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THESIS

COUNTERING ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION AND
AL SHABAAB RECRUITMENT WITHIN THE ETHNIC
SOMALI POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES: AN
ARGUMENT FOR APPLYING BEST PRACTICES FOR
STEMMING YOUTH GANG RECRUITMENT AND
INITIATION

by

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December 2010

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STEMMING YOUTH GANG RECRUITMENT AND INITIATION**

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ABSTRACT[1]

Over the past few years, a spate of attempted plots, lethal attacks, and arrests of American Muslims both at home and overseas has created the perception of a more worrisome development regarding the issue of domestic radicalization and homegrown violent extremism. The individuals involved in these developments have come from a broad cross-section of various ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic backgrounds in the United States, making it difficult for law enforcement and the intelligence community to focus their efforts to predict or determine where violent extremists will emerge. This thesis focuses on the Somali-American community in particular and the threat posed by a very small percentage of that community that has, in recent years, been drawn to violent extremist agendas in Somalia. This thesis examines existing best practices that might be leveraged or utilized to combat the radicalizing influences that have affected some Somali-Americans in the past, with the hope that those practices can prevent similar effects in the future.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIAI	al-Ittihad al-Islami
AQEA	Al Qaeda East Africa
CAP	Chicago Area Project
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear
CLG	Communities and Local Government
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GRP	Gang Reduction Program
HOA	Horn of Africa
IC	Intelligence Community
ICC	Islamic Courts Council
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
ISC	Intelligence and Security Committee
NCTC	National Counter-Terrorism Center
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NGTA	National Gang Threat Assessment
OJJDP	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
OSCT	Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism
QHSR	Quadrennial Homeland Security Review
RICU	Research, Information and Communications Unit
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USG	United States Government
USPER	United States Person

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The President's national security strategy explicitly recognizes the threat
to the United States posed by individuals radicalized here at home.

-Eli Lake

East Africa-based al-Qa'ida leaders or al-Shabaab may elect to redirect to
the Homeland some of the Westerners, including North Americans, now
training and fighting in Somalia.

-Dennis Blair

A.   BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In December 2006 the Ethiopian military invaded Somalia and overthrew the
governing Islamic Courts Council (ICC). During the ensuing conflict several citizens
were discovered fighting against the Ethiopians alongside Al Shabaab Al-Mujahidin (Al
Shabaab), the largest and best organized armed militia in Somalia. Since that time, Al
Shabaab has been designated by the United States as a terrorist organization because it
has "committed, or poses a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten
the security of U.S. nationals or the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the
United States" (United States Department of State [USDOS], 2008). This designation
was made largely due to the threat posed by Al Shabaab's close association with the Al
Qaeda terrorist organization (Brennan, 2010), but its pronouncement was likely spurred
on by incidents of support of Al Shabaab by Somali-Americans and other radicalized
Americans, including travel by those individuals to Somalia for the purposes of engaging
in jihad. Al Shabaab's ties to Al Qaeda are rooted in Al Shabaab's close relationship in
recent years with Al Qaeda East Africa (AQEA) operative Saleh Nabhan (Mudd, 2009).
Nabhan was an unindicted co-conspirator involved in the planning of the 1998 bombing
of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and was an active supporter of Al Shabaab,
providing militaristic training to the terrorist group until his recent death at the hands of
the U.S. military (Roggio, 2009). Prior to his death, the FBI had been actively seeking to
indict Nabhan for his role in the 1998 embassy bombings, which resulted in the deaths of

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U.S. citizens. Horn of Africa (HOA) expert Dr. David Shinn notes that Al Shabaab's current leader, Muktar Robow, continues Al Shabaab's affiliation with Al Qaeda, as he reinforced in a 2008 statement:

> We will take our orders from Shayk Usama bin Ladin because we are his students.… Most of our leaders were in trained in al-Qa'ida camps. We get our tactics and guidelines from them. Many have spent time with Usama bin Ladin. (Shinn, 2009, p. 3)

Despite the U.S. Department of State's designation of Al Shabaab as a terrorist organization, U.S. citizens continue to travel to Somalia to fight alongside Al Shabaab (Mueller, 2009) against the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was installed to replace the ICC. To date dozens of radicalized[2] U.S. citizens have since been identified as having traveled to the region to engage in jihad against the TFG government and military forces in place to protect that government. The FBI believes that other U.S. citizens have yet to be identified. The reasons behind these citizens' support of Al Shabaab will be examined later in this paper. Al Shabaab's close alignment with Al Qaeda (Associated Press, 2009), currently the gravest terrorist threat to U.S. national security, is made worse by the fact that Al Shabaab is the most prolific trainer currently known of American citizens seeking to become jihadists. In 2008, the world witnessed the first American citizen die as a suicide bomber inside Somalia in support of Al Shabaab operations (Mudd, 2009). The threat to the United States posed by Al Shabaab and by the American citizens now trained by Al Shabaab has garnered the attention of the U.S. national leadership, which has declared that the radicalization of such Americans is a threat to our national security (Simmons, 2006, p.1; Lieberman, 2009, Blair, 2010, p.11; Mueller, 2009). While no ethnic Somali-Americans have yet returned to the United States

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[2] Broadly defined, radicalization is the process by which an individual or group assumes extremist beliefs and/or behaviors. (Homeland Security Institute, 2006, p. 1) Within the context of this problem, however, radicalization is more specifically defined as the process whereby an individual comes to accept an extreme and militant interpretation of Islam in which Western and Western-affiliated powers are seen as aggressors against Islam. This version of Islam defines society in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims, or as Muslims and infidels, and espouses the necessity of 'jihad' and violent action as a means to defend Islam from the infidels (Mullins, 2008, para. 3).

and conducted terrorist attacks, those returning upon completing their jihadist training (and in some cases fighting) pose a real and present danger to the security of the United States.

There is general agreement among leaders within Islamic communities in the United States and experts in the field of Horn of Africa (HOA) studies (Anwar, 2006) that law enforcement agencies in the United States must proactively engage in community outreach within ethnic Somali communities in order to stem the tide of Somali-American radicalization and recruitment at the hands of extremist Islamists. To stem the occurrence of radicalization among the ethnic Somali population in the United States and therefore reduce the likelihood that radicalized American Somalis would, at the behest of the Al Shabaab terrorist organization, engage in terrorist attacks within the United States, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, public welfare entities, and private sector organizations have initiated efforts to counter radicalization occurring within ethnic Somali communities. Current counterradicalization policies and practices are a necessary and positive step toward both improving government relations with Somali-Americans and reducing radicalization among that segment of the population, but the degree to which they been effective in achieving these goals is not known. However, it is clear that in their current state these efforts do not fully address the underlying socioeconomic factors (Mukhtar, 2009, p.7) that foster an environment in which American Somali youth are likely to become radicalized and thus be susceptible to Al Shabaab recruitment. This is evidenced by the continued radicalization of Somali-American males who continue to travel to the Horn of Africa region to train with, and fight alongside, the Al Shabaab terrorist organization (Hsu, 2009).

While the radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment of Somali-Americans is a relatively new problem, many of the causative socioeconomic factors are nearly identical to those at the root of the decades-old problem of youth gang formation in the United States. For decades, law enforcement and social welfare agencies in the United States have addressed the problem of youth gangs and the proliferation of such gangs in our society, and over time they have identified best practices for countering youth gang

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recruitment and initiation. The success of these best practices is attributable in part to these agencies' incorporation of policies and procedures cognizant of, and sensitive to, the aforementioned underlying socioeconomic factors contributing to the formation of youth gangs. The adoption of such best practices by law enforcement and social welfare agencies and organizations, if applicable, would allow such agencies to conserve valuable resources currently dedicated to identifying, largely through trial and error, the most effective and efficient means of conducting community outreach to the Somali-American community in an effort to counter the radicalization occurring in that community.

B.   RESEARCH QUESTION

Understanding that programs focused on countering radicalization among Somali-American youth are only a first step to addressing this nationwide problem and that similar programs are needed to address this problem within other communities in the United States, the U.S. government must nonetheless act quickly to address radicalization within the U.S. Somali diaspora communities.

What, if any, best practices can be derived from law enforcement and public welfare agency efforts over the last four decades to stem youth gang recruitment and initiation and then be applied to the U.S. government's efforts to counter radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment within the ethnic Somali diaspora in the United States?

C.   METHODOLOGY

1.   Comparative Study

In an effort to ascertain counterradicalization best practices to be utilized by the United States, a review of the current counterradicalization program utilized by the United Kingdom—a country of similar cultural and governmental construct as the United States—demonstrates both the positive and negative effects of such a comprehensive, nationwide program. This study examines these positive and negative aspects and offers an assessment of the likelihood of such a program's being implemented in the United States. This study begins with the assertion there is currently no unified national strategy for countering radicalization.

2. Appreciative Inquiry

Through a secondary analysis of the primary source material regarding counter-gang best practices in the United States, the viability of the application of these best practices to the USG's counter-radicalization efforts among Somali-American communities was examined after reviewing and comparing the underlying socioeconomic factors contributing to both gang recruitment and Somali-American radicalization.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature addressing the ongoing conflict in Somalia, Al Shabaab's role in that conflict, and the threat arising from radicalized American citizens traveling to Somalia to fight alongside Al Shabaab is understandably limited, given the relatively short time span of this issue. While there are books written prior to the December 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somali that tangentially address Al Qaeda's interests in the Horn of Africa (HOA) region (e.g., Lewis, 2003; Emerson, 2002; Kepel, 2004), these works do not address the specific issues of the radicalization of ethnic Somali-Americans, their support to Al Shabaab, and the threat they pose to the homeland. The bulk of the publications addressing these issues thus far have been periodicals, research reports, and proceedings of meetings and other forums, such as symposiums and Congressional testimony. These are dominated by the commentary of a few frequently quoted and cited experts on matters related to the HOA region. There is also government research as well as analysis conducted by nongovernmental organizations such as the Somali Justice Advocacy Center and the Somali Family Care Network. These offer insight into both the government's perception of the threat posed to the United States by Al Shabaab and its supporters in the United States, as well the perception of civic organizations focused on providing aid to the Somali diaspora. Additionally, there are also sources that address the issue of gang recruitment and initiation, the relevance of which I will discuss later in this proposal. All of these sources have been organized according to which of the following key categories they address. Some sources cover more than one of these topics:

- Al Shabaab's rise to power;

- Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda: a dual threat to the United States;

- The threat to the homeland posed by radicalized Americans supporting Al Shabaab;

- The way forward: applying counter-gang program best practices in countering radicalization of ethnic Somali-Americans.

1. Al Shabaab's Rise to Power

One of the most prolific writers on the topic of Somalia's political instability and societal turmoil is Dr. Ken Menkhaus, professor of political science at Davidson College and noted expert on HOA issues. In March 2009, Menkhaus testified in a hearing entitled "Violent Islamist Extremism: Al Shabaab Recruitment in America" before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Menkhaus's testimony focused on how the ongoing societal instability in Somalia has led to the emergence of the nationalistic-focused group Al Shabaab, which has inspired the Somali diaspora globally. Menkhaus attributes the rise of Al Shabaab to the intense nationalistic feelings of the Somali people and their dissatisfaction with the United Nations–installed Transitional Federal Government in Somalia. Menkhaus also attributes the newly discovered radicalization of young ethnic Somali-Americans to similar nationalistic feelings, which coupled with feelings of alienation and disenfranchisement in their U.S. communities, make this segment of the population especially susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by Al Shabaab. In his testimony Menkhaus also spoke of the cultural obstacles that law enforcement must overcome in order to conduct effective outreach to the Somali communities in the United States, obstacles that include an innate fear of authority, a history of victimization, and the all-too-frequent lack of positive male role models for impressionable young ethnic Somali men—sentiments expressed by a clear majority of writers on this subject. This subject will be addressed further in another segment of this review.

Echoing many of the same sentiments as Menkhaus is former U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia and Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of State Somalia Task Force Dr.

David H. Shinn. In a paper he submitted to the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Shinn provides an overview of the history of Al Qaeda in Somalia, the rise of Al Shabaab, and its recruitment of Americans and other Westerners, and he offers suggestions as to how best to stabilize the internal conditions in Somalia. Shinn asserts that Al Shabaab's genesis can be traced to the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania committed by al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI) (Shinn, 2009, p. 2). Shinn asserts that Aden Hashi Ayro, a former member of the Somali Islamic Courts Union (ICU) who had trained with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and who was inspired by the 1998 AIAI embassy attacks, formed Al Shabaab in 2004 (Shinn, 2009, p. 2). Shinn notes that Ayro employed nationalistic and Islamic rhetoric to energize "disaffected young Somalis" as he led them into battle against the Ethiopians who had invaded Somalia to depose the ICU (Shinn, 2009, p.2). Shinn's work borrows heavily from news accounts of the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, as well as from his peer, Dr. Ken Menkhaus. Shinn's paper, however, unlike the works by Menkhaus, offers no solutions as to how the United States should address the problem of the radicalization of its ethnic Somali population.

On the theme of how best to address the crisis in Somalia, Ted Dagne, a specialist in African affairs and a writer for the Congressional Research Service, wrote a February 2009 report to Congress entitled "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace." In that report, which focused heavily on the issue of Somali piracy on the high seas, Dagne spoke to the current security conditions in Somalia, specifically the instability caused by the ongoing attacks by Al Shabaab against the TFG and its protective forces. Dagne, like Roque and Menkhaus, notes that while Al Shabaab was at least partially responsible for the relative peace enjoyed by Somalis prior to the 2006 invasion by the Ethiopians, Al Shabaab was also responsible for the current continued societal unrest. Dagne makes note of the fact that American citizens have traveled to Somali, but he does not address the fact that these Americans traveled to Somalia to fight in support of Al Shabaab and the TFG. Dagne acknowledges that one American has martyred himself as a suicide bomber inside Somalia, but he paints the occurrence as an anomaly and delves no further into the issue. Dagne seeks to inform his audience—in this

case the Congress—about the current security situation in Somalia, and his work is informative with regard to the current security environment in Somalia and the threat posed by Al Shabaab. However, Dagne's work, like many in this field, offers little insight into why Americans are fighting alongside Al Shabaab within Somalia and offers no suggestions as to how best to address this phenomenon.

In summary, the literature covering the history of Somalia and the rise of Al Shabaab is largely homogeneous, as authors on this topic tend not to stray far from commonly accepted facts derived from historical accounts. While informative and necessary for building the foundation for any plan of action to address radicalization of ethnic Somalis in the United States, this subject matter offers little in the way of constructive guidance as to how to achieve this goal. To find this information we must examine other sources.

2.   Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda: A Dual Threat to the United States

Sources containing historical accounts of Al Qaeda's footprint in Somalia consistently point to the early 1990s as being the time that the terrorist organization first took an interest in the region. One such source, a policy paper written by the International Crisis Group, places Al Qaeda's emergence in Somalia between 1992 and 1995, during the United Nations humanitarian intervention in that country. (International Crisis Group, 2005, pp. 6–7) This paper examines the rise of militant Islam in Somalia as seen in the ascension of AIAI in the early 1990s and that group's close relationship with Al Qaeda. The paper also examines the present-day tensions between Al Shabaab and the TFG in Somalia and U.S. efforts to kill or capture Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab leadership in that country. The paper's utility to counterradicalization efforts is found in its coverage of the early years of Al Qaeda in the HOA region, as well as its examination of Al Qaeda's continued ties to the region, and Al Shabaab specifically. The connectivity between these two terrorist organizations is the primary reason for the FBI's concern with the radicalization of Americans and their subsequent travel to Somalia to train and fight in support of Al Shabaab.

In a hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in March 2009, FBI National Security Branch Associate Executive Assistant Director Phillip Mudd provided testimony regarding Al Shabaab's ties to Al Qaeda. Mudd specifically addressed Al Shabaab's ties to those responsible for the 1998 attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, referring to East Africa Al Qaeda (EAAQ) facilitator Saleh Nabhan, as well as that organization's ties to the Al Qaeda leadership currently in hiding in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas (FATA) (Mudd, 2009, p. 2). Mudd opined that Al Qaeda could be recruiting operatives to conduct terrorist operations both within and outside Somalia; while there is currently no evidence to suggest that this is occurring, the FBI remains concerned that it is a very real possibility (Mudd, 2009, p. 2). Mudd noted Al Shabaab's successful recruitment of a U.S. person (USPER) from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and his subsequent use as a suicide bomber inside Somalia in 2008 has only heightened the FBI's concern that other Al Shabaab trained USPERS could become operational within the United States (Mudd, 2009, p. 2).

Mudd's concerns were echoed by testimony given the same day by Andrew Liepman, Deputy Director of Intelligence at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) who spoke to the continued interest by Al Qaeda's senior leadership in the events in Somalia. Liepman's testimony, as the head of the nation's primary intelligence fusion center, which examines the intelligence disseminated from all members of the intelligence community (IC), bolsters Mudd's testimony. Liepman's testimony further demonstrates the collective IC's fear that Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab could be planning and coordinating attacks against the homeland. As evidence to his claim, Liepman references a February 2009 video, in which Al Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, praised Al Shabaab, and another video in August 2008, in which Saleh Nabhan welcomes Muslims around the world to travel to Somalia, attend Nabhan's training camp, and join Al Shabaab in jihad (Liepman, 2009, pp. 4–5).

Mudd's and Liepman's testimony are derived largely from U.S. intelligence community (IC) reporting, which cannot be covered here due to classification issues, but which is supported and corroborated by media and nongovernmental organization (NGO) reporting. One such article, written by Bill Roggio and appearing in the *Long War*

Journal, discusses the recent death of Saleh Nabhan at the hands of U.S. military forces (Roggio, 2009). In that article Roggio discusses how, prior to his death, Nabhan was an unindicted co-conspirator involved in the planning of the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Roggio also highlights the fact that Nabhan was additionally an active supporter of Al Shabaab who provided militaristic training to the terrorist group until his death. Reinforcing these claims is previously noted HOA expert Dr. David Shinn whose recent work outlines how Al Shabaab's current leader, Muktar Robow, continues Al Shabaab's affiliation with Al Qaeda as Robow reinforced in a 2008 statement in which he claimed that Al Shabaab receives guidance and orders from Usama bin Ladin (Roggio, 2009, p. 3). Additionally, a recent article in the *Washington Times* reported the surfacing of a video, entitled "Labaik ya Osama" in which Al Shabaab formally pledges allegiance to Osama bin Ladin (Waterman, 2009, p.1). The article goes on to address the issue of the symbiotic relationship between Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab and quotes an unnamed U.S. government official who confirms this relationship by saying, "That's why [al Shabab is] on the terrorism list" (Waterman, 2009, p. A14).

In summary, while the extent of the intertwining of Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab can be debated, there is little doubt left that the two terrorist organizations are at least engaged in an ongoing dialogue.

3.   The Threat Posed by Radicalized Americans Supporting Al Shabaab

The bulk of the writing on the topic of the radicalization of Americans is found in news articles, both in print and online. These articles often lack any great depth of analysis, but they provide snapshots of the FBI's investigation of American citizens who have been radicalized and traveled to Somalia to fight alongside Al Shabaab. One recent article from the *Washington Post* noted that, while Al Qaeda is under increasing international pressure, the threat from homegrown extremists who travel abroad for jihadist training under the Al Qaeda banner is growing and represents a real threat to the United States and its allies. The article identified seven U.S. citizens who have died while fighting alongside Al Shabaab in Somalia and three additional citizens whom the FBI recently charged with terrorism violations related to those U.S. citizens' support to Al

Shabaab (Hsu, 2009). Additionally, a June 2009 *New York Times* article highlighted the radicalization of several Minneapolis Somali-American youth, including Shirwa Ahmed, the first American known to die as a suicide bomber in Somalia, and Mohamoud Hassan, among others (A. Elliott, 2009). This article was followed by a January 2010 article highlighting the path to radicalization for American citizen Omar Hammami, now known by his pseudonym Abu Mansoor Al-Amriki, or "the American," who has become one of the best-known public faces of Al Shabaab (A. Elliott, 2010). Articles such as these make up much of the open-source information regarding Al Shabaab's American recruits.

Rafaello Pantucci, a researcher at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, authored a study that examined the threat posed by Al Shabaab. In that study Pantucci focused on the fear held by several countries, primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, that radicalized and jihadist-trained ethnic Somalis will return to their home countries and carry out terrorist attacks, as has already occurred in the United Kingdom and Canada (Pantucci, 2009, p. 5). Pantucci notes that previous such attacks were self-inspired and did not require an attack order from Al Shabaab leadership (Pantucci, 2009, p. 6). In a hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in March 2009, FBI National Security Branch Associate Executive Assistant Director Phillip Mudd provided testimony in which he expressed the FBI's concern regarding the threat posed by radicalized American citizens returning to the United States after training and fighting in jihad overseas (Mudd, 2009, pg. 2). Mudd's sentiments were echoed by Senator Joseph Lieberman, who identified the radicalization of American citizens and their subsequent travel to Somalia to engage in jihad fighting alongside Al Shabaab as a threat to U.S. national security (Lieberman, 2009, p.6).

The preponderance of online and print articles on this subject focus on the comings and goings of suspected foreign fighters, primarily Americans, who are believed or known to be traveling overseas to train and fight alongside Al Shabaab. While many of these articles imply the threat to the United States associated with such actions of American citizens, the tenor and tone of the reporting is not yet alarmist in nature.

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Nonetheless, these articles account for the majority of the unclassified reporting regarding the movement of radicalized Americans into and out of Somalia.

4.   The Way Forward: Applying Counter-Gang Program Best Practices in Countering the Radicalization of Ethnic Somali-Americans

From a review of the various sources related to radicalization and the ongoing tribulations in Somalia, it appears that there are many barriers that all levels of government must overcome in order to effectively address the radicalization of the U.S. Somali diaspora. Menkhaus identified six such barriers between law enforcement outreach efforts and Somali-Americans. These barriers include Somali-Americans' distrust of law enforcement due to harsh treatment endured in Somalia at the hands of security services, the illegal status of some Somalis residing in America, Somali customary laws that conflict with U.S. laws, the Somali peoples' history of persecution, and ignorance of U.S. laws (Menkhaus, 2009, pp.13–14).

In developing a program to counter radicalization among ethnic Somalis living in the U.S., local, state, and federal government agencies should look to historical examples of law enforcement community outreach to disaffected segments of society. One prime example of such outreach efforts that have greatly contributed to the decline of crime committed by this segment of society is outreach to youth susceptible to violent gang initiation. There are numerous studies that demonstrate how active law enforcement and community outreach to disaffected, disenfranchised, and at-risk youth can greatly reduce the incidence of youth gang membership, as well as reduce the incidence of violent crime committed by youths.

One such study, written by Finn-Aage Esbensen and found in the September 2000 *Juvenile Justice Bulletin,* a product of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, attempts to outline methods that help communities identify youth at risk for joining gangs and then identify methods for preventing youths from joining gangs. The central tenets of the bulletin are that, while youths of various ages and from all segments and strata of society join gangs, the vast majority of youth gang members tend to be between the ages of 12 and 24 (Esbensen, 2000, p. 3) and come

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from "socially disorganized and socially marginalized communities" (Esbensen, 2000, p. 9) The study more specifically defined the average youth gang member as being a "minority youth residing in single-parent households" (Esbensen, 2000, p. 4). The study further posited that any program designed to reduce youth gang recruitment and participation that only focused on one solution or approach was doomed to failure. The study pointed to the need for a multipronged approach that addressed the multiple underlying problems making youth more susceptible to gang involvement (Esbensen, 2000, p. 9).

In his comprehensive online book concerning street gangs, Dr. Mike Carlie addresses the full spectrum of issues related to gangs. Carlie examines every facet of gangs, from how and why they form, to how they recruit and maintain members, to how municipalities can combat gang violence and address the familial and societal issues that lead to gang formation and expansion. Carlie's study draws on a massive body of work compiled by hundreds of professionals and spanning the fields of academia, law enforcement, government, and private agencies that addresses gangs of all types on a daily basis. Some of Carlie's findings speak to the importance of healthy and stable home lives in the socialization process and the ability of Somali youths to avoid becoming involved in criminal behavior, the negative impact of the absence of positive male role models, and the lack of discipline at home as being key factors in determining whether youths will join gangs. (Carlie, 2009, pp. 2–8)

Mary H. Lees, Mary Deen, and Dr. Louise Parker of Washington State University confirm Carlie's assertions in their review concerning gang violence and prevention. The three authors outline the reasons that youths join gangs, their risk factors for joining, and methods to prevent youths from joining gangs. Similar to the reasons cited by the authors addressing the radicalization of ethnic Somali youth in the U.S., these three authors have determined that youths most often join gangs out of a need for positive emotional reinforcement, structure, discipline, a sense of belonging, acceptance, and recognition, among other needs (Lees, Deen, & Parker, 1994, para. 2). The primary risk factors determining youth susceptibility to gang recruitment are racism, poverty, lack of a support network, and media influences (Lees, Deen, & Parker, 1994, para. 4). The 2008

U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model, authored by noted gang researcher Irving A. Spergel, summarizes the findings of all these authors. The Comprehensive Gang Model serves as a guide to best practices for addressing community gang problems and is based on five strategies that, when combined, allow government agencies and private-sector entities to effectively address gang problems wherever they arise nationally (United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [USDOJ, OJJDP], 2008). This is a seminal work that thoroughly encapsulates decades of gang research and proffers a real-world-tested model for local communities to implement in an effort to address their specific gang problems.

The conclusions of these studies, primarily the demographic analyses and the corresponding socioeconomic factors identified as being at the root of gang recruitment and initiation, are nearly identical to those associated with the segment of the ethnic Somali diaspora residing in the United States, which is radicalizing and being recruited by Al Shabaab. All five individuals who testified in the hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in March 2009 provided testimony in which they pointed to the same familial and societal factors mentioned in the Juvenile Justice bulletin as being responsible for the disproportionate number of young ethnic Somali males radicalizing in the United States. Abdirahman Mukhtar, Youth Program Manager for the Brian Coyle Center, a community center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, perhaps best summarized the consensus beliefs of those providing testimony. Mukhtar attributed the rise in radicalization among young Somali-Americans to their sense of being torn between their new American identity and customs and those of their parents and grandparents who have not assimilated into American culture. Mukhtar also noted the lack of jobs for Somali youths, the relative poverty of their families, and the lack of positive male role models as all being factors allowing Somali-American youth to be susceptible to radicalization (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 3).

From this cursory examination of works addressing the issue of youth gang recruitment and participation, it is evident that there is good reason to further study the parallels between this topic and the radicalization of ethnic Somali youths residing in the

United States. By understanding and applying best practices already utilized to address youth gang recruitment and participation to the problem of radicalization, the FBI and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies could, it is hoped, increase their chances of successfully countering radicalization within ethnic Somali communities in the United States, thereby greatly reducing the threat posed by such radicalization.

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II.   A STUDY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S COUNTERRADICALIZATION PROGRAM AND ASSESSMENT OF THE VIABILITY OF ITS APPLICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

In addressing a problem of such magnitude as radicalization, it might prove beneficial for domestic intelligence and law enforcement agencies and social welfare partners to look to foreign governments of similar construct as the United States, having similar laws and a similar appreciation of civil liberties and basic human rights, in order to identify those best practices which could, with modification, be applied here in the United States. One such foreign government counterradicalization program, the United Kingdom's (UK's) "PREVENT" program, hereafter referred to as "Prevent," shows significant promise as being a "lessons learned" resource for the United States. Currently that program is under review by the British government, and a full assessment is due in January 2011 (Home Office.gov.UK, 2010). This chapter provides the results of a study of the UK's Prevent program in an attempt to highlight both the positive and negative aspects of this program and to assess the viability of such a program in the United States.

A.   THE UK'S NATIONAL COUNTERRADICALIZATION PLAN

Since 2003, the UK has had in place a comprehensive national counterterrorism strategy known as CONTEST, which is currently comprised of the following four component plans, or pillars:

PURSUE: to stop terrorist attacks;

PREVENT: to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism;

PROTECT: to strengthen protection against terrorist attack; and

PREPARE: where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact. (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 13)

Together these plans under the CONTEST umbrella seek to "reduce the risk to the United Kingdom and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 12). This strategy grew in part out of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist

attacks in the United States, but the strategy's importance was not fully realized in the UK until a group of homegrown radicalized Muslims conducted orchestrated terrorist attacks within London's subway and city bus systems on July 7, 2005 (7/7) (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 82). Both 9/11 and 7/7 demonstrated the continued global reach, determination, influence, and lethality of the Al Qaeda (AQ) terrorist organization and the threat posed by radicalization at the hands of militant Islamist ideologies. In 2008, UK authorities proclaimed that at any given moment they were contending with approximately 30 terrorist plots, 200 terrorist groups or networks, and 2,000 individuals that UK authorities judge to be a terrorist threat to the UK (National Security Strategy of the UK, 2008, p. 10). While such details are absent in the UK's 2010 National Security Strategy, the strategy does make clear that Al Qaeda continues to be the most significant terrorist threat to the UK, and authorities there uncover terrorist plots on a "regular basis" (National Security Strategy of the UK, 2010, p. 14). For the UK such threats highlight the importance and necessity of an overarching strategy like CONTEST. In crafting its CONTEST program, the government has made it clear that it alone cannot solve this problem but instead must have the support and participation of a diverse swath of society—including community and social groups, law enforcement, education, faith-based groups, the media and many others—and must be a cross-government program (National Security Strategy of the UK, 2010, p. 26). The CONTEST program is run by the Home Office's Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT), which is made up of the following six directorates:

- Research, Information, and Communications Unit (RICU);
- Strategy, Planning and Change;
- Prepare, Protect, CT Science & CBRN;
- Law, Security and International;
- Communications Capabilities; and
- 2012 Olympic Safety and Security. (homeoffice.uk.gov, 2010)

In an effort to address the underlying problem of radicalization, the UK initiated in October 2007 the Prevent component of its strategy (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 80). This program seeks to reduce popular support for terrorism and stymie

terrorist recruitment efforts among the population of the UK (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 82)—efforts that UK authorities label as "winning hearts and minds" (Communities and Local Government [CLG], 2007). At the heart of the Prevent program is the government's message crafted by the RICU, which was established in 2007 when the Prevent program was launched (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 153). The RICU works to counter the violent extremist narrative of Al Qaeda and other like-minded groups through a variety of means. Perhaps the pivotal role played by RICU is its mission to help government agencies craft the content and language of their counterradicalization messages and provide an assessment of how they are likely to be received by the target audience (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 154). In order to do this, the RICU leverages the skills of media specialists, anthropologists, pan-Arab media, marketing advisors, and other specialists (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 154). RICU, like all UK government agencies, operates under the assumption that "contemporary terrorism is driven by an ideology and not a theology" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 154), but RICU understands that Muslim communities are the ones most intensely targeted by Al Qaeda and other violent extremist Islamist groups. For this reason RICU strives to promote alternative voices to the violent extremist narrative being focused at Muslim communities and works with foreign government partners in order to ensure that a shared and consistent message is passed to the global Muslim community. Following RICU's carefully planned strategy, the UK government has publicized its intent to not betray its core values of "human rights, the rule of law, legitimate and accountable government, justice, freedom, tolerance, and opportunity for all" (National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom, p. 6), while still openly identifying the perpetuation of corrupted interpretations of Islam by violent extremists as being the nation's primary terrorism threat (National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom, p.10).

As identified and updated in 2009, the specific objectives of the Prevent strategy over the next three years are "to challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices; disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places where they operate; support individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment, or have already been recruited by violent extremists; increase the resilience of communities to

violent extremism, and address the grievances which ideologues are exploiting" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 14). Currently, the UK government finances the Prevent program to the sum of £140 million, or roughly $200 million U.S. dollars. These monies go toward financing the numerous initiatives managed under the Prevent umbrella. A few of the more high-profile of these initiatives include the "OSCT's efforts to remove unlawful terrorism-related content from the Internet while also working to counter the messages of violent extremists propagated on the Internet" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 94); the "OSCT's creation of a 'Young Muslims Advisory Group', which gives a voice and a means of peacefully effecting societal change to young Muslims" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 90); the "efforts of local authorities working with the police under the umbrella of the 'Channel' program to identify youth deemed to be at risk of radicalization and then arranging for non-law enforcement, community-based interventions intended to help steer at-risk youth from the path to radicalization" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009,); the "government's efforts to provide schools with resources to modify their curriculum in such a manner as to give students the tools to understand and challenge violent extremist narratives" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 88); and the "government's efforts to reduce inequalities amongst the religions and races in the areas of housing, education, the criminal justice system, health, and the labor market and its endeavors to promote inter-faith harmony and shared sense of what it means to be a citizen of the U.K." (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 91). These are but a few of the many programs being funded by the central government, but they reflect the scope of the problem that the UK government seeks to address and the ambitiousness of the government's response to that problem.

In trying to assess the success of the Prevent program to date, the UK government, by way of its Intelligence and Security Committee's (ISC) 2008–2009 Annual Report, noted that it had been advised by the Home Office that progress within the Prevent program is now being measured against three key outcomes. These outcomes focus on the degree of resistance to violent extremism within UK Muslim communities, within key sectors such as universities and prisons, and within the communities of key

international partner nations (Intelligence and Security Committee [ISC], n.d., p.28). However, the ISC voiced concern over the lack of measurable progress in these efforts to date (ISC, n.d.). Supporting the ISC's concerns is the Communities and Local Government Committee (hereafter referred to as "the Committee"). Within the UK Parliament, the House of Commons maintains government oversight responsibilities and, like the U.S. Congress, has multiple committees focused on reviewing various government programs and services, one of which is the Committee. The Committee has budget, policy, and administrative oversight of the OSCT's Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). The CLG, a UK government-created entity seeks to better society by improving pubic services, fostering community cohesion, and addressing malign behaviors (House of Commons, CLG, 2010), with the latter being the reason that the CLG was given program management responsibility for the Prevent program. In March 2010, the Committee, facing an increasingly unsettled and media-incited Muslim population, produced a report in which it stated, "The current overall approach to *Prevent* is contentious and unlikely ever to be fully accepted in its existing form by those it is most important to engage" (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 3). The report outlined several issues that the Committee identified as being the basis for its assessment. The following represent the more contentious of these issues, as well as the Committee's recommendations as to how the government should address them.

Role of the CLG: While the Committee generally accepted the premise of, and need for, the four component elements of CONTEST (Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare), it agreed with the sentiments of those citizens it interviewed in the course of their investigation: the CLG should not be involved in Prevent, because the program has led to widespread feelings of exclusion and alienation among Muslims in the UK (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 3). Consequently, the Committee recommended that the CLG's role in the government's counterterrorism agenda be reduced so that the CLG could then focus more on its role of building cohesion among and across communities (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 62).

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Focus on Muslims: Perhaps the most contentious of all the issues addressed, the perceived focus by the UK government on Muslims, was found by the Committee to be perhaps the single greatest impediment to the success of the Prevent program. The Committee referenced a report produced in 2005 from the findings of seven different government-initiated working groups. The working groups were comprised of members of the UK's Muslim population, who were asked in the wake of 7/7 to help the government determine the best courses of action for successfully preventing extremism. That report specifically warned that government efforts "targeting only Muslim communities would result in further stigmatizing them as being the 'problem', which could potentially lead to increased alienation whilst society at large plays little or no role in the two-way integration process" (Preventing Extremism Together Working Group, 2005, p. 48).

To date, the government has experienced difficulty in convincing a segment of the Muslim population that the government's intent is to focus on Al Qaeda–inspired terrorism and is not simply a tool for spying on all Muslims per se (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p.11). The result of this has been that a portion of UK Muslims now harbors "feelings of alienation and stigma" while non-Muslim communities harbor resentment for Muslim communities because they are receiving government funding via the Prevent program (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p.22). The Committee found that these factors together have kept Prevent from being able to sustain meaningful interfaith dialogue and community cohesion for the purposes of countering violent extremism (House of Commons, CLG, 2010). As a possible solution, the Committee proposed that the government consider utilizing the framework of the CLG's Connecting Communities program, which gives those communities that feel they have no voice or say in societal and government affairs a forum in which to peacefully air grievances in an effort to promote societal change (Connecting Communities, 2010). Such a program within Prevent would allow the government to continue to address at the national level the specific threat posed by Al Qaeda–inspired violent extremism, while also providing

Muslims suffering feelings of alienation and frustration a forum through which they could peacefully voice their concerns and seek reconciliation (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 23).

Fears of government surveillance: Of equal contentiousness as the claims of Prevent's spotlight-like focus on Muslims alone are the allegations that the government, via Prevent, is unjustly and unlawfully surveilling law-abiding Muslims. Fanning the flames of the hysteria surrounding this issue, the Committee contends, are media reports that sensationalize the issue. One such article, which the Committee referenced, points to a government-funded youth center in which the government sought to contain free Internet access so that it could monitor the websites visited by the youth (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 12). While a subsequent government investigation into these allegations found no evidence to support the claims, the damage had nonetheless already been done, and the idea that the government sought to spy on Muslims was already etched into the psyche of the Muslim populace. In defense of government efforts to promote community-based outreach to persons susceptible to radicalization and violent extremist messages, one of the panelists consulted by the Committee for its report highlighted the case of former UK citizen Hasib Hussain, who died while perpetrating the 7/7 attacks. Prior to his death, Hussain, by all accounts, was an average UK citizen except for his apparent interest in and support for Al Qaeda, as evidenced by his scribblings on his school books. The panelist opined that the outcome of 7/7 could have been different had someone conducted outreach to Hussain prior to his becoming a suicide bomber. The Committee, itself unsure as to how the government could dispel public fears of government spying of Muslims, ultimately recommended that the government commission an independent investigation into the allegations (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p.18).

In the end, the Committee found that, while the Prevent program was necessary and has been effective to some degree, it has in many cases had the opposite effect from that intended by the government. In addition to recommendations for addressing the problems identified in the proceeding paragraphs, the Committee emphasized the need for greater local government control of Prevent funding but less involvement of local

government community outreach agencies in the counterterrorism agenda (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p. 67). Additionally, the Committee found that there needed to be "greater clarity as to what the programme aims to achieve" and a "proportionate and risk-based approach to delivering Prevent" before much-needed performance measures can be adopted by the government (House of Commons, CLG, 2010, p.66). It is clear that the Committee's findings and recommendations were heavily influenced by sentiments of anger, outrage, and alienation emanating from the UK's Muslim population. Did the Committee then cave to the overwhelmingly negative response from the Muslim populace? The truth is complicated and nuanced, but it is evident that the government's negative assessment of its own Prevent program was shaped by public perception.

B. THE VIABILITY OF THE UK PREVENT MODEL'S APPLICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

In assessing the viability of enacting a UK Prevent-like program within the United States, we must examine the experiences of the UK and endeavor to avoid Prevent's shortcomings and pitfalls. In doing this, we must acknowledge that, while there are many similarities between the two nations, there are also substantial differences that must be considered. Examining first the similarities, both the UK and the United States have a representative forms of government—the UK having a democratic constitutional monarchy, and the United States a democratic representative republic. Both have increasing populations due in large part to growing immigrant diasporas. Both are free-market economies engaged in international trade and therefore dependent upon positive foreign relations with nation-state trading partners and their diaspora populations residing within their borders. Both have robust legislatures that have enacted dynamic laws intended to protect their citizenry from terrorists and terrorist acts. Our nations' commonalities are perhaps best captured in a description of UK society found in the UK's National Security Strategy 2009 update;

> We have a markedly pluralistic society, with a tradition of open debate supported by a lively free press, and a very long-standing tradition of the rule of law. We have a strong belief in values which should guide our

government's actions. But we also have a tradition of individualism which means that our values and identity are not easily captured in a single narrative. (p. 38)

Despite these similarities, however, there are differences that could make the implementation of many elements of the PREVENT program difficult in the United States.

One difference is the way in which Muslims are treated and are, or are not, assimilated into the native culture. American Muslims occupy predominantly the middle class, whereas 20 percent or more of European Muslims live in poverty (PEW Research Center, 2007, p. 54) and suffer from a "failed integration" (Ruffer, 2008). This "failed integration" seems to largely have its roots in the way in which Muslims are, or are not, embraced by their host nation. European nations, whether fairly or not, are perceived as displaying national biases which exclude anyone who does not reflect the image of the individual nations (i.e., Englishness, French-ness, etc.), whereas the United States still enjoys its "melting pot" image in the eyes of the world (Sageman, 2007, p. 2). Perhaps the most notable difference between the United States and the UK, however, is that the UK's system of constitutional monarchy allows for much greater national government direction and control of a program such as Prevent, whereas the federal system of government in the United States empowers the states to largely govern themselves, while traditionally limiting the role of the federal government to only those duties not assumed by the states. In the UK the national government has been able to implement the Prevent program with little resistance from the kingdoms and localities within the UK, and in fact it has enjoyed widespread acceptance and embrace of the program. In the United States such federally directed and led implementation of Prevent would meet with substantial resistance from the states if such a program were not methodically coordinated beforehand. Even then, there is no guarantee that the federal government could secure the acceptance of all 50 states. In order to obtain the support and participation of the states, the federal government would likely be required to provide funding to assist the states in implementing a counterradicalization program and would additionally need to clearly demonstrate how such a program would benefit the states and their citizenry. This could be done, and should be done, by demonstrating how a well-structured

counterradicalization program could be utilized to address at-risk youth from across a wide spectrum of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds that are susceptible to adopting violent antisocial behaviors of all kinds—not just violent Islamist extremist behavior. States will want to participate in such a program because it will help them provide much-needed social services to their citizenry and will, when applied properly, affirmatively address violent criminal behavior stemming from real and perceived socioeconomic inequalities among the population. Obtaining the consensus of the states will prove to be one of the greatest hurdles the federal government will face when implementing a U.S. counterradicalization program. However, by focusing on the benefits of such a program—including improved social services to the respective constituencies of the states, federal funding streams for all counterradicalization programs and services, and improved security through the targeted reduction of radicalization and its negative side effects—it is feasible that the federal government could obtain the buy-in of the states.

Once the federal government has the states' acceptance of the program, it must then work to provide specific and detailed guidance regarding implementation. This will likely prove taxing due to the sheer complexity of implementing such a massive cross-government program servicing the immense U.S. population. Unlike the UK, which has approximately 50 law enforcement agencies (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2010), serving a total population of approximately 62 million people (Office for National Statistics, 2010), the United States has approximately 17,000 law enforcement agencies (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010), serving a total population of approximately 309 million people (U.S. Census, 2010). The staggering numbers of both law enforcement agencies in the United States (not to mention the bevy of other local, state, and private sector agencies) and the civilians that they serve and protect makes a nationally designed and locally applied program like Prevent a daunting task. The federal government must drive the counterradicalization message via a RICU-like entity that formulates the countermessage and then assists the states with adapting the message so that it reaches the widest possible audience within each state's diverse population. Working together, however, this can be accomplished in the same way that other federally initiated and

state-managed social-welfare programs, such as Medicaid, have been accomplished. The immense geographic and population size of the United States need not be an impediment to implementation of a successful counterradicalization program.

Similar to the UK's stance that "the most significant international terrorist threat to the UK continues to come from groups who claim to act in the name of Islam and who try to recruit people of Muslim faith to the cause of violent extremism" (Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare, 2009, p. 12), the previous U.S. presidential administration identified violent ideologies that "twisted" Islam to serve its own terrorist goals (National Security Strategy of the United States, 2006, p.12) as being the gravest threat to the national security of the United States. However, the current administration is reticent to associate Islam with terrorism (Apuzzo, 2010) and has engaged in proactive outreach to Muslim communities in both the United States and abroad in an attempt to dispel the notion that the United States is at war with Islam (White House, 2009). Given the administration's aversion to linking terrorism with radical Islam or violent Islamist extremists, it is likely that a phased approach will be required when acclimating the American public to the dangers associated with radicalization. Although the UK and the United States currently differ with regard to the language they utilize in describing the threat posed by radicalization, nonetheless they each acknowledge that it is a very real threat to national security. By studying and learning from the UK's Prevent program, the United States will be better positioned to avoid such issues as perceived government spying on, and undue focused scrutiny of, law-abiding Muslims. The establishment of a robust RICU-like organization that manages the national counterradicalization message will likewise be key in ensuring the viability of the government's program. The number of media outlets in the United States is exponentially larger than in the UK, a fact that will make it all the more important that the government make it clear that the media is an integral part of the solution to the problem of radicalization and has a duty to help educate, as well as to inform the public. This can be accomplished as long as the government ensures that its message is consistent and focused on empowering communities to help at-risk youth and others susceptible to those peddling messages of hate and violence.

C.   CONCLUSION

In summation, it is entirely feasible that a Prevent-like program could be applied within the United States so long as the states and their component agencies are brought in early to the planning and coordination of such a program. There will be a need for collective discussions as to how the counterradicalization message will be crafted, what it will be, and how it will be disseminated. Additionally, the media's assistance will need to be formally enlisted to help with what will be a massive information campaign. The focus of such a campaign would be educating the public about the objective of the program— which is to empower communities to reject violent extremism—and in so doing helping to protect Americans from future terrorist attacks.

III.   COUNTERGANG BEST PRACTICES

> Street gangs are an amalgam of racism, of urban underclass poverty, of minority and youth culture, of fatalism in the face of rampant deprivation, of political insensitivity, and the gross ignorance of inner-city (and inner-town) America on the part of most of us who don't have to survive there.
>
> -M. W. Klein

Having examined the counterradicalization practices instituted in the United Kingdom, a nation of similar governmental and social construct as the United States, and having observed the both the benefits and pitfalls of such a program, let us now examine how the United States has dealt with a similar social problem—the problem of youth gangs. Such an examination may allow us to ascertain what practices, if any, can be applied. For nearly 100 years, gangs have existed in one form or another in the United States, but gangs as we understand them today came to the forefront of the criminal world within the last 50 years. In this period of time, law enforcement and social welfare organizations have developed methods of addressing this problem—some effective and some not. However, within the last decade there has arisen a set of countergang best practices, that might be suitable with modification for application to the problem of radicalization among the ethnic Somali-American populace, thus avoiding the need to "reinvent the wheel" when creating a counterradicalization program.

A.   A "GANG" DEFINED

In analyzing countergang best practices, it is important to note that there are several different types of gangs. The 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment (NGTA), prepared by the U.S. Department of Justice-Sponsored National Gang Intelligence Center, identifies three basic types of gangs: street gangs, prison gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs, with street gangs being the most prevalent (National Gang Intelligence Center, 2009, p. 7). Street gangs are further broken down into three subgroups: national-level, regional-level, and local street gangs. Local street gangs are in turn predominantly comprised of youth gangs (National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC], 2009, p. 7). In this context youth gangs are defined as having more than two members who are between the

ages of 12 and 24, sharing a sense of identity, have been in existence for a year or more, and are involved in criminal activity (Esbenson, 2000, pp. 2–3). Due to the fact that street gangs represent the broadest set of gang membership and also best mirror the demographic of Somali-American's current radicalizing of ages 17 and 27 (Ephron & Hosenball 2009), countergang programs targeting such gangs are the most useful for purposes of comparison with potential counterradicalization practices. In Chapter IV we will examine further the demographic within Somali-American communities that is most susceptible to radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment.

B.   A BRIEF HISTORY OF GANGS IN THE UNITED STATES

While the exact origins of youth gangs in the United States are unclear, it is known that in the 1800s during the Industrial Revolution there was a proliferation of youth gangs (largely made up of members from multiple immigrant diasporas) throughout New England, which may have arisen due to the difficult urban conditions of industrialized America (Howell, 1998, p. 2). Since that time the United States has experienced three additional periods of gang expansion, with the most recent period occurring in the 1990s (Howell, 1998). Early gang research described gangs in terms of nationality and/or ethnicity versus race-based descriptors until around the 1950s (Esbensen, 2000, p. 4). Historically, gangs were made up of members who were almost exclusively males residing in the inner city and who were members of an ethnic or racial minority (Esbensen, 2000, p. 3). While current data demonstrate that gangs have migrated in recent years from urban areas to suburban areas and even rural communities (NGIC, 2009, p. iii), the data also suggest that a majority of gang members are still from racial and ethnic minorities (Ogletree, 2008, p. 41). The exact number of youth gangs in the United States is not known; however, the 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment estimated that there were approximately 1 million gang members belonging to more than 20,000 criminally active gangs within the United States, and 58 percent of state and local law enforcement agencies reported having active criminal gangs in their jurisdictions (NGIC, 2009, p. iii).

C.   COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INITIATIVES

In the last three decades there have been numerous countergang programs and initiatives applied to addressing the issue of criminal gangs in the United States. A study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) in 2000 examined the history of these programs. This study notes that modern countergang efforts began with programs that simply attempted to prevent youth from joining gangs, but by the mid-1930s these efforts had transitioned to programs that sought to organize and mobilize communities in an effort to reduce crime and to counter gang formation (Howell, 2000, p. 5). This is due to the widespread acceptance of the notion that cohesive, organized, and engaged communities were the key to reducing crime as well as mitigating gang problems since the social environment and not the individual were the cause of maladaptive behavior—a concept known as "social disorganization" theory (Esbensen, 2000, p. 6).

What is perhaps the best known delinquency prevention program in the United States to date (Esbensen, 2000)—the Chicago Area Project (CAP)—was established in 1934 by two early gang researchers, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, who, following social disorganization theory, directed the implementation of CAP (Howell & Curry 2009, p. 2). The goal of CAP was to reintegrate gang members into society through such methods as the use of "detached workers," who were members of a government agency or government-sponsored agency, assigned to embed within local gangs where they could more directly counsel gang members in an attempt to reintegrate them into society (Howell & Curry, 2009, p. 2). Additionally, CAP engaged preexisting community groups, such as church groups and labor unions (Esbensen, 2000, p. 6) in an effort to improve the conditions in neighborhoods, including offering afterschool programs and other activities in an effort to fill youths' time with positive activities and divert them from entering gangs (Esbensen, 2000). CAP spawned numerous other similar programs in other cities in other states. However, subsequent research called into question the efficacy of the detached-worker concept due to the fact that such programs focused

almost solely on affecting individual behavior, while at the same time failing to address shortcomings in community structure and capacity (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7), the concept at the heart of social disorganization theory.

As countergang efforts progressed, a transition occurred in which law enforcement, with the support of legislative initiatives, began to initiate suppression programs designed to target areas with high gang concentrations for intensified enforcement efforts (Howell, 2000, p. 5). While enforcement activities are an essential aspect of any effective countergang program, such activities only treat symptoms and do not address shortcomings in a community's structure or capacity; thus they cannot be expected to be the sole solution to the problem (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7). Today, many jurisdictions prefer to adopt programs incorporating aspects of these and other countergang approaches (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7). These approaches can be separated into seven distinct types of programs: prevention, intervention, suppression, multiple technique programs, multiagency programs, comprehensive programs, and legislative initiatives (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7).

Of the recommendations cited in the 2000 OJJDP study, which examined the implementation of these types of programs within multiple jurisdictions across the nation, two of the cited recommendations are the most relevant for the purpose of addressing the problem of youth radicalization within Somali-American communities. The first recommendation is that all elements of a community, not just law enforcement, should work together to address this problem. The second recommendation is that communities must provide gang members with alternatives to being in a gang, since no consistently successful program for preventing youth from joining gangs has yet been identified. Those programs which have thus far shown great promise involve helping youth with family, peer, and school problems, as well as community conditions (Howell, 2000, p. 54). Further, the 2000 OJJDP study examined a 1995 national gang migration study in which respondents from 211 surveyed cities assessed the effectiveness of multiple countergang practices (Howell, 2000, p. 46). The results showed that nearly two-thirds of cities surveyed utilized some type of community engagement strategy, and 54 percent found such practices to be effective, as the table below illustrates (Howell, 2000, p. 46).

Table 1.   Law Enforcement Strategies and Perceived Effectiveness

Strategy	Used	Judged Effective (if used)
Some or a lot of use		
Targeting entry points	14%	17%
Gang laws	40	19
Selected violations	76	42
Out-of-State information exchange	53	16
In-State information exchange	90	17
In-city information exchange	55	18
Federal agency operational coordination	40	16
State agency operational coordination	50	13
Local agency operational coordination	78	16
Community collaboration	64	54
Any use		
Street sweeps	40%	62%
Other suppression tactics	44	63
Crime prevention activities	15	56

ª Percentage of cities, *n*=211. The number of cities responding to each question varied slightly.
Source: Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1995.

Source: Howell, 2000, p. 46.

The aforementioned 2000 OJJDP study concluded that the most effective counter-youth gang program will likely prove to be a combination of strategies, including prevention, intervention, and suppression, initiated in a collaborative, community-engaging fashion (Howell, 2000, p. 55).

Contemporary countergang strategies, as well as the aforementioned 2000 OJJDP gang study, reflect the research and field work of noted gang researcher and University of Chicago sociologist and professor, Dr. Irving A. Spergel, who has spent more than three decades studying the problem of gangs and their negative effects on society. A prolific writer on the topic of gangs, Dr. Spergel is perhaps most renowned for what is now known as the "Spergel model" (2010 Canada, 2010, p. 9), or the "community-wide, comprehensive gang program model," which the U.S. Department of Justice adopted and renamed simply the "comprehensive gang model." Key assumptions of the model are that the youth gang problem is the result of fragmented communities and the failure of public agencies in those communities to tend to the social development needs of youth and that youth gangs are generally attractors of youth "between childhood and adulthood,

particularly youth from disorganized or deviant families in socially and economically marginal neighborhoods (Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 203).

Dr. Spergel, with DOJ funding, first implemented his comprehensive gang model in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood in a program that lasted from 1992 to 1997 (Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 203). This first implementation of the model suffered from several catastrophic failures, including the local police department's lack of interest in entering into joint relationships with other key program agencies and community groups and, perhaps most damningly, the ultimate dissolution of the crucial neighborhood advisory group, due largely to petty squabbling and the inability to communicate effectively (Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 211). The neighborhood advisory panel, consisting of members from several local places of worship, Boys and Girls clubs, a community organization, social welfare agencies, local residents, the local alderman, and a business group, were key elements of the comprehensive countergang program and the failure of these elements to work together for the betterment of the community was cited as one of the primary reasons why the Little Village program did not achieve its full potential in countering youth gang formation and gang violence (Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 217). Despite the failure of the Little Village community to fully implement all strategies and program elements of the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model, the program nonetheless demonstrated the necessity of, and power of, community engagement and mobilization.

Community Context
Social Disorganization Factors:

- Demographic
- Socioeconomic
- Family Characteristics
- Ecological
- Cultural

IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Targeting
Balance
Intensity
Continuity
Commitment

STRATEGIES

Social Intervention
Community Mobilization
Provision of Social Opportunities
Suppression (Socialized Control)
Organizational Change and Development

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Steering Committee
Interagency Street Team
Grassroots Involvement
Social Services
Criminal Justice Participation
School Participation
Employment and Training
Lead Agency Management
- Defining problems/issues
- Planning
- Sequencing strategies/tactics
- Organizing community interests/interagency coordination
- Staff selection/development
- Case management
- Program analysis/evaluation
- Achieving program success
- Fund-raising
- Public/media relations
- System change/legislative action
- Sustaining/diffusing model

Source: Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 206

Figure 1.   Comprehensive Gang Program Model

Following the implementation of the Little Village program, OJJDP conducted a demonstration to measure the effectiveness of the comprehensive gang model and initiated the program in five separate localities across the United States from 1995 to 2000. The results from those five sites—Mesa, Arizona; Riverside, California; Bloomington-Normal, Illinois; San Antonio, Texas; and Tucson, Arizona—were combined with the results of the Little Village program (Table 2). The outcome showed three of the six localities making significant planning mistakes that kept them from seeing positive results. The other three localities experienced reductions in both gang violence and drug-related offenses due to their successful implementation of programs focusing on prevention, intervention, and suppression (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 44). However, the study made clear the fact that when communities come together collectively to address a shared problem, they are more likely to enjoy success than they would working in an uncoordinated fashion.

Table 2.   Effectiveness of Comprehensive Gang Model

Program Implementation Characteristics		Degree of Importance to Program Success[†]	Levels of Implementation by Project Site[‡]					
			Chicago	Mesa	Riverside	Bloomington-Normal	San Antonio	Tucson
Program Elements (Structure)	City/County Leadership	***	2	4	4	1	1	1
	Steering Committee	**	1	4	3	1	1	0
	Interagency Street Team/Coordination	***	4	4	3	0	0	0
	Grassroots Involvement	*	3	1	1	0	1	0
	Social Services: Youth Work, Individual Counseling, Family Treatment, and Recreation	**	3	3	3	2	3	3
	Criminal Justice Participation	***	4	4	4	1	1	0
	School Participation	**	1	3	3	3	2	0
	Employment and Training	**	3	1	4	3	1	0
	Lead Agency/Management/Commitment	***	4	4	4	0	0	0
Strategies	Social Intervention: Outreach and Crisis Intervention	**	4	3	3	1	1	0
	Community Mobilization: Interagency and Grassroots	**	1	3	2	1	0	0
	Provision of Social Opportunities: Education, Job, and Culture	**	3	2	2	2	1	0
	Suppression	***	4	4	3	0	0	0
	Organizational Change and Development	***	2	4	4	0	0	0
Operating Principles	Targeting Gang Members/ At-Risk Gang Youth	***	4	2	3	1	3	3
	Balance of Service	***	4	3	3	0	0	0
	Intensity of Service	*	4	3	3	1	0	0
	Continuity of Service	**	2	1	2	2	0	2

Source: Spergel, Wa, and Sosa, 2006, pp. 216–217
[†]Importance of characteristic to success: ***=extremely, **=moderately, *=somewhat
[‡]Levels of implementation: 4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, 1=poor, 0=none

The 2008 U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems encapsulates, supports, and summarizes the findings of Dr. Spergel's work, as well as the OJJDP's 1995–2000 implementation of Dr. Spergel's comprehensive, community-wide gang program model. The OJJDP has sought, through multiagency collaboration across all levels of government, to replace the false promise of "safety, belonging, economic opportunity, and a sense of identity" (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. iii) that gangs use to lure recruits. Based on decades of analysis of the gang problem, primarily strategies developed largely through the research and field work of Dr. Spergel, the OJJDP's formula for success is based on five strategies that when combined allow government

agencies and private-sector entities to effectively address gang problems wherever they arise nationally. The five strategies are community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development.

Community mobilization entails leveraging the involvement of the citizenry, including rehabilitated gang members, community organizations, and government agencies in addressing gang recruitment and initiation, and also coordinating and synchronizing programs across all participating agencies (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 2). The ppportunities provision entails developing tailored training, education, and employment programs to provide gang-involved youth alternatives to gang participation (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 2). Social intervention entails conducting outreach to, and providing services to gang-involved youth and their families with the assistance of youth-serving agencies, faith-based organizations, schools, grassroots organizations, law enforcement, and other juvenile/criminal justice organizations (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 2). Suppression entails utilizing a system of both formal and informal social control procedures to address gang violence and other criminal activity. Formal procedures might include community-oriented policing-style gang suppression operations, while informal procedures could include monitoring and supervision of gang-involved youth by juvenile/criminal justice agencies, community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots organizations (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 2). And finally, organizational change and development entails maximizing the effective utilization of available resources by developing and implementing dynamic and forward-thinking policies and procedures within and across participating agencies (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 2).

Implementation of these strategies can come after a community experiences a tragic event, such as a gang-related death or other violence that shocks the conscience, but it can also occur in the absence of any such catalyst and can be merely the result of a gradual building of public support to address a gang problem (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 6). In whatever fashion a community comes together to address its gang problem, the community's next step toward addressing the problem is the convening of an organizational structure (identified by OJJDP as a steering committee) to plan and coordinate community response efforts (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 6). Experience has

demonstrated that successful implementation of the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model is determined by the effectiveness of the steering committee (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 6), which works best when made up of a mix of upper-level management from participating agencies, as well as influential individuals from the community, including residents, grassroots community group representatives, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, pp. 6–7).

The OJJDP's comprehensive gang model outlines five steps through which communities should implement the aforementioned five core strategies in order to address a gang problem. Step one: the community, including community leadership, acknowledges the existence of a youth gang problem (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 3). Step two: the community assesses the scope of its gang problem (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 3). Step three: the community, through a steering committee, sets goals and objectives to address the problem (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 3). Step four: the steering committee provides the community with relevant programs, services, and strategies to address the problem and does so in a manner consistent with the aforementioned five core strategies (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 3). And finally step five: the steering committee evaluates the effectiveness of the community's response to the problem and makes modifications to the program as required (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p. 3).

In order to test its comprehensive gang model, in 2003 OJJDP implemented the Gang Reduction Program (GRP) in four U.S. cities: Los Angeles, California; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; North Miami Beach, Florida; and Richmond, Virginia (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2008, p.3). The GRP sought to assist communities in addressing their gang problems by teaching those communities to utilize the five core strategies derived from Dr. Spergel's body of work regarding gangs. In each of the cities, the GRP model was modified so as to be most effective in addressing the unique "local needs and problem-solving approaches" of that locale (Cahill et al, 2008, p. 356). The findings from that study were compiled and presented in 2008 by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center in coordination with the OJJDP. With regard to community engagement and collaboration, the study found that there was successful steering committee formation and function, including program

planning and implementation, at all of the program sites, which as previously noted is a criterium for successful implementation of the comprehensive gang model (Cahill et al, 2008, p. 359). And while the study found varying levels of collaboration and communication among program participants, with agencies focusing on suppression strategies collaborating more quickly and more closely at the start than did agencies focusing on the intervention and outreach strategies, in the end those individuals and agencies comprising the community engagement and outreach arm of the GRP improved their levels of communication and collaboration (Cahill et al., 2008, pp. 359–60).

D. CONCLUSION

The last two decades of gang research and countergang program testing has demonstrated that the most effective counter–youth gang program will likely prove to be a combination of strategies, including prevention, intervention, and suppression, initiated in a collaborative, community-engaging fashion (Howell, 2000, p. 55). Fortunately, this fact has been recognized by our national leadership. The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives of the 110th Congress, in addressing a 2007 hearing on effective countergang practices spoke to the need for a "continuum of services for youth" involving the educational, law enforcement, social welfare, mental health, not-for-profit, business, and faith-based sectors working together (Scott, 2007, p. 3). Similarly, in 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives held one of several hearings in which it heard from numerous expert witnesses in the field of gang research, as well as gang suppression, who testified regarding what constitutes an effective practice for addressing gangs. Referenced in that hearing was a study in which three common characteristics of programs that successfully address gangs and gang violence was identified. These characteristics can be found repeated throughout the extensive body of work concerning gangs and have come to be accepted almost as universal truths. The first of these characteristics of successful countergang programs is their inclusion of families, schools, and other components of communities (Ogletree, 2008, p. 12). Only with the inclusion of these elements of the community can a program be truly successful. The second characteristic of successful countergang programs is their

focus on individual development, especially teaching youth social and cultural skills needed by youth in order for them to be effective and contributing members of their community (Ogletree, 2008, p. 12). The third and final characteristic of successful countergang programs is that they begin in preschool and continue throughout primary and secondary education. Such programs have shown that they are effective in reducing criminal behavior among male youth—especially those from economically challenged families (Ogletree, 2008, p. 12).

Why then are such programs often not implemented, or if implemented why are they not always successful? There are many reasons why a particular countergang program might not be initiated, or perhaps ultimately fail if initiated. These reasons can range from the failure of a community to recognize its gang problem, the failure of communities to effectively communicate and collaborate in the planning or implementation phases of a countergang program, or the failure of government agencies to focus adequate resources on the gang problem, to name only a few. Unfortunately, authorized funding from Congress for countergang programs is typically not provided in full and has been declining in recent years (Scott, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, many of those programs that do receive funding, at both the national and local levels, are unproven programs with questionable methodologies and outcomes (D. Elliott, 2007, p. 8).

The fact that many U.S. communities have yet to implement the comprehensive gang model and the fact that several of those communities that have implemented the model have not fully solved their gang problem need not be reasons to abandon examination of this model as a viable method for addressing radicalization occurring within Somali-American communities. The comprehensive gang model, if accepted, modified, and then applied to a program addressing radicalization among ethnic Somali males, who are generally of the same demographic as youths most susceptible to gang recruitment, would not only save the government valuable time in addressing this threat but might serve to help Somalis better assimilate into American culture. Perhaps a test case in one American city containing an ethnic Somali enclave might serve to establish the effectiveness of such a program in reducing the sense of non-belonging that many

second-generation Somali youth harbor; this is a topic that will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter IV. By reducing or eliminating this sense of non-belonging, it may be possible to reduce the risk of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment among these youth.

The general consensus of gang researchers and experts is that the gang problem requires national-level funding and direction, but local, community-based solutions (Howell & Curry, 2009; Esbensen, 2000; Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006; Fernandez, 2007, p. 49). Further, study after study reiterates the need that countergang programs focus not only on correcting individual behavior through multiple community-based intervention programs, but also that such programs work to reshape the communities, including the families, in which gang members live (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7; Hill, Liu, & Hawkins, 2001, p. 3; Kennedy, 2007, p. 33). This is not only because gangs are the by-products of fractured families and communities (Esbensen, 2000, p. 7), but more importantly because gangs are more likely than not to come from "socially disorganized or marginalized communities" (Esbensen, 2000, p. 9).

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IV.   ANALYSIS

For the early gang researchers, the quest for an understanding of urban gangs began when researchers started following peasants and sharecroppers into cities. Thus, immigration and the experiences of immigrants adapting and adjusting to city life form the basis for all else that follows, including and especially the maladaptation that so often occurs among them. In this vein, there are multiple areas in which immigrants and especially their children find themselves betwixt and between, beginning with where they settle, what jobs they fill, and how and why their social and cultural values and practices are challenged and typically undermined and revamped. It also takes into account when the social environment shapes personal identities with whom the individuals interact. As noted above, no more than 10% of the youths become gang members in most affected neighborhoods, and the most marginalized families and children in each of these neighborhoods tend to fall into this category.

-J. D. Vigil

So what causes the radicalization of a small but significant number of Somali-American youth? The answer is complex: sophisticated extremist recruiters target vulnerable individuals, young men—many of them refugees who came here as small children or who are children of immigrants—torn between their parents' traditional ethnic, tribal, and clan identities and the new cultures and traditions offered by American society. Caught between two worlds, and lacking structure and definition in their lives at home, some youth become susceptible to the draw of gangs and criminality, and in some cases religious or nationalistic extremism.

- Andrew Liepman

The above quotes, the first concerning the problem of gangs in the United States and the second concerning the problem of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment in the United States, both speak to the trials and tribulations that certain communities in this country have experienced as a result of their migration, or their ancestors' migration. The two problem sets interestingly share numerous commonalities. Both problem sets demonstrate a propensity to attract youth, especially male youth from socioeconomically

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challenged communities, who must fight against social and cultural norms that are often in conflict with those of their families and or communities—an issue to be examined in this chapter.

In Chapter II we examined the efforts of the government of the United Kingdom to counter radicalization primarily among its Islamic population. If we are to accept that the UK counterradicalization practices would not be acceptable given the much greater size of the United States' populace, its more decentralized federal system of government, its corresponding exponentially greater number of law enforcement and intelligence agencies that would need to be involved, as well as the politically unpalatable nature of such a program as PREVENT, singularly focused on Muslims, then we must look to other methods to counter radicalization occurring among Somali-Americans. In Chapter III we examined the problem of youth gangs in the United States and a corresponding set of best practices that have been adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice as being the nation's best hope of countering youth gang formation. In this chapter we will examine both the socioeconomic drivers of youth gang formation and the socioeconomic drivers of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment occurring among Somali-American youth. Such a juxtaposition is intended to illuminate the similarities of the socioeconomic drivers of both problem sets, thereby making a case for the need to conduct a test-case study of the application of identified countergang best practices against the problem of Somali-American radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment.

A. SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUTH GANG RECRUITMENT

For as long as communities and governments have sought to combat gangs and gang crime, there have been theories proposed and studies initiated to identify the reasons that youth join gangs. The findings point to a range of causes, from lack of societal integration, racism, poverty, and political isolation. While these factors alone cannot be said to be the sole indicators of potential gang affiliation, gang-study findings indicate that minority youth from single-parent households are at greater risk for joining gangs than are their counterparts from Caucasian two-parent households (Esbensen, 2000, p. 4). Lending credence to this statistic is the work of renowned family therapist Michael

Gurian, who has studied the troubling contemporary trend of male youth scholastically falling behind females of the same age. Gurian points to the lack of positive male role models as a primary reason for the learning gap between the genders, especially when examining male youths in the junior-high-school and high-school age range (Tyre, 2006). Gurian notes that boys learn healthy work habits and self restraint from older male role models (Tyre, 2006), and in the absence of such role models, young males easily fall prey to negative influences.

In American society today 40 percent of boys are raised in the absence of their biological fathers, and more than half of African-American males who begin high school never graduate (Tyre, 2006). Social ecologist James D. Vigil supports the theory of the negative effects of absentee positive male role models and offers additional explanation as to why certain youth join gangs. Vigil notes that the typical age range of youth involved in violent gang activity is the very age range in which youth are transitioning from childhood to adulthood; this is a time typically characterized by ambivalence and unpredictability, and for many teenagers living in stressful conditions, it is an especially difficult stage in their development (Vigil, 2003, p. 227). Beyond the lack of male role models, gang researchers point to socioeconomic deprivation, especially among urban youth, as being one of the leading predictors of youths susceptible to gang recruitment (Esbensen, 2000, p. 5).

One prime example of such outreach efforts that have greatly contributed to the decline of crime committed by this segment of society is outreach to youth susceptible to violent gang initiation. There are numerous studies that demonstrate how active law enforcement and community outreach to disaffected, disenfranchised, and at-risk youth can greatly reduce the incidence of youth gang membership, as well as reduce the incidence of violent crime committed by youths. One such study in a bulletin by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, attempts to outline methods that help communities identify youth at risk for joining gangs and then identify methods for preventing youths from joining gangs. The central tenets of the bulletin are that, while youths of various ages and from all segments and strata of society join gangs, the vast majority of youth gang members tend to be between the ages of 12

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and 24 (Esbensen, 2000, p. 3) and come from "socially disorganized and socially marginalized communities" (Esbensen, 2000, p. 9). The study more specifically defined the average youth gang member as being a "minority youth residing in single-parent households" (Esbensen, 2000, p. 4). The study further proffered that any program designed to reduce youth gang recruitment and participation that only focused on one solution or approach was doomed to failure. The study pointed to the need for a multipronged approach that addresses the multiple underlying problems making youth more susceptible to gang involvement (Esbensen, 2000, p. 9).

Corroborating these findings are individuals from community outreach groups across the country, such as the director of the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C., Mai Fernandez. Speaking before Congress, Fernandez pointed to the plight of immigrant families who came to the United States to find better lives for their families; in so doing many of the parents discovered that they needed to have multiple jobs outside of the home, leaving them precious little time to spend rearing children and providing them the time and attention required to keep them from seeking a sense of belonging with gangs and falling prey to negative influences (Fernandez, 2007, p. 48). Speaking before the same House of Representatives subcommittee the following year, former Los Angeles gang member Ely Flores spoke of his path to recruitment by a gang and his subsequent life of delinquency and crime. Flores spoke of coming from a single-parent household, where he was raised by his mother in an economically depressed neighborhood, where many of his peers were frequent visitors to youth detention facilities and prisons as a result of joining gangs in order to fill a need for belonging (Flores, 2008, p. 80). Flores identified the lack of resources and alternatives to gang life as the reason for his ever-growing sense of anger and disenfranchisement.

Still other gang researchers point to even more complex and interwoven socioeconomic predictors for gang initiation. One such framework, known as multiple marginality (Vigil, 2003, p. 230), takes a collective assessment of such factors as the effect of the neighborhood dynamic, sociocultural marginalization, poverty, social control, and other gang membership predictors. This framework seeks to examine the interconnectivity of multiple factors to include what constitutes a gang, where the gang

resides/exists, how the gang operates, and how their behavior is in part determined by societal factors, why gangs act the way they do, when gangs will act out with violence, and with whom gang members engage in unlawful and/or socially destructive behavior (Vigil, 2003, p. 232).
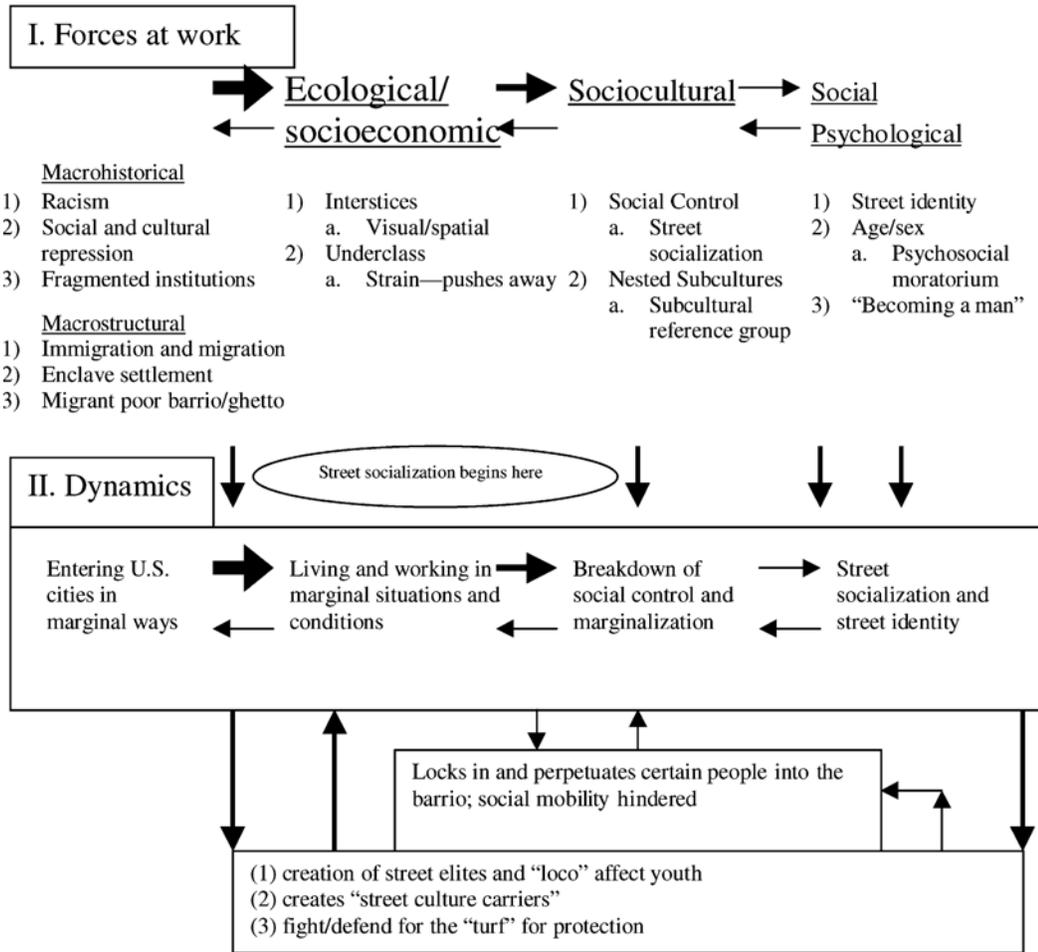
Source: Vigil, 2003, p. 231.

Figure 2.   Framework of Multiple Marginality: "Act and React"

Vigil discusses the process of acculturation—the process of learning a new culture—as a key element of marginalization because the conflict between learning one's own culture while at the same time having to learn a new culture often leads youth, especially minority youth, to identify with life on the street (Vigil, 2003, p. 235–36.) Vigil notes that, in studying urban street gangs, early gang researchers at the turn of the

century examined the movement of sharecroppers and other immigrants into urban settings. It was from this migration into the cities of socioeconomically deprived immigrants and the resulting hardships of urban life, including the lack of integration with mainstream society, that set the stage for the creation of gangs (Vigil, 2003, pp. 232–33). Pointing specifically to African American youth, Vigil notes that the acculturation process has been ongoing for this segment of society since their ancestors were uprooted from Africa and transplanted in foreign lands such as the United States (Vigil, 2003, p. 236).

These same tenets are shared by literally hundreds of professionals spanning the fields of academia, law enforcement, government, and private agencies who address gangs of all types on a daily basis. Some key findings in this body of study speak to the importance of healthy and stable home lives in the socialization process and the ability of youths to avoid becoming involved in criminal behavior, the negative impact of the absence of positive male role models, and the lack of discipline at home as being key factors in determining whether youths will join gangs (Carlie, 2009, pp. 2-8). Other key findings highlight the fact that youths most often join gangs out of a need for positive emotional reinforcement, structure, discipline, a sense of belonging, acceptance, and recognition, among other needs (Lees, Dean, & Parker, 1994, p. 1). Congruent with these, the primary risk factors determining youth susceptibility to gang recruitment are racism, poverty, the lack of a support network, and media influences (Lees, Dean, & Parker, 1994, p. 1). The conclusions of these studies, primarily the demographic analyses and the corresponding socioeconomic factors identified as being at the root of gang recruitment and initiation, are nearly identical with those associated with the segment of the ethnic Somali diaspora residing in the United States, which is radicalizing and being recruited by Al Shabaab, as will be discussed next in this chapter.

B. SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SOMALI-AMERICAN AL SHABAAB RECRUITMENT

In working to understand precisely what is driving a small percentage of Somali-American youth to radicalize and seek the jihadist lifestyle, we must first conduct a cursory examination of the history of Somali immigration into the United States. Such an

examination offers a glimpse of the genesis of the socioeconomic drivers of Somali-American radicalization. This is key since there exist few publicly available details regarding the socioeconomic background of all Somali-American jihadists identified to date (Weine et al., 2009, p. 185). In the early 1990s, after the outbreak of civil war in Somalia and the United States' humanitarian intervention in that country, the first mass migration of Somalis into this country began. Minneapolis, Minnesota, offering a bevy of social services and blue-collar employment opportunities, quickly became the seat of the Somali diaspora in North America (A. Elliott, 2009). The diaspora quickly grew and expanded into other states, including California, Massachusetts, Washington, Ohio, and Maine (Hsu & Johnson, 2009). Today the Somali-American population is estimated to be in the range of 150,000 to 200,000; however, this number could be higher, due to such factors as identity and documentation fraud, illegal immigration, and reluctance on the part of Somali-Americans to share personal information with U.S. census workers (Mudd, 2009). Unlike their European counterparts, Muslim immigrants to the United States (including Somali-Americans) seem to truly embrace the American dream and believe they have found a place where they can thrive (Sageman, 2007, p. 3) despite the fact that Somalis in general receive less cultural and language training prior to immigration than do other Muslims immigrants to the United States (Liepman, 2009). Even when having to overcome language and cultural barriers, first-generation Somali-Americans quickly entered the workforce, occupying mostly service-sector jobs, and by all accounts were productive members of society, except for a proclivity to keep to themselves within their ethnic enclaves (A. Elliott, 2009), which, given the clan-based nature of Somali society, is not unexpected or unusual. Perhaps the single greatest driving factor behind the Somali-American community's robust participation in the U.S. economy is the critical role that the global Somali diaspora plays in passing remittances back to family members and friends in Somalia, a sum estimated to be approximately one billion dollars annually (Menkhaus, 2009). The push for Somali-Americans to push remittances back to Somalia is so great that failure to do so on the part of any Somalis, even Somali-American youth capable of gaining employment (teens and above), would

mean instant renouncement by family and clan (Menkhaus, 2009). However, despite their strong work ethic and hard work, 60 percent of Somali-Americans live in poverty (Weine et al., 2009, p. 182).

While adult Somali-Americans could largely isolate themselves socially from their non-Somali neighbors, Somali-American youth could not do so—they were immersed in American schools and American life and forced to deal with the pains of assimilation (A. Elliott, 2009). Linguistic isolation has been identified as one of the primary reasons that Somali-Americans suffer high poverty rates, the lowest college graduation rate, and the highest unemployment rate among East African diaspora communities in the United States (Liepman, 2009). This is reflected in the testimony of one Somali-American, Abdirahman Mukhtar, who was born in Somali but fled with his family to the United States in 1998 and settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 1). There Mukhtar entered high school—the same high school as many of the thus-far identified Somali-American jihadists, including Shirwa Ahmed (referred to in Chapter I), the first Somali-American to die serving as a suicide bomber for Al Shabaab in Somalia. Mukhtar struggled in school, due to a variety of factors, including his inability to speak English, his need to overcome social and cultural biases of other students, and the requirement that he work in order to send remittances back to the family in Somalia (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 2). Mukhtar, like many Somali-American youth, was caught between two worlds—that of older, first-generation Somali-American immigrants who live as if they plan to return some day to Somalia, and younger, second-generation Somali-Americans who struggle to assimilate and immerse themselves in American culture (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 5; Weine et al., 2009, p. 189; Temple-Raston, 2009). Mukhtar summed up his experiences as a Somali-American teen, and very likely the experiences of most Somali-American youth, saying, "Parents expect you to keep your culture, while the American education system and way of life forces you to assimilate" (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 3).

Stories like that of Mukhtar are common within the Somali-American community. In their often strained attempts to fit in, Somali-American youth are frequently chided for attempting to be something they are not. This is especially the case with their African-

American counterparts who mock Somali-American youth for their mimicry of "ghetto" customs (A. Elliott, 2009). At the same time, these same Somali-American youth are chastised by family members for being too "ghetto," thus further alienating the youth and instilling within them strong feelings of self-doubt and identity confusion (A. Elliott, 2009). These same family members often show more interest in the struggles of life back in Somalia than in the mental well-being and social adjustment of their children (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 3). As a result, Somali-American youth suffer from a "crisis of belonging"—a phrase coined by the uncle of one boy who left America for Somalia and tutor of Somali-American youth at the same Minneapolis high school attended by Mukhtar (A. Elliott, 2009).

Facing barriers of "race and class, religion and language" (A. Elliott, 2009), many Somali-American youth seek a sense of brotherhood or family, where they can share their thoughts and experiences with like-minded individuals. There are those who believe that the Internet and certain fundamentalist mosques are to blame for the radicalization of Somali-American youth who are seeking ways to cope with American life and culture (Butty, 2010; Ali, 2006). Omar Jamal, executive director of the Somali Justice Advocacy Center in Minnesota, echoed these sentiments, saying, "You have high rates of young guys unemployed. You have a high rate of dropouts. They're difficult to integrate and work into the mainstream." Jamal further blamed religious extremists for having conducted outreach to disaffected youth and "indoctrinated them into this violent, radical ideology" (Hsu & Johnson, 2009), sentiments echoed by concerned members of the Somali-American community (Ahmed, 2009, pp. 3–4).

An examination of those criminally charged to date for their acts in support of Al Shabaab, or those directly supporting the terrorist organization, reveals that the ages of those involved ranges from the late teen years to the early forties. However, the vast majority of those criminally charged for traveling to Somalia for the purposes of engaging in armed combat have been between the ages of 18 through 27 at the time of charging. The exact age of the men at the time of their radicalization and subsequent recruitment by Al Shabaab is not clear, but it appears from the profiles of those Somali-American youth thus far criminally charged for their affiliation with, and support of, Al-

Shabbaab that this time period can typically be measured in months, not years All of the Somali-Americans identified to date as being involved in activities supporting Al Shabaab immigrated as children to the United States from Somalia (Ahmed, 2009, p. 3) and were subjected to the pressures and strife spoken of by Abdirahman Muhktar and others. Six of these young men died as a result of their participation in jihadist fighting in Somalia, with one of the young men, Shirwa Ahmend, dying as a suicide bomber.

Table 3.   Somali-Americans Supporting Al Shabaab

Somali- Americans supporting Al Shabaab

Name	Age when charged	Education	Role
Ahmed, Salah Osman	26	began college	jihadist
Abdulle, Adarus	25		jihadist facilitator
Abdow, Abdow Munye	26		jihadist facilitator
Abshir, Khalid Mohamud		High School	recruiter / jihadist
Ahmed, Shirwa (deceased)	27	High School	jihadist
Bana, Jamal (deceased)	19	began college	jihadist
Faarax, Cabdulaahi Ahmed	32		recruiter / jihadist
Hassan, Mohamed Abdullahi	18	High school (incomplete)	jihadist
Hassan, Kamal Said	24	began college	jihadist
Hassan, Mohamoud (deceased)	23	began college	jihadist
Hassan, Burhan (deceased)	17	High school (incomplete)	jihadist
Isse, Abdiweli Yassin			provided funding / recruiter
Isse, Abdifatah Yusuf	25	began college	jihadist
Maruf, Zakaria (deceased)	30		jihadist
Mohamed, Omar Abdi	24	High school	recruiter
Omar, Ahmed Ali		High school	recruiter / jihadist
Omar, Mahamud Said	43		provided funding / recruiter
Salat, Mustafa Ali	18	High school (incomplete)	jihadist
Shumpert, Ruben (deceased)			jihadist

(Anti Defamation League, 2010; US Department of Justice press release, November 23, 2009)

An examination of the above chart might at first glance give no indication of the turmoil that the Somali-American youth highlighted endured, since many completed high school, and some even began taking college courses. However, closer examination of the facts reveals that several of the highlighted youth never completed high school but instead dropped out in order to begin their jihadist exploits (A. Elliott, 2009). The same is

the case for those few who had begun college courses. Nearly all of these Somali-American youth turned Al Shabaab jihadists once lived in an impoverished neighborhood infested with gangs, drugs, and violence in a community geographically isolated from the rest of Minneapolis (Weine et al., 2009, p. 189) in a group of tall, public-housing buildings known as "the Towers" (Temple-Raston, 2009). It seems that all these youths followed the same path: social isolation as a result of language and cultural barriers, followed by disenfranchisement and disillusionment, followed by radicalization, and ultimately culminating in their recruitment by Al Shabaab.

While the vast majority of those charged thus far in the United States for crimes related to support of the Al Shabaab terrorist organization have been Somali-Americans, there have been several non–Somali-Americans charged, including the previously mentioned Daniel Maldonado, who warrant a cursory review. The following table lists other non–Somali-Americans charged to date.

Table 4.   Non–Somali-American Converts Supporting Al Shabaab

Non Somali-American converts supporting Al Shabaab

NAME	Age when charged*	Education	Role
Chesser, Zachary Adam	20		facilitator / jihadist
Hammanmi, Omar	26	High school (incomplete)	recruiter / jihadist
Kastigar, Troy (deceased)	28		jihadist
Maldonado, Daniel J	28		recruiter / jihadist
Masri, Shaker	26		jihadist
Mehanna, Tarek	27		facilitator

(*US Department of Justice press release, October 20, 2010; US Department of Justice press release, August 5, 2010; Family Security Matters, 2010; US Department of Justice press release, July 20, 2007; Family Security Matters, 2010; US Department of Justice press release November 5, 2009)

Although not a Somali-American himself, Daniel Maldonado, the first American citizen criminally charged for his jihadist activities in Somalia (Anti Defamation League, 2010, p. 6), perhaps best summed up the feelings of many Somali-American youth when he said that his reason for traveling to Somalia to live and fight alongside Al Shabaab was so that he, "would be able to live, pray, act, dress and be a Muslim without anyone

yelling at me, calling me names, refusing me jobs or apartments" (Family Security Matters, 2010). An American convert to Islam, Maldonado's words highlight his frustrations with being singled out and chastised for being a Muslim and his corresponding need to feel a sense of belonging. So what leads such non-Somali-Americans to take up the cause of Al Shabaab? The answer to this question remains unclear, but terrorism expert Marc Sageman believes that "terrorists are idealistic young people, who seek glory and thrills by trying to build a utopia. Contrary to popular belief, radicalization is not the product of poverty, various forms of brainwashing, youth, ignorance or lack of education, lack of job, lack of social responsibility, criminality or mental illness. Their mobilization into this violent Islamist born-again social movement is based on friendship and kinship" (Sageman, 2007, p. 1). As we have seen in this chapter, this need to feel a sense of kinship and belonging is a characteristic common to both Somali-Americans radicalizing and joining the ranks of Al Shabaab, as well as to thousands of other American youth who seek such belonging within criminal gangs.

The sources documenting radicalization in the United States are largely in lockstep agreement with the fact that militant Islamic extremism has not simply taken root in one isolated corner of the homeland—it has spread throughout the country. The promises of self-fulfillment and individual honor have attracted and continue to attract disaffected Muslims, primarily young Muslim men. From a review of the limited body of work related to radicalization of Somali-Americans, it appears that there are many barriers that law enforcement and social welfare organizations must overcome in order to effectively address the radicalization of the U.S. Somali diaspora. The United States finds itself in a difficult situation: how to address the very real problem of the spread of Islamic radicalization while not alienating the moderate Muslim communities in the United States and abroad and further fanning the flames of radicalization. John Miller, FBI Assistant Director of the Office of Public Affairs, in a 2007 statement before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, spoke to the need for the FBI and other elements of government to conduct outreach to the Muslim community in the United States in order to earn their respect and trust. Echoing these sentiments is Dr. Ken Menkhaus, professor of political science at Davidson College and noted expert on Somali

issues and Al Shabaab specifically, who identified six such barriers between law enforcement outreach efforts and Somali-Americans. These barriers include Somali-Americans' distrust of law enforcement due to harsh treatment endured in Somalia at the hands of security services; the illegal status of some Somalis residing in America; Somali customary laws that are often in conflict with U.S. laws; the Somali people's history of persecution; ignorance of U.S. laws; and the collective failure of Somali-Americans to take responsibility for ensuring that their youth do not engage in terrorism or activities supportive of terrorism (Menkhaus, 2009, pp.13–14). So why do these barriers exist, and can we get beyond them in order to address the problems of radicalization and recruitment? The answer to these questions comes with the introduction of the psychosocial perspective.

In trying to understand why a small percentage of Somali-American youth are radicalizing and seeking to wage jihad in Somalia, there is value in examining what these youth experience psychologically while trying to assimilate into American culture. Stevan Weine and his associates examined community and family approaches that could be utilized in combating the radicalization and recruitment of Somali-American youth utilizing the psychosocial perspective. This perspective is one that seeks to go beyond the perspectives of politics, criminal justice, history, or theology and instead takes into account community and family processes when assessing the mental well-being of an individual; it further seeks to address imbalances in this well-being through intervention at both the community and family levels (Weine et al., 2009, p. 184). The psychosocial perspective, methodologically speaking, focuses on allowing individuals to, in their own words, describe their strengths, weaknesses, and needs, as well as their perceptions of their families, peer groups, schools, and communities, and then uses those narratives in scripts utilized during intervention sessions (Weine, Ware, & Klebic, 2004, p. 924). Like "situationists" such as Zimbardo and Moghaddam who argue that the behavior of individuals and groups can be manipulated through a convergence of situational factors (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 25; Moghaddam, 2006, p. 22), the psychosocial perspective examines how certain environmental factors can help determine why some people commit violent or terrorist acts. However, unlike the "situationists," the psychosocial

perspective focuses less on addressing certain specific negative behaviors (i.e., violent acts) as it is with addressing the underpinning social and psychological factors contributing to radicalization (Weine et al., 2009, p. 185). As summarized by Weine, "Identity confusion, social isolation, academic underachievement, or high-risk behaviors may not only reflect individual psychopathology but also be manifestations of trauma to families, to communities, and to cultures" (Weine, Ware & Klebic, 2004, p. 923). Weine makes it clear that he and his colleagues are concerned that current counterterrorism approaches advanced by terrorism experts and law enforcement "lack a fundamental appreciation of the significance of knowledge about community and family processes in refugee and immigrant groups," processes that Weine and his colleagues believe could help significantly mitigate the risk of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment occurring among Somali-American youth (Weine et al., 2009, p. 193).

Looking at the Somali-American community through the psychosocial perspective, Weine notes, one quickly sees a variety of factors that have led to the current occurrences of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment within that community. Some of these factors include nationalist feelings of wanting to fight in defense of the Somali homeland (Weine et al., 2009, p. 188), trauma experienced in refugee camps overseas prior to migrating to the United States (Weine et al., 2009, p. 188), the prevalence of Somali mothers who were torture survivors and single parents (Weine et al., 2009, p. 188), high levels of poverty (Weine et al., 2009, p.189), clan/tribal divisions that continue despite migration to the United States and that "impede the delivery of community-level support as well as community collaboration with social services, health services, and law enforcement (Weine et al., 2009, p.189), language deficiencies that limit education and thus opportunities (Weine et al., 2009, p.189), being "Americanized" too quickly, which leads to feelings of being "trapped between different and at times dissonant identities" (Weine et al., 2009, p.189), and the lack of fathers and other positive male role models to steer young Somali-American males away from gang activity or Islamic extremists (Weine et al., 2009, p.189), among others. Weine's argument is that all of these factors, as well as others not highlighted, diminish the positive psychosocial

processes that might have otherwise been able to prevent certain Somali-American youth from straying down the path of radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment, or gang violence for that matter (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 4).

Weine's answer to how local, state, and federal government in the United States can leverage psychosocial approaches in dealing with this problem centers around government learning about, and taking into account, the psychosocial issues that are key to combating radicalization in diaspora communities (Weine et al., 2009, p. 192). These issues include diaspora-specific cultural beliefs and practices, the differences between refugees in the United States and immigrants, an understanding of those in the diaspora most at risk and what exactly that entails, the diversity of Islamic perspectives, the roles and function of families within immigrant communities, the structure and function of immigrant community leadership, and disparities between immigrant and non-immigrant educational opportunities (Weine et al., 2009, pp. 192–93). Weine's solution is made up of the following five-steps.

Step one is identifying community and family protective resources. Since a psychosocial approach assumes that susceptibility to radicalization and recruitment can be reduced by strengthening family and community protective processes, government and private-sector agencies should examine and strengthen the roles of parenting, including parental involvement in education, government outreach to families, mentoring, and faith communities (Weine et al., 2009, p. 194). Step two is building family interventions based on well-researched knowledge of the social circumstances of refugee and immigrant Somali-American youth, especially those between the ages of 15 and 25 and from single-mother households (Weine et al., 2009, p. 194). By speaking with Somali-American youth who do not radicalize or are not recruited by Al Shabaab or criminal gangs—the vast majority of this group—authorities can use this information in creating positive counter radicalization programs (Weine et al., 2009, p. 194). Step three is building multilevel community interventions that go beyond just family-level intervention and seek to engage Somali-American youth in a comprehensive fashion. This can be done through programs that leverage the assistance of positive, adult Somali-American male mentors who encourage Somali-American youth in such areas as education, careers, and

personal development, programs that promote the formation of local and state Somali-American leadership groups that encourage civic engagement and public service, programs that provide imams and other community leaders with the necessary tools and training for dealing with gang and extremist recruiters, and also programs that seek to counter the negative messages of extremists on the Internet (Weine et al., 2009, pp. 195–96). Step four is forming community collaborative partnerships that develop, refine, and test different intervention strategies through partnerships between local organizations, businesses, schools, and religious institutions using the knowledge gained by identifying the positive psychosocial processes found within the community that tend to prevent radicalization and recruitment (Weine et al., 2009, p. 196). And finally, step five involves forming multidisciplinary collaborations among counterterrorism, law enforcement, social and mental health services, education, and academia. Such collaboration would bring to bear psychosocial expertise in supporting the efforts of law enforcement and other counterterrorism experts, including research and analysis support in furtherance of efforts to tailor counterradicalization programs and messages, and could also offer to law enforcement education, training, technical assistance, and fellowships on psychosocial issues, while also offering to psychosocial workers similar programs on counterterrorism issues (Weine et al., 2009, pp. 196–97).

In the same vein as Weine and his colleagues, Dr. Walid Phares, senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, in 2006 testimony before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment, outlined a six-point plan for countering radicalization. In step one, according to Phares, government, the media, and subject matter experts must identify and accept the notion of the existence of an ideology of jihadism to pave the way for step two, in which the public and educational institutions mobilize against this ideology by teaching counterphilosophies (Phares, 2006, p. 27). Step three involves the government's banning of this ideology, based upon its violent teachings and the threat the ideology poses to society, followed by step four, which involves a massive public education campaign conducted with the assistance of publicly funded media—i.e., National Public Radio, C-SPAN, the Public Broadcasting System (Phares, 2006, pp. 27–28). Step five involves

enlisting the public's assistance, along with that of domestically based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in countering radicalization, which builds into step six in which the assistance of international NGOs, and specifically democratic and humanist Muslims is enlisted (Phares, 2006, pp. 27–28).

Can plans like those of Weine and his colleagues, or like those of Dr. Phares, work? Will Somali-Americans buy into such plans and participate? The answer to these questions may be reflected in the responses of American Muslims to polls focusing on American Muslims perceptions of life in American. A 2007 Pew Research poll found that despite the fact that 53% of American Muslims believe it is more difficult since the 9/11 attacks to be a Muslim in America, 78% were either "happy" or "very happy" with their lives. Also, 76% of American Muslims were very or somewhat concerned about the rise of Islamic extremism around the world, and 61% were concerned about its rise specifically in the United States. These statistics are supported by the observations of scholars and experts such as Dr. Marc Sageman, who notes, "The American Dream is alive and well among Muslim Americans" (Sageman, 2007, p. 5). Dr. M. Saud Anwar, chairman of the American Muslim Peace Initiative, offers a similar perspective, pointing to a poll conducted of the Pakistani American community regarding Muslim integration in the post-9/11 era in the United States. Anwar notes that in that poll 2,000 individuals were polled, with 10% responding. While the poll suggests that American Muslims (84%) are more inclined to integrate into American society and maintain their heritage as opposed to assimilating, they at the same time overwhelmingly (99.5%) value interaction with non–Muslim Americans (Anwar, 2006, pp. 3–4). Additionally, the majority of the Muslim Americans polled said they were comfortable talking to a law enforcement officer (75%) (Anwar, 2006, pp. 3–4). Dr. Anwar, drawing upon these statistics, advocates increased communication and coordination between law enforcement and American Muslims in order to counter the effects of radicalization. (Anwar, 2006, pp. 3–4).

C.   CONCLUSION

In examining the threat associated with Americans who radicalize and travel to the Horn of Africa region to train and fight alongside Al Shabaab, it is clear that not all who do so are ethnic Somalis or members of the Somali diaspora. However, the majority of the identified Americans to date who have traveled to Somalia for the purposes of jihad have been Somali-Americans. While no counterradicalization program can be expected to be 100% effective, just as no nation can ever prevent every threat (Brennan, 2010), it seems evident that a focused and tailor-made counterradicalization program structured so as to empower and equip Somali-American communities to police themselves is what is needed. Such a program would make allowances for the unique cultural customs and beliefs, and would avoid the accusations of excessive government focus on Muslims, as well as the government surveillance and spying experienced by the U.K. government. However, such a program is needed quickly and must have a high probability for success. Focusing on enforcement efforts alone, however, would likely prove to be counterproductive, as has been the case in efforts to counter gangs. As pointed out by Robert Scott, chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, enforcement approaches disproportionately target minorities, especially blacks and Hispanics, who are frequently treated more harshly than their white counterparts (Scott, 2007, p. 2). Additionally, Scott identified the need for government and communities to address the underlying reasons that youths join gangs and engage in criminal activity: to ignore these reasons and focus simply on enforcement will serve only to perpetuate gangs and their expansion (Scott, 2007, p. 3).

While the problem of gangs and gang violence have not been eradicated in the United States, after decades of experience, much trial and many errors, there are effective countergang best practices that, modified properly, could be quickly applied to the problem of radicalization occurring among Somali-Americans. The focus of such best

practices, and the corresponding reason for their success, is the combination of community engagement and empowerment in addressing the problem of gangs and gang violence.

The authors of all the sources reviewed agree is that the solution to the problems of Islamic extremist radicalization and recruitment in the United States is not likely to be found in "quick-fix" remedies. The effort will require extensive community engagement and trust building and will take time measured in years, not months or days. Noted terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman, in his book "Inside Terrorism," echoes the common sentiment of the majority of works on this topic: "Winning the war on terrorism will take decades, not years, to accomplish. If we are to succeed our efforts must be as tireless, innovative, and dynamic as those of our opponents" (Hoffman, 2006, p. 295). FBI Director Robert Mueller III, during one of many public addresses on the issue of radicalization, echoes these words:

> We must continue to work with our law enforcement and intelligence partners around the world. But we must also work here in the United States with the citizens we serve, to identify and disrupt those who would do us harm. Too often, we run up against a wall between law enforcement and the community—a wall based on myth and misperception of the work we do. We know that the best way to tear down that wall is brick by brick, person by person. Yet we understand the reluctance of some communities to sit down at the table with us. They may come from countries where national police forces and security services engender fear and mistrust. Oftentimes, the communities from which we need the most help are those who trust us the least. But it is in these communities that we must re-double our efforts. (Mueller, 2009)

While there is a great deal of agreement among the various pundits and experts regarding the causative factors of radicalization, there is clearly no consensus on how best to counter it. Further, despite the significant attention given to the radicalization of American ethnic Somali youths and their travels to the HOA region to fight alongside Al Shabaab during the past two years, there has been little study of how this particular problem set could or should be addressed. However, the materials available suggest that the solution to the problem of the radicalization of ethnic Somali-Americans is not to be found in one place. Instead, the solution will come from a combination of increased

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public awareness of the need to help American Muslims integrate into American society and from government conducting effective outreach to disaffected Muslims with the assistance of both government and nongovernmental organizations.

V.   FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Trust is an integral part of the fabric of our society.… Without trust, society closes down and will ultimately self-destruct.
>
> -Stephen R. Covey

> Much of the defense against jihadist radicalization will be invisible—quiet discouragement, interventions by family members and friends, and when necessary, discreet assistance to the authorities.
>
> -Brian M. Jenkins

> It is reckless to leave the task of combating terrorism only to the professionals when the changing nature of the threat requires that ordinary Americans play a larger support role in detecting and preventing terrorist activities.
>
> -Bergen & Hoffman

The goal of this research was to determine whether there were any best practices that could be culled from past and current countergang initiatives and then applied to a program to counter radicalization occurring within Somali-American communities in the United States. Such radicalization of Americans, especially those who subsequently receive jihadist training and experience outside the United States, jeopardizes the national security of this country. Toward the end of addressing radicalization within this segment of the U.S. populace, the research within this thesis addressed the following critical question: What, if any, best practices can be derived from law enforcement and public welfare agency efforts over the last four decades to stem youth gang recruitment and initiation and then be applied to efforts to counter radicalization and Al Shabaab recruitment within the ethnic Somali diaspora in the United States?

A.   FINDINGS

Examination of countergang best practices for this thesis led to the identification of the U.S. Department of Justice–adopted comprehensive, community-wide gang program model as one that encompasses the most effective elements culled from successful countergang programs nationwide. The program includes five field-tested core

strategies: community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development (USDOJ, OJJDP, 2009, p. 2). It may seem that there is no better critique of this program than the fact that it has yet to completely solve the gang problem. However, this would assume that the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model has been properly and uniformly applied throughout the country, which is not the case. The data discussed in Chapter III make it clear that, when the program is properly initiated and applied, it has not only demonstrated success in curbing violent youth gang recruitment and the criminal acts committed by youth gang members but has more importantly demonstrated success in mobilizing communities in addressing this problem (Howell & Curry, 2009, p. 13). For this reason, the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model shows promise as an effective approach for countering radicalization among ethnic Somali-American communities. However, modification of this model will be required in order to account for the differences between the gang and the radicalization problem sets. This would include changes in such areas as the formation and composition of the steering committee, as well as the intervention team and its outreach staff—all key elements of the comprehensive gang model and all necessary components of a comprehensive counterradicalization model program. Once necessary modifications are made, however, the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model shows great promise as being an effective means of addressing radicalization among Somali-American communities through engagement with, and empowerment of, those communities.

Just as the creator of the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model noted that the failure of the model to reduce gang recruitment and violence in certain locations was due primarily to the failure on the behalf of the initiating local governments to include community-based intervention into their countergang model (Spergel, Wa, & Sosa, 2006, p. 222), the failure of current counterradicalization efforts is due to the greater failure of government at all levels to empower communities to address the problem themselves. This view is supported by experts in the field of sociology, who affirm the need for communities to be supported in their efforts to police themselves with regard to addressing violence and other maladaptive behavior. Such support can be

derived from community partnerships with "agencies of formal social control," such as law enforcement and community policing programs, among others (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997, p. 923).

B.   NATIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

How do we address radicalization of Somali-Americans, given that they tend to reside in enclaves largely isolated from mainstream American society? The research findings of this thesis make it evident that the answer lies in the successful engagement of Somali-American communities in countering radicalization and its negative effects. Fortunately, recent U.S. national policy has identified the need for such increased community engagement. The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy specifically addresses the threat posed by radicalization and speaks to the need for new policies and programs to address this threat. While no specific plan is proffered, the National Security Strategy nonetheless identifies the need for programs that "expand community engagement" and "empower local communities." (National Security Strategy of the United States, 2010, p. 19).

Following the conclusions of the National Security Strategy, the first Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) report, released in February 2010, further addresses the need for government to enlist the participation of individual citizens and communities in countering radicalization and further emphasizes the need for clearly defined and publicly available methods for reporting suspicious activity (United States Department of Homeland Security [USDHS], 2010, p. 39). The QHSR further identifies one of the primary goals of the homeland security enterprise as being the fostering of communities that have the resources and ability to ensure their own "well-being" (USDHS, 2010, p. 36) and that work together toward common goals (USDHS, 2010, p. A-8). The report makes it clear that building such communities starts with the individual, who, when vigilant and aware (USDHS, 2010, p. A-8), fosters a prevention environment, which in turn makes for safer communities. These tenets were reinforced in the September 22, 2010, testimony of Michael Leiter, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, in which Mr.

Leiter pointed to community institutions as having a key role in countering radicalization. Mr. Leiter emphasized the need for community-based solutions that are "sensitive to local dynamics and needs," and advocated that government serve as a facilitator, not direct community-led initiatives (Leiter, 2010, p. 8). Two prominent terrorism experts, Peter Bergen and Bruce Hoffman, in a recent paper entitled "Assessing the Terrorist Threat," also highlight the importance of all Americans, not just homeland security professionals, in participating in the detection and prevention of terrorist acts (Bergen & Hoffman, 2010, p. 32).

C.   BUILDING TRUST

The problem of radicalization is one born from a society in which malign and antisocial behavior is allowed to go unnoticed and unchecked. In his article "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Robert D. Putnam examines the trend toward declining civic engagement and civic trust in American culture. Putnam examines the contemporary phenomena of individual and communal isolation, as evidenced by substantial declines in Americans' participation in civic organizations (Putnam, 1995, p. 5), civic duties such as voting (Putnam, 1995, p. 3), as well as declines in communal leisure activities (Putnam, 1995, p. 5). Putnam points to several possible causes of such social disengagement (Putnam, 1995, p. 3), such as the rise in the prevalence of technology in leisure activities such as television (Putnam, 1995, p. 9), which allow individuals to self-entertain versus engage with others, and demographic changes (Putnam, 1995, p. 8), such as the rise of single-parent families and lower birth rates. In the end, Putnam is at a loss to fully explain the current social disengagement phenomena and calls for further study. Nonetheless, his article highlights a key point regarding modern American culture—that Americans are not as socially connected as they were in past decades. It is evident that the result of this lack of civic engagement and trust is the rise in recent years of societal ills such as radicalization.

As identified by Putnam, a declining awareness by Americans of their fellow man and their surroundings has fostered an environment in which societal problems such as radicalization emerge and are able to exploit the inattentiveness of the populace. While

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the American Somali diaspora communities suffer less from this phenomenon of individual social isolation because they are generally more cohesive, due primarily to their strong family/clan–based structure, they are nonetheless susceptible to the effects of this phenomenon to some degree—especially on the community level. Somali-American communities tend to be closed off to mainstream American society, and for this reason they have not fully assimilated into American culture to the degree that other immigrant disaporas have historically done.

In order for individuals and communities to accept and adopt government programs aimed at addressing radicalization through community engagement, there must be an effort on the part of the government to regain the trust of the Somali-American community. This trust has waned in the last three years as a result of the ongoing federal investigation into the terrorist activity of a select few within that community, and it has only recently begun to show signs of improvement. To build trust the government must be completely transparent in its efforts (Covey, 2006, p. 317). There can be no hidden agenda within the government's plans and no hint of deception, especially when public trust of government is at an all-time low (Pew Research Center, 2010.) Additionally, there must be trust among communities because without such bonds of trust there is little incentive for individuals to take a stand on behalf of the public good (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997, p. 919).

Research has shown that grassroots organizations within communities help build trust among individuals and foster the creation of additional ties on a personal level. These personal-level ties give grassroots organizations their strength because they demonstrate the individual's willingness to take action on behalf of his neighborhood or community secure in the knowledge his fellow community members will do the same (Howell & Curry, 2009, p. 11). As previously mentioned, most Somali-American communities already possess internal mechanisms of community organization (i.e., community elders who serve as informal leaders within the community), so in those instances such existing internal mechanisms can serve as vehicles of community

engagement and change. The stipulation is, of course, that those internal mechanisms of control must be trusting of government and other actors seeking the community's alliance in combating radicalization.

D.   DECENTRALIZING THE EFFORT

As has been the message with countergang practices, so it must be with counterradicalization practices with regard to Somali-American communities. Each city, county, and region addressing radicalization along with their Somali community leaders and community groups must address their problems locally. This decentralization of the effort (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2007, pp. 46–53) transfers the responsibility for the planning for and implementation of counterradicalization initiatives out of Washington, D.C., and places it in the hands of those who can best address the problem—communities working with the assistance of local government. The role of the federal government should be relegated to that of being a provider of general program guidance and, most importantly, financial resources. In this way the problem of radicalization can be handled at the lowest possible level, while the community and local government implementers of the policy can still enjoy the centralized support and overarching program guidance offered by the federal government. Such a hybrid approach (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2007, p. 164) ensures that counterradicalization efforts are tailored to meet the needs of the many different Somali-American communities in the United States. Attacking the ideology of the decentralized Al Shabaab recruiting networks provides the decentralized network of Somali-American communities with their best chance of effectively countering radicalization (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2007, p. 144). In other words, destroy the message and you can destroy the threat.

After gaining the trust of Somali-Americans, government agencies, being sensitive to the concerns and unique cultural practices and norms of this group (Davies & Murphy, 2004, p. 2), must work to clarify not only the government's role but also the role of the communities in countering radicalization. Only through such a partnership can a counterradicalization program be effective and successful. What elements define an effective community mobilization program? This has been made clear in the decades of

countergang efforts here in the United States. Noted gang researchers James C. Howell and G. David Curry suggest that there are three hallmarks of effective community-based programs. The first of these is the inclusion of community-based grassroots organizations whose legitimacy and viability are accepted by both parochial and public organizations. The second is that decisions are made collectively among citizens, businesses, and government, and the third is that grassroots organizations and law enforcement must recognize the other's role in the process (Howell & Curry, 2009, p. 12).

Law enforcement agencies especially must strive to overcome Somali-Americans' inherent distrust of the dual roles of law enforcement as both enforcers of the law, as well as stewards of the social welfare. However, as RAND researcher Brian Michael Jenkins pointed out when speaking before the U.S. House of Representatives, government at all levels must be careful not to elevate the societal position of Muslims so as to make them of separate or even privileged status (Jenkins, 2010, p. 6). Such has been the case with the U.K.'s PREVENT program, with the unfortunate consequences discussed in Chapter II.

E.   PROPOSAL

In summation, it is entirely feasible that a counterradicalization program modeled after the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model could be applied, with modification, within Somali-American communities in the United States as long as state and local governments and communities and are brought early into the planning and coordination of such a program. In fact, the call for just such a model has already come from the Somali-American community (Mukhtar, 2009, p. 7). There will be a need, of course, for collective discussions about how the counterradicalization program and message will be crafted, what it will be, and how it will be disseminated. Additionally, the media's assistance will need to be formally enlisted to help with what will be a massive information campaign. The focus of such a campaign would be the education of the public as to the objective of the program, which is to empower communities to reject violent extremism and in so doing help to protect Americans from future terrorist attacks. Adoption of the following goals by law enforcement and social welfare agencies would go a long way toward ensuring the success of such a program in the United States. Goal

number one: the United States should commit itself to assertively and comprehensively addressing the issue of radicalization among Somali-Americans and other Americans susceptible to radicalization, in an effort to reduce the threat that they pose to the national security of the United States. Goal number two: the president of the United States should commission a panel of experts to examine the U.K.'s PREVENT program in order to identify best practices from that program to be applied within the United States. This panel should be comprised of personnel from key federal, state, tribal, and local government, as well as those private-sector agencies dedicated to addressing social welfare issues and should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- The Muslim Public Affairs Council;
- The Department of Homeland Security ;
- The U.S. Department of Justice;
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation;
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police;
- The National Sheriff's Association;
- The National Governors Association;
- The American Civil Liberties Union;
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children & Families;
- The Anti Defamation League.

This working group should be convened immediately upon identification of the group's members, who should thoroughly study the comprehensive, community-wide gang program model and should examine government and private-sector reporting, both positive and negative, concerning the program. The panel should also, at a minimum, answer the following questions:

- Who will craft the counterradicalization message, what will that message be, and how will it be kept consistent across all U.S. policy and across the span of federal, state, and local governments?

- Who will define the roles of communities, as well as local, state, and federal governments, and how will these roles be complementary to one another? How could they or would they be opposed?

- What steps will local, state, and federal government take in rehabilitating those citizens identified by Somali-American communities as being radicalized to the extent that they are prepared to engage in violence or are on the path to being prepared to engage in violence?

With regard to the first question, there currently is no single agency, whether federal, state, or local, tasked with crafting a message that is as sensitive as will be a government counterradicalization message. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with exclusive federal jurisdiction for investigating acts of terrorism domestically, as well as abroad, could be considered. However, given the FBI's well-known law enforcement mission, there exists the potential for conflict should the FBI also be tasked with crafting the nation's counterradicalization message. Since in any counterradicalization program the public's assistance will be enlisted in identifying citizens requiring diversion into government programs designed to stave off radicalization, the government must be able to maintain the public's trust. For an agency to be enforcing the nation's laws, including terrorism laws, while at the same time crafting and delivering the nation's counterradicalization message, invites controversy and certainly could hinder the mission of building public trust of the government's counterradicalization efforts. This has been demonstrated, as highlighted in Chapter II, by the U.K.'s Communities and Local Government agency, whose efficacy has been degraded due to public mistrust of the agency because of its role in the U.K.'s PREVENT program.

The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) might on the surface appear to offer hope as the nation's counterradicalization messaging center. An aspect of the NCTC's composition that is of great benefit and that will be essential for the entity tasked with crafting the nation's counterradicalization message is that it is an interagency body. However, in its current composition the NCTC is staffed and structured to serve primarily as an intelligence fusion and analysis center. In order to assume the mission of crafting and delivering the nation's counterradicalization message, the NCTC would need a

fundamental change not only in its charter, but it would also require internal restructuring to include the hiring of additional personnel with the skills and experience in crafting complex public-outreach programs.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) seems a logical choice as it was designed to be the clearinghouse with regard to matters relating to the nation's security. However, each of DHS's component agencies (e.g., Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Coast Guard, Federal Air Marshals Service), as currently configured, is already heavily tasked and likely not resourced to handle such a unique and sensitive mission. In order for DHS to assume this mission, a new entity within DHS with the sole mission of crafting the nation's counterradicalization message would need to be formed. Perhaps that is the answer—the creation of a new entity, whether within an existing federal agency (which would likely save precious time and resources) or outside and independent of existing agencies, with the express purpose of crafting and disseminating the nation's counterradicalization message. Either way, whether tasked to an existing agency or to an agency yet to be created, it seems clear that the agency responsible for the mission must be properly resourced and situated within the bureaucracy so as to be the most effective it can be with regard to interagency and intergovernmental collaboration. The agency will need to guard against growing too large and unwieldy so as not to lose sight of its sole mission and purpose, and it must be a truly interagency effort representing the interests of government at all levels—from local to state to federal— since all will be involved in the counterradicalization mission. As to the role of communities, as well as each of the levels of government, and how they will complement and oppose one another, those items must be addressed at length by the aforementioned panel of national leaders and subject matter experts.

There is no quick or easy answer regarding the nation's counterradicalization message, its composition, and how it will be kept consistent across all U.S. policy and across the span of federal, state, and local governments. Suffice to say, the message will need to be broad enough to address varying forms of radicalization, not myopically focused on violent Islamic extremism but instead also address violent domestic militias, violent ecoterrorists, white supremacists, and the like; it must originate from, if not be

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directly managed from, one central office so as to ensure the consistency of the message. As for the remaining question concerning the format and structure of any radicalization diversion and rehabilitation programs, this too will require a great deal of discussion. The discussion must be had among leaders at all levels of government, from local to state and federal and must include subject matter experts who can guide the discussion based upon known facts concerning indicators of extremist ideology and radicalization. Only through such collaboration and open discourse can there be any hope that a unified and cohesive approach can come to fruition.

Additionally, learning from the example of our U.K. partner, all levels of government in the United States involved in the counterradicalization mission must work collectively to ensure that the local, state, and federal agencies and/or departments chosen to coordinate and lead the U.S.'s counterradicalization efforts are not ones whose current missions conflict with, or would otherwise be counterproductive to, that of the U.S.'s counterradicalization program (as experienced in the U.K. by the CLG.) By empanelling leaders from across the local, state, and federal government spectrum, as well as community leaders and social welfare and watchdog organizations, true transparency and consensus can be achieved. Additionally, the United States will need to ensure that its message is clear: that violent interpretations of Islam and violent Islamist extremism are antithetical to the American principles of freedom and democracy and that such interpretations of Islam must not be allowed to flourish, but that any form of Islam that respects these principles and that can peacefully coexist with them will be embraced within the United States.

It will require the commitment of all levels of government to ensure that Somali-Americans do not feel under siege and the sole focus of government observation but instead feel empowered to help government root out and identify those who twist Islam to fit their own selfish political agenda. The process will likely proceed slowly at first, but with the participation of community organizers and leaders helping to work past apathy and community denial, there will come positive changes in community response to the problem of radicalization (Spergel, 1992).

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