where rehabilitation has been and can be attempted: prison.

Clergy working with governments in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt have had some success in convincing incarcerated adherents of extremist ideology that they had been theologically mislead. This applies both to the foot soldiers and to high-level operators and ideologues. Egypt's counter-radicalization programs are the most extensive of the four, and their most recent success is the forthcoming paper "Advice Regarding the Conduct of Jihadist Action in Egypt and the World" by Sayid Imam al-Sharif, the founder and first commander of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. In the paper he recants his theological interpretations that supported violent jihad, which had formed the core of his earlier work "Foundations of Preparation for Holy War." This work had served as the ideological cornerstone for many violent Muslim extremist groups. The program has already resulted in twenty-five volumes of revisions in which former ideologues revised their prior thinking on issues including: declaring Muslims apostates, attacks on civilians, and waging war against Muslim rulers who do not apply Sharia law.

These programs consist of allowing those imprisoned to speak with one another and dialogue with clerics who bring a different, i.e. nonviolent, interpretation to theology. In some instances, reductions in prison sentences have also been used as inducements. This report does not recommend or condemn this approach —it is out of EWI's area of expertise—but does caution that such inducements can yield surface level success and skew real results. Clearly, the optimal scenario is one in which a genuine conversion away from violence takes place, not abetted by material inducements. Further, not surprisingly, none of these recantations has resulted in adoption of secular or liberal outlooks on religion. There is still much in the outlook of these "converts" that would trouble someone with traditionally secular or liberal values. The goal, however, is a renunciation of violence and the ideology of violence. Given that security officials have attested to the difficulty of "breaking" those arrested for committing or supporting religiously inspired violence,

[11] Imam Sajid (Imam Brighton Islamic Mission) interviewed by Stephen Tankel (EWI Fellow), August 2007.

even nominal success by these counter-radicalization programs argues for expanding to and implementing them in any prison where violent religious extremists are held.

Mobilize the moderates

In the words of one of the clerics who presented at EWI's conference, "the most common response to religious violence by moderate religious leaders is to be quiet." A number of those interviewed stated religious leaders often claim they do not engage in such condemnation because they do not want to draw attention to these actors and thereby lend them legitimacy.[12] In today's world of 24/7 global media, these actors do not need help drawing attention to themselves. And their legitimacy is only enhanced by the silence of leading persons of their faith. The danger with this is two-fold. This section first outlines the two dangers an under-response by moderates pose, and then presents recommendations for how moderates should respond.

First, and more obvious, is that religious outsiders will not be able to penetrate the ideology of an extremist movement. Rather, criticism from outside the faith can actually reinforce allegiance to the group. This can be true even if accompanied by a response with allied moderates, but is certainly the case when moderates remain silent. Those speaking from within the faith will always have the most legitimacy when condemning violence.

The second danger is that moderates are always the second victims of violent extremism, following those who suffered physical harm. Over time, extremism unchecked from within the faith will continue to fester and grow, and can ultimately dominate in some areas. It is possible to think of this in terms of Mao's three phases of insurgency. During the first phase, extremists seek to inspire popular support within the faith, sometimes using violence as a means of doing so. The second phase is devoted to trying to force moderates onto the defensive, and to illustrate the permanency of the extremist movement (through its visibility) and contrast this with the moderates' ephemeral authority (illustrated by their inability to stamp out the extremists within the faith). By the final phase, the extremist movement is strong enough to face off directly with the moderates, and challenge them for control of the faithful. Clearly, neither this direct face-off nor any of the phases take the form of actual warfare between extremists and moderates. Metaphorically speaking, however, it is possible to see how inactivity by moderates can allow extremists in certain regions to dictate the nature of religious ideology, or at the very least compete with moderates for the faithful.

The macro recommendation, of course, is that moderates must not remain silent in the face of extremist violence or extremist appeals. And while a number of religious leaders have issued public statements condemning violence, too often these declarations are abstract and not aimed directly at participants and perpetrators. Often they do not include emphatic religious pleas to desist from criminal activity, or a condemnation of the misuse of theology to sanction violence.

Assuring the populace that Judaism/Christianity/Islam is a religion of peace is all well and good, and it is certainly understandable why moderates would feel the need to defend the faith to the larger population in the wake of a violent act. However, while the faith does need defending, it is against the extremists who attempt to reinterpret it to sanction violence. The audiences that moderates really need to speak to in the wake of a violent attack are those within their faith who condone, support, or are contemplating similar acts of violence. Moderates need to deliver the message that violence is an abomination, and explain why the interpretation of the religion to sanction this violence is wrong. When doing so, they should speak from within the faith, meaning they should employ the language of theology to make their case.

When applicable, clerics should encourage perpetrators to desist and turn themselves over to law enforcement when a plot is suspected or after a crime has been committed. Further, clerics need to single out the perpetrators for condemnation. For example, in 1987, Dennis J. Malvasi bombed an abortion clinic. He turned himself in to the authorities less than 24 hours after Archbishop John J. O'Connor broadcast a plea that Malvasi give himself up. "The cardinal is my shepherd," said Malvasi at his subsequent sentencing, after pleading guilty to bombing one clinic in Manhattan and to trying to bomb another in Queens. Sentenced to seven years in prison, Malvasi served five and was paroled but was re-arrested in 2001 for helping James Charles Kopp, who killed an abortion doctor, to evade federal authorities. It is unclear if counter-radicalization efforts would have been successful, but they were not attempted during Malvasi's incarceration.

Cardinal O'Connor's plea was particularly effective given the nature of hierarchy within the Roman Catholic Church. In the case of Jewish audiences, violent extremists have suggested they will not act without some form of rabbinical consent, and so such a tactic could also be effective in this instance. When addressing Protestant or Muslims audiences, statements from the pulpit countering violent activity will likely have the most resonance at the local congregational level.

[12] Each of EWI's researchers found this cited by numerous experts as the reason given by religious moderates for why they do not speak out more. Each also found enormous consensus during their research for the importance of mobilizing the moderates.

Cardinal O'Connor's plea was likely effective because it was directed specifically at Malvasi and included no caveats. He did not condemn violence abstractly and then add a lengthy caveat condemning abortion. Nor did Cardinal O'Connor seek to disavow Malvasi as a member of the faith. Instead he dealt with him directly —or at least as directly as he could through the media—as a Catholic who had committed the crime of murder in the name of his faith. It is perfectly fine to say that a violent extremist does not represent Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, but it is also crucial to recognize that they committed the crime in the name of that faith. Simply disowning the perpetrator as "not a real Jew/Christian/Muslim" is exactly the type of Manichean rhetoric in which extremists engage. Leading persons of faith must acknowledge that the problem exists within the faith, and address the wider ideological distortions of theology that made such an act possible.

It is not enough, however, for moderates to speak up only in response to violence. A number of the experts EWI interviewed suggested that violence followed the creation of an atmosphere in which murder appeared religiously acceptable and even encouraged.

In a liberal democracy, governments cannot and should not censor the proclamation of ideology unless it presents a clear danger. Moderates can intercede and must act as the vanguard in any attempt to erect a moral barrier against extremist movements. According to one cleric, it is the role of every responsible leading person of faith to "name and shame" those constructing the ideological framework on which the commission of violence is based. When hate is preached and violence condoned, either in the media or from the pulpit, moderates must speak up. Where relevant, moderates should publicize hypocritical conduct or perceived moral failings of members and leaders of extremist movements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Eric Hoffer's observation over fifty years ago that "'to lose one's life is but to lose the present; and clearly, to lose a defiled, worthless present is not to lose much" still holds true today.[13] Even if an extremist cell or network is destroyed or a movement totally discredited, there must be something new to fill the vacuum created. The political, religious, and civil society communities must work together to fill that void, otherwise another extremist group may well. Civil society constitutes everything that exists between the familial level and the state level. It permeates the civic and the religious worlds, and is the space in which all social activity transpires. The range of organizations within the space of true civil society should not be limited to non- governmental organizations (NGOs). The very nature of democratic life requires respect for differences. For this reason, civil society groups that are advancing vision of pluralism, civic tolerance, free speech, citizen participation, and engagement are all helping to foster alternatives to violent extremism. To defeat extremist movements, academia, business, community groups, faith organizations, media, think tanks, and sundry other entities within this space must be mobilized to promote these alternatives.

The overarching goal must be two-fold: to provide people with a present that does not leave them desirous of civilization change and willing to sacrifice today for the promise of tomorrow, and to provide people with alternative social structures and movements to belong to. Toward these ends, this report does not have much to offer in the way of recommendations. This may appear at first counter-intuitive, since EWI is after all an NGO and would not be expected to neglect its own role. However, it is precisely because of EWI's intimate knowledge of the breadth of civil society activities that are already dedicated to the aforementioned goal that this report is silent on the matter.

Instead, the approach here is to recommend ways to leverage the existing efforts of civil society to maximize their impact in the cause of countering the appeal of extremist movements. To this end, the following recommendations outline how to better utilize the framework of civil society to create a platform for discussion and action, the role civil society can play as an intermediary between governments and communities when tensions arise, and those situations when civil society should be prepared to mobilize its resources and actively intervene in the face of an extremist threat.

This said, there is one area where EWI does believe more resources must be directed, and that is toward youth programs. While it is true that a multitude of youth-based civil society programs already exist, mainstream society is still being outspent, outmaneuvered, and outhustled by extremist recruiters when it comes to meeting young people. Though outside the scope of this report, it bears mentioning that gang recruitment is another indicator of failure in this area. EWI's expertise is not in creation or maintenance of successful youth initiatives. There are plenty of organizations that exist solely for this purpose, and the purpose here is not to recommend to them how to do a better job. Rather, the reason for addressing this is to advocate for more funding for these organizations. Businesses and philanthropic organizations looking to have an impact in the struggle against violent extremist could do a lot worse than to fund programs designed specifically to give young people positive alternatives to those on offer by extremist movements.

[13] Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper Collins, 1951), 69.

A framework for discussion and action

There are near limitless ways in which civil society can provide a framework for discussion and action, with the production of reports such as this being only one of many. What is desperately needed, however, is a way of networking many of the different efforts already underway. As a number of people have pointed out, extremist movements are generally very well networked and we need to catch up. EWI therefore recommends the creation of an inventory of the elements of civil society already dedicating resources to this cause. The geographic and substantive scope would need to be established. There is no reason why multiple inventory projects cannot be undertaken in different geographic locations, provided the organizations responsible coordinate at the outset toward the ultimate aim of combining the finished product.

Regardless of whether undertaken by one or multiple organizations, the inventory would begin with research on and outreach to relevant governments, civil society, and faith-based groups involved in combating extremism. This research will identify and collect data on a comprehensive array of counter-extremism efforts, answering the following types of questions: what aspects of extremism are being addressed and combated (recruitment, rhetoric, preparation for violent action); what methods are being used to counter extremism; what audiences and communities are being targeted; how are communities included in the shaping and implementation of the effort; is there co-ordination between this effort and others of its type (e.g. civil society, government, the religious community); what challenges have been faced; and what lessons have been learned in combating extremism that could be applied in other contexts or cases. This research will be compiled in an inventory that will catalogue all counter-extremism efforts in the geographic region identified. Over time, this inventory should be developed into an online data sourse that can be expanded yearly. The outcome fostered could include new co-operation between hitherto unacquainted groups, information-sharing and greater awareness of the work being done within the network of groups devoted to combating extremism, and the adoption of new techniques and approaches discovered through this interchange.[14]

In addition to networking different organizations currently underway, networking people—and particularly leaders—from civil society is imperative. According to Mark Gerzon, a Distinguished Fellow at EWI who leads the Institute's Leadership Program, one of the greatest contributions civil society can make in reducing the threat of violent extremism is to champion a vision of leadership that models non-violent inclusiveness. To develop this kind of leadership requires work in every sector of society—from schools to universities, from business to academia, from media to religion. Every part of civil society can play a role in making citizens aware that the most effective antidote against violent extremism is for mainstream civic leaders to stand up for the kind of leadership that leads to stronger communities and a safer world.

To this end, identifying or creating venues to bring together leaders from within and across different realms of civil society, is a more personalized—or micro—approach to facilitating the cross-pollination of ideas. Further, by designing specific leadership programs around the problem of extremism it is possible to motivate people toward additional action and to equip them with the tools necessary to undertake such action. Such programs should bring policy these leaders together with those who have been affected by religious extremism or on the front lines working to counter it. Such efforts would foster cross-cultural sharing and cooperation and engage new and powerful allies in the search for actionable solutions. In addition, on a more macro level, civil society groups that are focused on "conflict resolution" or "democratic dialogue," as well as those who are seeking to improve parliamentary processes and make government more transparent and accountable, are also making a significant contribution to combating extremism. As the recognized institutions of decision-making become more effective, the rationale for violent extremism is weakened.

A framework for mediation

Many elements of civil society—particularly academia, community and faith organizations, pressure groups, and the media—already agitate for addressing the economic, political, and social conditions that can constitute the underlying risk factors for violent extremism. By the nature of their mission, these entities are often best suited to offering a non-violent means for marginalized individuals and groups to appeal for redress or vent frustration. Consequently, some of these entities—especially community and faith organizations and pressure groups—can act as intermediaries between communities and governments when tensions arise. Academia is likely better suited to providing a roadmap for how to mediate or redress the relevant issues and the media to bringing to public attention the need to do so.

Citizens' panels—comprised of local community members, government and law enforcement representatives, and civil society members—could be useful to this end. Similar panels have been employed to defuse tensions between law enforcement and the

[14] The initial impetus for this recommendation came during a meeting by EWI President John Mroz with then-Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, Hank Crumpton. Soon after, the same idea was proposed at an EWI working group on the Role of Civil Society in Countering Extremism, with members of European NGOs and EU officials on Friday, September 29, 2006 in Brussels. EWI is continuing to develop the idea.

communities they patrol, most often following the controversial use of deadly force by police. In this case, panels might be adopted to defuse tensions over everything from domestic of foreign policy legislation to counter-terror measures.

In addition to more overt means such as the aforementioned panels, members of community and faith organizations and pressure groups can also serve an important function as a backchannel for government and security practitioners. This is not to suggest the latter should attempt to co-opt the former. Precautions must be taken to avoid even the appearance of this, since many civil society groups and individuals are successful precisely because they are known to be fiercely independent from the government. However, just as governments use Track 2 diplomacy when dealing with one another, especially in times of tense public exchanges, civil society can present a framework for Track 2 diplomacy between governments and internal communities.[15]

A framework for intervention

There are instances where civil society must intervene rather than play a preventative or even ameliorative role. Civil society provides the framework for political, religious, and civic leaders to reconcile countervailing ideas and values in an acceptable human rights framework. By extension, civil society groups are often best suited to confronting extremist movements at the local level when they seek to arrogate and instrumentalize tangible grievances. For example, when financially distressed farmers were joining the Christian Identity movement and associated paramilitary groups in the U.S. farm belt in the 1980s, the strongest antidote came from farm organizations and rural community leaders themselves.

To date, such interventions have generally been ad hoc. This is understandable, especially considering local groups will likely be more aware of what is happening in their backyard and how to best address the issue. Again, networking and information sharing can help alert local civil society to an approaching threat as well as equipping community leaders with best practices for how to address it. At this point, local civil society must be prepared to use their capital to close down areas of operation for extremist movements and provide an alternative for the citizenry. By way of explanation, several experts related the following examples to EWI. The first example pertains to the mobilization of communities to block operational infiltration by extremist groups and the second to the provision of an alternative "good."

The first example regards grassroots efforts to shut out attempts by extremist movements to organize. Reverend Dave Ostendorff leads a grassroots organization that has sought to educate people about extremism and to mobilize communities to oppose it. His organization puts people on the ground in communities to educate local congregations about extremist movements. In one instance, when a Christian Identity minister was attempting to organize a meeting in an Illinois community, Reverend Ostendorff's organization went to the community ahead of time. There they met with the pastors and lay leaders in the community and educated them about the nature of the Christian Identity movement. They also alerted the hotel where the meeting was to be held, which then refused the group meeting space. As a gesture of support the local pastors organized their own meeting so they could pay the hotel to host it for them.[16]

The second example was relayed by one of the participants at EWI's conference, and concerns the Klu Klux Klan when it was still violently active. At that time, in Georgia, there was a lot of Klan activity in the Northwest. They were attempting to organize and recruit members from a local manufacturing plant. While law enforcement was either unwilling or unable to offer a solution, the community was. They recognized that the need being fulfilled by the KKK was not ideological or race-based. It was a socio-economic good that was sought, in this case labor organization. The workers wanted to organize and the Klan was, at that time, the only game in town. The solution was to create an alternative trade union. Once this was offered to the employees, KKK recruitment dropped precipitously in that area.

These are but two examples of the myriad ways in which civil society must sometimes actively intercede at the local level. These may appear to small victories in the wider battle against Identity extremism, but ultimate victory against an extremist movement is often gained one community at a time.

CONCLUSION

This report has endeavored to contribute actionable recommendations for countering extremist violence committed in the name of religion. In some cases, this report has argued for existing approaches and in other times has recommended new ones. By no means are the recommendations proffered exhaustive. Such an offering would be impossible, if for no other reason than that any approach to countering violent extremism must be adaptive: to the times, to the social, political, and economic climate, and to the movement it seeks to counter. The goal has been to present principals and tactics that can be applied or adapted to various

[15] The idea of developing citizens' panels and the manner in which they might be employed resulted from an EWI working group on the Role of Civil Society in Countering Extremism, with members of European NGOs and EU officials on Friday, September 29, 2006 in Brussels.

[16] For more about Reverend Ostendorf's organization, see http://www.newcomm.org/.

circumstances and to urge all stakeholders involved to muster the will to implement them.

The recommendations made in this report are far more easily devised than implemented. Even were they to be universally accepted by all stakeholders engaged in the struggle against violent religious extremism, which they expectedly and assuredly will not be, actualizing these recommendations would remain a challenge. To repeat the Clausewitzian refrain, they may be simple but that does not mean they are easy.

Avoiding Manichean rhetoric and the urge to militarize a conflict in the wake of deadly attacks contradicts the understandable human and societal impulse. The seeming logic of different members within a faith making common cause against extremist elements is belied by the fact that sometimes these co-religionists consider one another extremists or apostates. Suggesting civil society organizations need to take a more actively interventionist role asks a lot of a constituency with no legal responsibility for maintaining security.

Research and investigation in this field must continue, and new thinking will continue to be valuable. Ultimately, though, no easy answer exists. Rather, many of the answers are already out there, but they are not easy.

In the wake of attacks or under the shadow of potential threats, governments need to take a measured approach, counter-intuitive though it may seem. This does not argue against the use of force when necessary, or the adaptation of laws to keep up with changing times. It does mean maintaining the rule of law, treating all citizens consistently, and avoiding engagement of violent extremists on their terms.

Inter-faith efforts are proof that leading persons of faith can come together in common cause. They must now re-direct those much of the effort internally, as they cannot eschew the difficult task of addressing the cancer of extremism when it exists within their own faith. Liberals, moderates, and conservatives have to find a way to embrace a modicum of intra-faith pluralism in order to delegitimize their co-religionists who twist the faith to incite or condone violence.

Civil society organizations have a major role to play, but this requires organization and focus. So much good work is already being done, but too many of these efforts are unilateral. If extremist movements are networked, then civil society movements need to be as well. Given the plethora of organizations in healthy societies this is a massive undertaking, but a necessary one.

Finally, it bears repeating once again that the political, economic, and social conditions creating the risk factors for violent extremism must be addressed. This commonly accepted wisdom remains difficult to translate into action. Further, doing so is a lengthy undertaking. This report has sought to underscore the more short-term approaches stakeholders can take in response to the threat from extremist violence perpetrated in the name of religion. This is a scourge that afflicts all three of the Abrahamic faiths, but one that all of them ultimately equipped to deal with. Each inspires the large majorities of their followers to focus on and develop the most beneficent features of humanity. The goal for the stakeholders addressed in this report must be to reframe the “us versus them” paradigm by taking actions that will unite these majorities, who accept pluralism and eschew violence, and isolate those who preach and practice violence.

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