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RECONSIDERING CVE: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM EFFORTS IN AMERICA

by

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December 2018

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The problem of violent extremism in the United States is complex and, now more than ever, it is politically charged. This thesis critically analyzes countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts in the United States since 2011 to reveal a number of adverse, unintended consequences stemming from policy and programming. Using open-source research, the thesis also establishes a dataset to describe federal CVE efforts, which is evaluated through a sociopsychological lens to determine the impact of the efforts on communities, organizations, and individuals. While many adverse consequences are identified, they culminate in one troublesome conclusion: that current U.S. CVE programming is contributing to greater national insecurity. This research provides recommendations designed to mitigate the damaging impacts of CVE efforts that have already taken root—such as institutionalized racism and insufficient attention on domestic terrorism—and offers data-driven suggestions for policymakers. The findings of this research call for a fundamental restructuring of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy; rather than interdicting violence, the strategy must focus on preventing violence. Preventing terrorism, as shown through this research, begins with countering the susceptibility of vulnerable individuals to violent radicalization and recruitment tactics.

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RECONSIDERING CVE: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM EFFORTS IN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

The problem of violent extremism in the United States is complex and, now more than ever, it is politically charged. This thesis critically analyzes countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts in the United States since 2011 to reveal a number of adverse, unintended consequences stemming from policy and programming. Using open-source research, the thesis also establishes a dataset to describe federal CVE efforts, which is evaluated through a sociopsychological lens to determine the impact of the efforts on communities, organizations, and individuals. While many adverse consequences are identified, they culminate in one troublesome conclusion: that current U.S. CVE programming is contributing to greater national insecurity. This research provides recommendations designed to mitigate the damaging impacts of CVE efforts that have already taken root—such as institutionalized racism and insufficient attention on domestic terrorism—and offers data-driven suggestions for policymakers. The findings of this research call for a fundamental restructuring of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy; rather than interdicting violence, the strategy must focus on preventing violence. Preventing terrorism, as shown through this research, begins with countering the susceptibility of vulnerable individuals to violent radicalization and recruitment tactics.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organization
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
CRCL	civil rights and civil liberties
CT	counterterrorism
CVE	countering violent extremism
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center
OTPP	Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships
SIP	*Strategic Implementation Plan* for *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*
START	National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
S&T	Science and Technology Directorate
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USAO	U.S. Attorney's Office
USG	U.S. government

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between September 12, 2001, and December 31, 2016, there were eighty-five violent extremist attacks in the United States, which resulted in over 225 fatalities.[1] Tragically, this number became outdated almost immediately after it was reported; at least five attacks killed a dozen more people between January 2017 and November 2017. These incidents include the murder of a transit security guard, shot in Denver, Colorado, in January; the August murder of a young woman who was run over by a car while protesting the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia; and the November murder of eight pedestrians who were intentionally run over by a truck driver in New York City.[2]

The problem of violent extremism in the United States is complex and, now more than ever, politically charged. In 2011, the U.S. government released two documents intended to drive its strategy for countering violent extremism (CVE): the *National Strategy on Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism*, and the *Strategic Implementation Plan* for that strategy document.[3] Using open-source information, this thesis studies domestic CVE efforts since 2011 through a sociopsychological lens to establish a practical perspective. In doing so, the research identifies and empirically catalogs traditionally anecdotal narratives on the impact of CVE efforts in the United States

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[1] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts*, GAO-17-300 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017), 3–4, https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-300.

[2] Kirk Mitchell, Jesse Paul, and Noelle Phillips, "Man Accused of Shooting RTD Guard at Union Station Was Former Soldier Who Posted about Police, Islam," *Denver Post*, February 1, 2017, http://www.denverpost.com/2017/02/01/shooting-rtd-union-station-soldier-police-islam/; Abigail Hauslohner et al., "James Fields Jr.: A Neo-Nazi's Violent, Rage-Fueled Journey to Charlottesville," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2017, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-james-fields-jr-charlottesville-20170818-story.html; Renae Merle et al., "Five Argentines among 8 Dead in New York City Terror Attack," *Washington Post*, November 1, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/10/31/nypd-says-one-person-in-custody-after-reported-incident-in-manhattan/?utm_term=.d7008ffdf40d.

[3] Executive Office of the President of the United States, *National Strategy on Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf; Executive Office of the President of the United States, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, 2011)

to strategically illuminate their adverse, unintended consequences. While current CVE efforts have also garnered positive and intended results, this research indicates that the negative consequences outweigh the efforts' originally beneficial purposes.

A number of these adverse consequences have been caused by inherent vulnerabilities in or inconsistent implementation of the aforementioned guiding documents—for instance, the documents fail to address domestic terrorism. Discrepancies between word and deed, especially when it comes to addressing all forms of violent extremism, pose a danger to democracy: they exacerbate systemic racial profiling and stigmatizing of individuals in CVE-targeted communities. Furthermore, this research reveals the dangerous impact of current public policy in the United States. Current policy, irrespective of actual threat information, conflates criminal terror-related activity with partisan civil immigration reform; this has bred relative deprivation among unfairly targeted U.S. citizens, who do not have equitable avenues to redress their grievances.

One of the most concerning findings is that these marginalized individuals are at greater risk for embarking on the complex journey toward radicalizing to violence. As such, this research concludes with one overarching consequence: current CVE efforts in the United States are contributing to greater national insecurity. Simply put, existing CVE practices inadvertently nudge individuals toward the staircase of radicalization to violence.[4]

This thesis offers recommendations for mitigating the damaging consequences of CVE efforts that have already taken root, and offers data-driven improvement options for policymakers to consider. For example, for the government to holistically improve national security and resilience against manmade disasters, policy and resources should prioritize countering probable—rather than improbable—violent extremist incidents. The most significant recommendation in this thesis, however, is for the fundamental restructuring of the U.S. government's approach to counterterrorism. Currently, the United States prioritizes law enforcement efforts that interdict *how* individuals radicalize to violence.

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[4] Fathali Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," in *Psychology of Terrorism*, ed. Bruce Bongar et al. (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 69–77.

This often consists of mostly, if not entirely, pre-criminal activity outside the jurisdiction of law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Rather, the focus should be on addressing the more difficult sociopsychological factors at the root of *why* individuals radicalize to violence to begin with. As agreed by most counterterrorism experts, most domestic and international CVE practitioners, and by the very individuals most affected by CVE-targeted efforts, success in preventing terrorism begins with making our citizens less susceptible to recruitment and radicalization tactics.

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It is misleading that only my name appears on the cover of this thesis. Indulge me.

Without an infinite desire to make my parents as proud as they have made me, I never would have had the opportunity to attend CHDS at NPS. I dedicate this research to my hero and dad, Nabil Barbari, and in memory of my irreplaceable and incomparable mom, the late Nahida Barbari. Despite every obstacle, my parents made the impossible possible and gave our family the American dream.

Most of all, I wholeheartedly thank my sisters and brothers of Cohort 1403/1404. Each of these incredible public servants left a lasting impression on me personally and professionally. I feel privileged to have been in their company and thankful for my lifelong friends. Of course, I must also sincerely thank my advisors, Dr. David Brannan and Dr. Anders Strindberg. For their inspiration and tolerance on this journey, I am forever grateful. There is comfort in knowing homeland security professionals are learning from their unique delivery of wisdom.

In 2012, I unexpectedly met a colleague who I thought was older and wiser. Turns out only the latter was true. With objectivity and integrity, Haroon Azar introduced me to the world of CVE and welcomed me into the small group of incredibly gifted colleagues working the mission. I now proudly call this group my friends and am grateful to have earned a place in their circle.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> In some cases, the law of unintended consequences could create a perverse effect contrary to what was originally intended and ultimately making the problem worse.
>
> Robert K. Merton[1]

Unintended consequences can be beneficial, damaging, underestimated, or even ironic. For instance, time and research have proven that aspirin, which was originally developed to relieve pain, has the beneficial, unintended consequence of being an effective and affordable anticoagulant medication for high-risk stroke patients.[2] A 2001 study showed that cigarette smoking has an ironic unintended consequence: it may lower the smoker's risk of contracting Parkinson's disease.[3] And there is certainly no shortage in examples of *harmful* unintended consequences. This thesis explores one such example: the harmful, unintended consequences of U.S. countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts. Unintended harmful consequences stemming from public policy are not uncommon. In a recent example, private companies in the United States have eliminated jobs to compensate for the Affordable Care Act's impact on profits.[4] Also recently, politically charged counterterrorism policies, intended to interdict funding to terrorist organizations, have gravely affected the ability of philanthropic organizations around the world to receive donations, leaving them severely under-resourced.[5] This is not a new phenomenon,

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[1] Jeffrey Sica, "The Law of Unintended Consequences: The Worst Mistake in Decades," *Forbes*, February 28, 2011.

[2] "Anti-clotting Agents Explained," American Heart Association, last updated April 2014, http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/HealthyLivingAfterStroke/ManagingMedicines/Anti-Clotting-Agents-Explained_UCM_310452_Article.jsp#.Vj_Cxyvl3L8.

[3] Harvey Checkoway et al., "Parkinson's Disease Risks Associated with Cigarette Smoking, Alcohol Consumption and Caffeine Intake," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 155 (2002): 732–738, http://doi.org/10.1093/aje/155.8.732.

[4] Alyene Senger, "10 Stories of Job Loss as Consequences of Obamacare," *Daily Signal*, March 11, 2013, http://dailysignal.com//2013/03/11/ten-stories-of-job-loss-as-consequences-of-obamacare/#.

[5] The Impact of Counterterrorism Measures on Charities and Donors after 9/11," Charity and Security Network, August 16, 2010, http://www.charityandsecurity.org/background/The_Impact_of_Counterterrorism_Measures_on_Charities_and_Donors_After_9/11.

however; as far back as 1920, the government instituted Prohibition—which restricted the manufacture, sale, and transport of alcohol—in an attempt to abate social perceptions of moral decline amid rising criminal activity. Unintended consequences of Prohibition included increased unemployment, tax revenue deficiencies, a rise in alcoholism, even higher rates of criminal activity, and corruption in law enforcement.[6] Had policymakers evaluated the unintended consequences of similar public policy decisions in Massachusetts and Maine during the late 1800s, however, they may have predicted these challenges and considered more viable solutions. Prohibition offers a unique parallel for examining the unintended consequences of CVE efforts in America, as CVE is another gallant attempt to simultaneously address societal changes and prevent a type of crime.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and explore the adverse, unintended consequences of domestic CVE efforts. This thesis defines CVE efforts as the policies and programs designed to prevent individuals from engaging in political, social, cultural, single-issue, racial, and/or religiously motivated violence while also fostering a "whole of society" approach to strengthening community resilience against a range of threats. Although the exploration is critical, the goal of this thesis is not to condemn current CVE programs. Rather, the goal is to make a positive, constructive contribution toward the homeland security enterprise's goal of enhancing community safety and resilience against threats posed by violent extremism. Using a sociopsychological lens to explore programmatic efforts both national and internationally, this thesis offers a practical perspective on domestic CVE efforts. Additionally, this research identifies and catalogs traditionally anecdotal narratives on the impact of domestic efforts to build a data set for revealing the adverse, unintended consequences of those efforts.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (henceforth referred to as 9/11), extremists have been increasingly attempting acts of violence in the United States and

[6] Michael Lerner, "Prohibition: Unintended Consequences," PBS, accessed January 10, 2017, http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/prohibition/unintended-consequences/.

abroad; in some cases, these attempts have been successful.[7] Violent extremists have also increasingly accomplished smaller-scale lethal assaults across the United States using fear, intimidation, and violence to pursue an ideologically motivated mission, and they often explain their motives in online manifestoes or on social media platforms. According to the New American Foundation, seventy-four people were killed in United States at the hands of violent extremists between September 2001 and June 2015.[8] A 2015 study by the Southern Poverty Law Center concluded that between April 2009 and February 2015, a domestic terrorist attack was foiled or occurred, on average, every thirty-four days. Only one or two individuals plotted 90 percent of these attacks.[9] And these startling statistics do not take into account the violent second half of 2015, when four major attacks resulted in another seventy-six deaths and hundreds injured physically and psychologically: the Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando, Florida, which left forty-nine innocent people dead; the attack at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, where nine parishioners were murdered while attending service; the death of four military personnel in a shooting at a military recruitment center in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and the December attack in San Bernardino, California, in which fourteen people were slain while attending an office holiday party.

In April 2017, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released the most recent aggregate data on violent extremism. In that release, the GAO reported that eighty-five violent extremist attacks between September 12, 2001, and December 31, 2016, resulted in over 225 fatalities.[10] Tragically, this number is already woefully dated. From January 2017 to November 2017, there were at least five violent extremist attacks with

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[7] Rick Nelson and Ben Bodurian, *A Growing Terrorist Threat? Assessing "Homegrown" Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), http://csis.org/files/publication/100304_Nelson_GrowingTerroristThreat_Web.pdf.

[8] "Deadly Attacks Since 9/11," International Security, June 2015, http://securitydata.newamerica.net/extremists/deadly-attacks.html.

[9] Southern Poverty Law Center, *Lone Wolf Report* (Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015), https://www.splcenter.org/20150212/lone-wolf-report.

[10] U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts*, GAO-17-300 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017), 3–4, https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-300, 3–4.

over a dozen fatalities. This includes the January shooting of a transit security guard in Denver, Colorado; the August murder of a young woman run over by a car at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia; and the November murder of eight pedestrians run over on a bicycle path in New York City.[11] Furthermore, for reasons unknown, these data do not include attempted violent extremist attacks in Minneapolis and Oklahoma, for example, in which no fatalities occurred. These data also exclude the 2017 violent extremist attack in Las Vegas, in which a gunman expertly plotted and executed an attack, firing over 1,100 rounds of ammunition into a crowd and killing fifty-eight people.[12] Finally, these data also exclude the death of twenty-six church-goers in Sutherland Spring, Texas, shot to death on November 5, 2017.[13]

The problem of violent extremism in the United States is complex and, now more than ever, it is politically charged. In August 2011, President Obama issued a counterterrorism plan to describe how the federal government would support American communities in preventing violent extremism. The strategy, entitled the *National Strategy on Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* (henceforth referred to as the *National Strategy*), was followed four months later by the release of a *Strategic Implementation Plan* (*SIP*) for the same document.[14] The *SIP* provides the nation with a

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[11] Kirk Mitchell, Jesse Paul, and Noelle Phillips, "Man Accused of Shooting RTD Guard at Union Station Was Former Soldier Who Posted about Police, Islam," *Denver Post*, February 1, 2017, http://www.denverpost.com/2017/02/01/shooting-rtd-union-station-soldier-police-islam/; Abigail Hauslohner et al., "James Fields Jr.: A Neo-Nazi's Violent, Rage-fueled Journey to Charlottesville," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2017, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-james-fields-jr-charlottesville-20170818-story.html; Renae Merle et al., "Five Argentines among 8 Dead in New York City Terror Attack," *Washington Post*, November 1, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/10/31/nypd-says-one-person-in-custody-after-reported-incident-in-manhattan/?utm_term=.d7008ffdf40d.

[12] Rachel Crosby, "Sheriff Says More than 1,100 Rounds Fired in Las Vegas Shooting," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 22, 2017, https://www.reviewjournal.com/crime/shootings/sheriff-says-more-than-1100-rounds-fired-in-las-vegas-shooting/.

[13] David Montgomery, Christopher Mele, and Manny Fernandez, "Gunman Kills at Least 26 in Attack on Rural Texas Church," *New York Times*, November 5, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/05/us/church-shooting-texas.html.

[14] Executive Office of the President of the United States, *National Strategy on Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf; Executive Office of the President of the United States, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, 2011).

loose understanding of the violent extremism problem, and declares a goal of preventing extremists from inspiring and radicalizing Americans to carry out acts of violence.[15]

During the Obama administration, numerous experts offered testimony to Congress concerning violent extremism; this includes the October 2015 hearing of Secretary Jeh Johnson to the House Committee on Homeland Security. Secretary Johnson stressed to the House Committee that the threat of violent extremism is increasingly complex, dynamic, and rapidly evolving in ways that differ from the terrorist threats faced in the United States immediately following 9/11.[16] Secretary Johnson's testimony indicates that the decentralized nature of violent extremism makes these types of terrorism plots increasingly difficult to detect.[17] Furthermore, he rightfully contends that the potential for deadly, small-scale attacks by individuals inspired by terrorists and their affiliated organization or groups, as opposed to individuals directed by a terrorist organization specifically, are on the rise. These findings are similarly expressed by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), an agency that prioritizes the development and implementation of CVE programming in accordance with administration priorities.[18] In July 2016, the former director for the Office for Community Partnerships for Countering Violent Extremism at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), George Selim, submitted written testimony to the Subcommittee on National Security. In the testimony, Selim underscores that both DHS and DOJ are concerned about the rise in recruitment and radicalization efforts coming from

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[15] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan*.

[16] "Written Testimony of DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson for a House Committee on Homeland Security Hearing Titled 'Worldwide Threats and Homeland Security Challenges,'" U.S. Department of Homeland Security, October 21, 2015, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2015/10/21/written-testimony-dhs-secretary-house-committee-homeland-security-hearing-titled-.

[17] The interchangeable use of violent extremism and terrorism by the U.S. government is noteworthy, and it is addressed in a later section of this thesis.

[18] James B. Comey, "Worldwide Threats and Homeland Security Challenges," Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 21, 2015, https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/worldwide-threats-and-homeland-security-challenges.

designated terrorist organizations, both domestic and foreign.[19] To address this persistent threat, the Obama administration mandated the formation of the CVE Task Force, led by DHS in close coordination with DOJ. One responsibility of this task force included evaluating, and modifying, efforts to implement the *SIP*, which it did on October 19, 2016, with the release of updated CVE *National Strategy* and *SIP*.[20]

As of the writing of this thesis, the future of this interagency effort remains unclear under the new Trump administration. The administration's official statements and positions are limited within open-source data. Perhaps the most telling piece of information, however, is that the CVE and CVE Task Force page on the WhiteHouse.gov website is no longer there.[21] While there appears to be no official statement from the White House on the future of CVE specifically, a significant portion of this thesis identifies and discusses the discernable shift in counterterrorism and CVE efforts under the Trump administration. The threat of violent extremism has evolved, and the need to build on conventional counterterrorism approaches to meet the demands of this dynamic threat environment remains a significant challenge for the national security mission.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

> What are the adverse, unintended consequences of the current approach to the CVE mission in the United States?

While it remains to be seen if the Trump administration will retain or revoke the national strategy set forth by the Obama administration, including the definitions and priorities established in the 2011 and 2016 *National Strategy*, it remains—as of the writing of this thesis—the guiding policy by which the U.S. government (USG) aims to counter

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[19] "Written Testimony of DHS Office for Community Partnerships Director George Selim for a House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency Hearing Titled 'Identifying the Enemy: Radical Islamist Terror,'" U.S. Department of Homeland Security, September 22, 2016, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/09/22/written-testimony-dhs-office-community-partnerships-house-homeland-security.

[20] George Selim, "Updating Our Plan to Counter Violent Extremism at Home," U.S. Department of Homeland Security, October 19, 2016, https://www.dhs.gov/blog/2016/10/19/updating-our-plan-counter-violent-extremism-home.

[21] As of November 24, 2017, the website WhiteHouse.gov and guiding documents were no longer available. Some reference material can still be found at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov.

violent extremism. As such, this research question serves as the foundation for exploring various components of CVE in the United States, and in particular the impact of efforts under the 2011 and 2016 *National Strategy*.

By studying unintended consequences and conducting a critical evaluation of existing narratives, data, and literature, can one conclude that current CVE programming has failed to achieve the intended goal or preventing and countering violent extremism? As Chapter III argues, the United States' Western allies face a far graver threat from violent extremism and are years ahead of the United States in terms of program development and maturity. Therefore, to what extent, if any, is the USG leveraging the best practices and lessons learned from similarly structured international partners? Additionally, how are the two leading federal agencies responsible for CVE efforts—DHS and DOJ—jointly and independently executing this mission, and by what metrics are they assessing qualitative outcomes? Finally, and arguably most importantly, how has the contentious 2016 presidential election—both the executive branch's change in political party and the marked rise in social conflict—impacted CVE programming?

C. HYPOTHESIS

This thesis hypothesizes that the United States' intended national security goal has become unachievable—due in large part to the implementation and unintended consequences of the *National Strategy*. The adverse consequences include, but are not limited to, the misguided identification of security threats and allocation of mitigating resources, the securitization of constitutionally protected activity, and the sustained social and psychological impact of racial profiling and stigmatization of individuals and communities targeted by CVE efforts. This research also hypothesizes that continued, unchanged implementation of existing CVE efforts will result in greater national insecurity and citizens' vulnerability to extremist recruitment and radicalization.

For the USG to truly prevent violent extremism, it must make a fundamental shift in its approach toward counterterrorism and violent extremism. Any amount of success in preventing terrorism begins with countering the susceptibility of vulnerable populations to recruitment and radicalization tactics. To truly reach its CVE goals, the USG must

immediately rectify the consequences identified in this thesis and develop new, data-driven policies that are grounded in nonsecuritized partnerships with communities and that focus on the sociopsychological drivers of criminal violence.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section articulates the research strategy and discusses the methods of analysis, data sources, and research limitations of this thesis. In working to develop an empirical data set from diverse and largely anecdotal qualitative information, each phase of the methodology includes ethical considerations, as this section explains. With data collected through the literature review and comparative case study, the researcher employed Dr. Fathali Moghaddam's *staircase to terrorism* theory to identify adverse, unintended consequences of domestic CVE efforts and options for improvement.[22]

1. Methods of Analysis

This research leverages two primary methodologies, a *formative program evaluation* in Chapter II, the literature review, and a *comparative case study analysis* in Chapter III. The literature review provides a foundational data set to establish an understanding of existing CVE programs across the federal government. The literature review also catalogs disparate narratives about the impact of these initiatives on the diverse communities involved.

a. Formative Program Evaluation

In his book *Evaluation Thesaurus*, Michael Scriven defines evaluation as the process of "determining the merit, worth and value of things … as a key analytical process in all disciplined intellectual and practical endeavors"[23] Evaluations in social science research can be categorized into two types, *summative* and *formative*. Summative evaluations are a collection or summary of data at the conclusion of a program that leads

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[22] Fathali Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," in *Psychology of Terrorism*, ed. Bruce Bongar et al. (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 69–77.

[23] Michael Scriven, *Evaluation Thesaurus*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1991), 1.

to an assessment or final judgment.[24] External audiences or decision-makers often conduct summative evaluations, focusing on both conclusive outcomes and processes.[25] Conversely, formative evaluations during the development and/or improvement phase of a program support analysis between the program and its intended outcomes prior to its conclusion.[26] This thesis employs a formative program evaluation to assess the impact of USG CVE efforts.

b. Comparative Case Study Analysis

As a research method, case studies are used to advance the understanding of complex individual, group, organizational, and social phenomena.[27] The real-world perspective of case study analysis is essential for evaluating unintended consequences because it provides the context needed to draw conclusions about patterns of behavior. Specifically with regard to social science research, such as the study of international relations and group behavior, researchers often use case studies to provide a basis for empirically applying qualitative data to a context in order to limit subjectivity.[28] This research uses case studies for this very reason—to limit subjectivity when applying qualitative data to derive unintended consequences.

2. Data Sources

While combatting violent extremism is a shared responsibility across the U.S. homeland security enterprise, the literature identifies DOJ—which includes both the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—and DHS as the primary agencies to study. Since 2011, DHS and DOJ have been informal federal CVE

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[24] Maddalena Taras, "Assessment—Summative and Formative—Some Theoretical Reflections," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53, no. 4 (2005): 468.

[25] Michael Scriven, *Evaluation Thesaurus*, 3rd ed. (Pt. Reyes, CA: Edgepress, 1981), 150.

[26] Scriven, *Evaluation Thesaurus*, 3rd ed., 63.

[27] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), 4.

[28] Yin, 4.

leads; their publicly available policies, programs, and budget guidance provide a foundation for data analysis.

Congressional testimonies, government oversight reports, and public statements from elected officials also serve as data sources for this research. Arguably, the most significant data source, especially for the formative program evaluation, is the compilation of open-source analysis from academia, think tanks, and social science researchers as well as community-based nonprofit organizations, which have publicly commented on the impact of government CVE programs. The use of case studies to evaluate related international CVE programs, as well as a domestic case study on the policy of racial profiling, provides support to empirically ground the qualitative data and also serves to establish parallels that substantively identify adverse, unintended consequences.

It is critical to underscore that further shifts in CVE-related public policy will inevitably have occurred upon publication of this research, as this matter remains on the forefront of the national security agenda. However, given the trajectory of public policy since January 2017, it appears possible, if not probable, that such public policy shifts will exacerbate the adverse, unintended consequences and conclusions found in this research. This thesis argues that the terms *countering violent extremism* and *preventing violent extremism* have been unproductively conflated. Also, as Chapter IV extensively discusses, regardless of intention, the reality is that domestic CVE initiatives are neither community-led nor are they focused on the whole of society. Rather, they are increasingly grounded in kinetic, law enforcement–based operations, which focus on a specific type of violent extremism. Conversely, the *prevention* of violent extremism operates in the pre-crime space, focusing on the psychological influences of social equity and status, resources, identity, and violent behavior. The criminal justice system is not best suited to address these issues, nor to facilitate locally led solutions between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. So long as changes in public policy fail to meaningfully address the adverse consequences of U.S. CVE efforts that have already taken root—and so long as they fail to recognize the aforementioned distinction between countering and preventing violent extremism—greater national insecurity will remain a reality.

3. Research Limitations

In 2015, Candace Karp wrote an analysis of emerging strategies to address the "dynamic and arguable phenomena of terrorism and violent extremism."[29] This phrase quite accurately summarizes the limitations of this research. The most noticeable—albeit the least impactful—limitation is the timeline associated with most of the statistical reporting, case studies, and federal initiatives. The majority of data collection and research for this thesis had concluded by early 2017, primarily covering the years 2001 to 2016. That said, this research discusses 2017 throughout as an increasingly dangerous year in terms of violent extremism, including the most deadly act of violent extremism yet, the Las Vegas shooting.[30]

A second limitation of this research is that it is bound by open-source data. However, the value of using strictly open-source information is twofold. First, it demonstrates the quality and quantity of authoritative data available to the public on this imperative topic. In terms of specific federal policies, programs, and metrics, open-source information is sparse at best (an issue Chapter II addresses). Second, using only open-source data ensures the widest possible dissemination of this research, such that it can be utilized and challenged. Using restricted information, such as classified intelligence or law enforcement sensitive documents, would restrict distribution of this research and thus constrain access by its intended audiences—CVE practitioners, policymakers, program developers, and impacted community-based organizations and leaders.

Finally, to preemptively eliminate a research limitation, the following section explains the decision-making process for including and/or eliminating specific topics often found in CVE literature. Despite emerging controversial perspectives on existing CVE research, this researcher accepted and did not reevaluate certain generally accepted CVE

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[29] Candace Karp, "You Can't Fight What You Don't Understand," *Foreign Policy*, June 1, 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/01/you-cant-fight-what-you-dont-understand-violent-extremism-islamic-state/.

[30] On October 1, 2017, Stephen Paddock shot more than 1,100 rounds of ammunition from his hotel room in Las Vegas, firing on a crowd of concert attendees. He killed fifty-eight people and injured nearly 600 in minutes. To date, this is the single deadliest mass shooting in the United States. As the motive remains unknown, it is possible this may not be an act violent extremism as defined in this research.

fundamentals if they did not impact this research. In an effort to counter potential limitations further, Chapter II defines terms critical to this research.

a. Distinguishing CVE from Counterterrorism

CVE is largely considered a counterterrorism tool and an integral part of the United States' counterterrorism missions both domestically and abroad.[31] When it comes to federally influenced CVE efforts, a great deal of literature exists on the legal implications related to privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.[32] As such, this thesis does not address the historical emergence of CVE and evolution of soft power versus hard power as a counterterrorism strategy during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations.[33] In fact, discourse on the legal and societal implications of conflating CVE and counterterrorism serves as a tangential contributor to the adverse, unintended consequences identified in Chapter IV. For example, domestic CVE efforts are connected to various agencies working in the intelligence community, and their involvement creates fear in increasingly securitized communities. Whether real or perceived, this rising fear is a significant contributing factor in unintended consequences of CVE efforts.[34]

b. Terrorism versus Violent Extremism

Along the same lines, this thesis avoids distinguishing between terrorism and violent extremism. This is not to say it is unimportant to distinguish between these terms; the related discourse is simply so extensive that it would distract from the purpose of this research. This research recognizes the USG's interchangeable use of *terrorism* and *violent extremism* as a contributing factor to CVE challenges and establishes working definitions for the purposes of this study in Chapter II For example, insurgent terrorism, left- or right-

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[31] "Programs and Initiatives: Countering Violent Extremism," U.S. Department of State, accessed December 8, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CVE.

[32] Thomas J. Davis, "Now is the Time for CVE-2. Updating and Implementing a Revised U.S. National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014).

[33] Ellen Hallams, "From Crusader to Exemplar: Bush, Obama and the Reinvigoration of America's Soft Power," *European Journal of American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2011).

[34] Georgia Holmer, *Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective*, Special Report 336, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2013), 2, http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Transnational/CVEUSIP.pdf.

wing terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism, eco-terrorism, lone wolf terrorism, single-issue terrorism, and cyber terrorism all present unique challenges.[35] Like many scholars, Bruce Hoffman all but dedicated an entire book (*Inside Terrorism*) to defining terrorism. In it he writes, "Terrorism is where politics and violence intersect.… [Terrorists] plan their operations in a manner that will shock, impress, and intimidate … to capture the attention of the media, and in turn, of the public and government as well."[36] Terrorism and violent extremism under this definition can be—and are—used interchangeably by researchers, public officials, and practitioners.

c. Community Policing

Another common topic absent from this research is community policing. Community policing is widely considered a best practice for law enforcement to address a common problem for a common good, and it is written about at length in the CVE context.[37] For the 2014 annual International CVE Research Conference, Stevan Weine and Ahmed Younis co-authored a paper on law enforcement capabilities that could be meaningfully integrated into CVE-specific community policing practices.[38] However, focusing on such a large body of research is not particularly relevant for identifying the unintended consequences of CVE efforts. Instead, this research evaluates the role of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems in a broader context—in terms of the implications of securitizing trusted, voluntary partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit members of a community.

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[35] Holmer.

[36] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 254–255.

[37] M. Alper Sozer, Ali Sevinc, and Suleyman Ozeren, "Police Officers' Perception of Community Policing in Countering Violent Extremism: An Exploratory Study," in *Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, ed. Marco Lombardi et al., vol. 118, *Series E: Human and Societal Dynamics* (Washington, DC: IOS Press, 2014), 203.

[38] Stevan Weine and Ahmed Younis, "Developing CVE Programs through Building Community Policing Capacities," in *Countering Violent Extremism: Developing an Evidence-base for Policy and Practice*, eds. Sara Zeiger and Anne Aly (Perth, Australia: Hedayah and Curtin University, 2015), 145.

d. Comparing Apples to Oranges: Absent International Players

Finally, it is important to address the absence of major international players in this research, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), despite their role in CVE on the global stage. This is not a research limitation so much as an intentional exclusion to strengthen the research design. The leading international body exploring the issue of violent extremism is the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), which was established in September 2013.[39] Representatives from a variety of federal agencies hold prominent positions in the GCTF, as do partners from at least thirty other nations.[40] Co-chaired by the UAE and United Kingdom (UK), the GCTF created a CVE working group to address what the forum had identified as one of the greatest emerging terrorism-related challenges—violent extremism. The GCTF established the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi and lauded Saudi Arabia for creating one of the "leading" approaches to CVE through the Care Rehabilitation Center in Riyadh.[41]

Despite these subjective accolades, this thesis intentionally avoids using the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and a few others nations represented in the GCTF for case study analysis because their positions as autocratic regimes inherently conflict with the democratic principles on which the United States and its national CVE strategy are founded. Moreover, abject human rights violations accepted as common practice in these countries are a factor that cannot be overlooked in general, much less on this issue specifically. The UAE and Saudi Arabia alike have an established pattern of human rights violations and allow abuse of migrant workers.[42] For example, the Criminal Court of Saudi Arabia enacted a new "anti-terrorism" law enabling indefinite and arbitrary imprisonment of convicted criminals, and it includes language that criminalizes any form of peaceful activism against the

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[39] The Soufan Group, "Assessing the UAE-Based Center on Countering Violent Extremism," *Intel Brief*, February 18, 2013, http://www.soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-assessing-the-uae-based-center-on-countering-violent-extremism/.

[40] The Soufan Group.

[41] The Soufan Group.

[42] "World Report 2015: Saudi Arabia," Human Rights Watch, January 2015, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/saudi-arabia.

regime.[43] Moreover, public beheadings remain the prominent form of execution, and the country surpassed its own record by executing 102 criminals by June of 2015—a number that includes foreign nationals.[44] Furthermore, the U.S. Department of State recently identified a series of human rights violations committed in the UAE, including its failure to address discrimination issues, especially among migrant women workers who remain excluded from legal labor protections.[45] Grounded in a psychology of terrorism framework, this research required the use of similarly structured Western liberal democracies to derive lessons learned and best practices.

4. Output

The purpose of this research is to help policymakers recognize and rectify the adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts that are derailing national security efforts. In addition to providing improvement options for consideration, this researcher's review of existing literature and synthesis of new a data set have produced an aggregate of findings that inform mitigation strategies to prevent these consequences from causing further harm. The threats posed by violent extremism are growing; extremists' tactics and vulnerabilities are evolving; public policy is being developed and released ever-more rapidly. The time to critically evaluate and redesign the national strategy for counterterrorism is now.[46]

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[43] Human Rights Watch.

[44] Adam Withnall, "Saudi Arabia Executes 'a Person Every Two Days' as Rate of Beheadings Soars under King Salman," *The Independent*, August 25, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-executions-amnesty-international-beheadings-death-sentences-rate-under-king-salman-10470456.html.

[45] U.S. Department of State, *United Arab Emirates 2014 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2015), https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236838.pdf.

[46] William McCants and Clint Watts, *U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2012), https://www.fpri.org/article/2012/12/u-s-strategy-for-countering-violent-extremism-an-assessment.

E. CHAPTER OUTLINE

While this chapter has provided an understanding of the research question, methodology, and objectives, it is in Chapter II, the literature review, that the main body of research takes shape. A significant chapter in this research, the literature review is also a standalone piece of research that serves two key functions. First, it establishes the data from which the researcher conducted a formative program evaluation of USG strategies and programs to combat violent extremism since 2011. Second, through the course of collecting and evaluating largely anecdotal assessments, this literature review has created a new data source on CVE impacts. Given the complexity of this subject, Chapter II concludes with a critical discussion of relevant terminology associated with violent extremism and describes the importance of a standardized lexicon to accurately reflect the threats to and the intent of CVE efforts. The literature review also demonstrates that semantics around CVE are just as critical a part of the solution as they are a symptom of, and irritant to, its problems.

Chapter III presents a comparative case study of the Commonwealth of Australia to strengthen the data and further validate the findings. Australia's CVE experiences and principles—which are more mature than those of the United States—its similarities in political structure with the United States, and the impact of its efforts thus far make Australia a compelling case analysis. The case study informs mitigation strategies that can be used in U.S. CVE efforts.

Chapter IV evaluates the findings of the literature review and comparative case study analysis, then applies them to the sociopsychological *staircase to terrorism* theory. This methodology contextualizes the adverse, unintended consequences of domestic CVE efforts, including vulnerabilities in the current CVE approach and its dangers to democratic principles. This extensive discussion—which ranges from racial profiling and stigmatization to the misappropriated focus of resources to prevent violent extremism and the related legal limitations—leads to a single overarching unintended consequence: this thesis argues that federal efforts to counter violent extremism have a high risk of inadvertently putting vulnerable individuals within CVE-targeted communities on a pathway to violent extremism. As mentioned, the critical nature of this research does not

suggest that positive consequences—whether intended or unintended—of domestic CVE efforts are absent. However, the goal of this research is to determine if the adverse consequences might derail national security efforts; as such, it does not address positive outcomes of CVE efforts.

This research concludes in Chapter V, which links the main findings to recommendations for improving the domestic approach to CVE. These recommendations are designed to both mitigate the damaging impacts of CVE efforts that have already taken root and to offer data-driven improvement recommendations for policymakers. Most significantly, this thesis endorses a fundamental redesign of CVE efforts (a national security priority) from the current model—which leverages law enforcement to interdict the process by which violent extremists mobilize to commit a crime—toward a new model of prevention based on the sociopsychological factors that explain *why* individuals radicalize to violence.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

> Countering violent extremism is the use of non-coercive means, to dissuade individuals or groups from mobilizing towards violence, and to mitigate recruitment, support, or engagement in ideologically motivated or justified terrorism … in furtherance of political objectives.
>
> Humera Khan[47]

There is simply no single definition that explains what CVE is or how it effectively contributes to national security and counterterrorism missions. There is a wealth of information on violent extremism from the perspectives of the psychology of human behavior, criminal justice, and international comparative studies. However, there is limited publicly available information about federal policies, plans, and programs designed to counter violent extremism. More so, there is little authoritative sourcing on the efficacy and impact of CVE efforts. This literature review establishes a body of knowledge on the federal strategy and various initiatives encompassed under the USG's CVE umbrella. Furthermore, it reviews open-source evaluative information of CVE programs by federal and congressional oversight committees, academia, national and locally based advocacy groups, counterterrorism experts and practitioners, and local community organizations. This review strategically corroborates largely anecdotal narratives and grassroots assessments, thereby transforming them into an empirically grounded foundation from which to conduct a formative program evaluation. Through this comprehensive lens, we can determine if U.S. CVE efforts are accomplishing their intended goals, and the adverse, unintended consequences that have resulted.

This chapter also reviews commonly used CVE terminology—a critical and divisive layer of complexity in the CVE space, and one that negatively impacts the primary USG CVE strategic goal to build well-informed, empowered, and resilient communities. For example, certain terms, such as *radical* and even *CVE* itself, hold connotations that are

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[47] Humera Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails: Washington's Top-Down Approach to Prevention Is Flawed," *Foreign Affairs*, February 18, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2015-02-18/why-countering-extremism-fails.

at odds with their intended use by federal government personnel working toward a shared mission. Chapter I explained that to scope this research effectively, certain topics commonly associated with CVE but not necessarily imperative to this research have been included and/or eliminated by design; the chapter also explained why the researcher accepted historical origins of CVE already in literature rather than reevaluating them. However, working definitions of terminology are critical to this study, and these are found in the final section of this chapter. This section is far more than a glossary of frequently used, socially accepted, or commonly used/rejected definitions; it establishes the foundation by which terms should be applied when considering this thesis. Furthermore, for the intended audience of this analysis, it facilitates a more nuanced understanding of seemingly innocuous terms that greatly impact national security and counterterrorism efforts. Such analysis required an extensive review of the literature, from which the researcher made defensible decisions about why to accept and/or omit specific language. In doing so, the thesis begins to address a gap in the literature—a thoroughly reframed lexicon for the study and practice of countering violent extremism. The current absence of such a lexicon is a contributing factor to adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts.

A. FEDERAL CVE STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

CVE as a concept grew out of the recognition that kinetic or physical security approaches to counterterrorism were largely reactive and, as a standalone option, not adequate for preventing radicalization to violence.[48] Released in 2010, the U.S. *National Security Strategy* discusses the issue of violent extremism at a high level and predominately in the context of enhancing hard-power counterterrorism efforts internationally.[49] In the revised strategy document released five years later, there is a discernable shift to a greater focus on terrorism prevention—a core pillar of CVE. A review of the literature illustrates

[48] Stevan Weine, *Reframing CVE as a Multidisciplinary Approach to Promoting Community Safety* (College Park: University of Maryland, 2015), https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_CVEto PromotingCommunitySafety_ResearchBrief_June2015.pdf.

[49] White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2010).

the shift beginning in 2011 with the Obama administration releasing the *National Strategy* in August of 2011, which the administration updated and rereleased in October of 2016.[50]

The 2016 version of the *National Strategy* calls for a whole-of-society and community-led solution to violent extremism prevention and intervention, and it provides broad objectives as guiding principles toward these desired outcomes. At its core is the belief that community- and partnership-based approaches are best situated to accomplish this mission and build resiliency against violent extremism. This is an extension of the 2011 *National Strategy*, which states that the "best defenses against this [violent extremism] threat are well informed and equipped families, local communities, and institutions."[51] To provide more specific guidance after the 2011 version, the Obama administration then released the *SIP* to operationalize the strategy in December 2011.[52]

What the 2011 *SIP* provided in terms of more desired outcomes it lacked in actionable direction for federal agencies and departments. In evaluating the creation of the White House CVE Task Force, the *SIP* shows the need to harmonize domestic efforts and evaluate implementation efforts.[53] One outcome of the White House CVE Task Force was the release of the revised *SIP* in October 2016, which responded to the "the current dynamics of violent extremism and … experiences and knowledge acquired over the last five years."[54] The updated *SIP* takes a more streamlined approach to achieving the goals of the 2011 *National Strategy* and highlights the role of prevention, which allows for a broader interpretation and scope of programming initiatives. For example, discussion of behavioral health and the education system, as well as the federal agencies responsible for

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[50] Executive Office of the President of the United States, *National Strategy*.

[51] Executive Office of the President.

[52] Executive Office of the President.

[53] Executive Office of the President of the United States, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2016), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2016_strategic_implementation_plan_empowering_local_partners_prev.pdf.

[54] "Written Testimony of DHS Office for Community Partnerships Director George Selim for a House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency Hearing Titled 'Identifying the Enemy: Radical Islamist Terror,'" U.S. Department of Homeland Security, September 22, 2016, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/09/22/written-testimony-dhs-office-community-partnerships-house-homeland-security.

those missions, is more pronounced in the 2016 version, though DHS and DOJ still maintain primary ownership of the mission.

The updated *SIP* restates that the role of the federal government is primarily to share information, leverage relationships and convene the public and private sectors, and provide resources (in the form of training and grants, for example) that support the empowerment of community-based violent extremism prevention and intervention solutions. While the *SIP* is no longer available on the WhiteHouse.gov website, the literature suggests its work continues, with a focus on the premise of the federal government's most effective role in strengthening community partnerships as a convener, "capacity-builder," and authoritative source for information related to violent extremism prevention efforts.[55] The new DHS CVE implementation plan focuses on four lines of effort:

1. Research and Analysis: All United States Government efforts to prevent violent extremism draw from rigorous, evidenced-based research and analysis. To date, unclassified, federally-funded research has shed light on many topics; however, more specific research will allow us to further advance our programs.
2. Engagement and Technical Assistance: Building trust with a range of communities and stakeholders is essential, and has allowed us to tackle the shared concern of violent extremism together. Moving forward, we will focus on maintaining those relationships and finding new ways to support our local partners.
3. Interventions: As communities across the country continue to develop intervention approaches the federal government will aim to support these efforts when requested and if appropriate.
4. Communications and Digital Strategy: We continue to take steps to address the various ways violent extremists use online platforms to promote violence. We are also committed to communicating with our stakeholders to ensure they understand the full range of federal resources available to them.[56]

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[55] Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, *Countering Violent Extremism in America* (Washington, DC: George Washington University, 2015), https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20America%20.pdf.

[56] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2016).

There is limited information about federal programming leading up to the aforementioned CVE Task Force. The federal government websites broadly speak to CVE as a priority—and address what "will," and "should" be done—but they offer little to explain what and how anything specifically has been or is being done. While research on indictors of radicalization has expanded since 9/11, there is markedly less authoritative and publicly available information by government on CVE programs to prevent individuals from adopting violent ideologies or intervening with individuals once a violent ideology has mobilized them to action.[57] On federal websites, the most cited federal action is the creation of the White House three-city pilot initiative, in which federal government representatives in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Boston directly supported communities to operationalize the *National Strategy* in accordance with the *SIP*.[58]

In Minneapolis and Boston, the federal lead for this effort was the DOJ's USAO, in collaboration with the FBI (also a DOJ entity). In Los Angeles, DHS was the lead agency, as it was already piloting a different strategic engagement model prior to the White House three-city initiative.[59] As part of this pilot program, the federal government charged the three cities with developing frameworks to achieve the goals and objectives of the *SIP* in coordination with a broad group of civil society members, including social service and health care providers, academia, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations, as well as federal, state, and local law enforcement and public officials. These efforts varied by

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[57] Holmer, Countering Violent Extremism.

[58] "Fact Sheet: White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," White House Office of the Press Secretary, press release, February 18, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism.

[59] The reason for the varying federal lead for the pilot programs is because in 2011, with the release of the national strategy, DHS launched a program between the department and the City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office to pilot the "Office for Strategic Engagement." The department identified Los Angeles as a location for strategic advantage to launch such a first-of-its-kind effort because collaborative CVE efforts had been on going in the area since 2008. Additionally, academic institutions and local community-based organizations were already established, and both government and nongovernment stakeholders were eager for such a partnership to help formalize the whole-of-society approach to CVE. The department has leveraged the concept, lessons learned, and best practices of the Los Angeles approach, and enveloped the pilot Office for Strategic Engagement into the new DHS Office for Community Partnership for Countering Violent Extremism, discussed later in this literature review. For more information on the DHS program in Los Angeles, see U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *The Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Los%20Angeles%20Framework%20for%20CVE-Full%20Report.pdf.

location and were met with various levels of support and resistance from community stakeholders. By mid-2016, both official information from the government and narrative literature from nongovernmental sources on this initiative had become increasingly scarce, which raises questions about the viability and success of the program. One of the noteworthy outcomes of the pilot initiative, however, was the development of a CVE framework in each city, tailored to each community, that heeded existing capabilities, outstanding requirements, and specific challenges. These frameworks also include goals for each community to establish prevention, intervention, and interdiction programming, which are the baseline for developing a comprehensive and inclusive local CVE strategy.[60]

The culmination of this pilot initiative was a White House–led three-day summit on CVE in February 2015, which included government officials, private- and public-sector leaders, CVE practitioners, and community organizers. The goal of this summit was for international and domestic stakeholders to discuss developments in community-oriented approaches to prevent violent extremism from taking root in communities and intervention options if prevention efforts are not successful.[61] The White House used this venue to highlight work the federal government has led or supported in local communities through grants, research initiatives, and in some cases direct local engagement in developing intervention models. This event also served as a platform for the United States to call on the international community to use the September 2015 United Nations (UN) General Assembly gathering to discuss "concrete steps taken to address the underlying grievances and conflicts that feed extremism."[62] Media reports, op-eds, and think tanks alike unfortunately criticized the event for a number of reasons. Most notably, they cited the summit as a hasty reaction by U.S. officials in response to public criticism that neither the president nor vice president attended the post–Charlie Hebdo attack solidary march on January 11, 2015. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, among others, a different

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[60] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2011).

[61] White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: White House Summit."

[62] "Remarks by the President at the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," White House, February 9, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/19/remarks-president-summit-countering-violent-extremism-february-19-2015.

variation of this summit was scheduled to take place in the fall of 2014, but it was postponed several times without explanation.[63]

Limited publicly available information exists about outcomes and next steps following the White House Summit on CVE in 2015. The available information largely focuses on the January 2016 creation of the White House CVE Task Force, composed of eleven federal agencies and departments, and led by DHS, DOJ, and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).[64] The task force is charged with coordinating federal CVE efforts as well as evaluating and updating the *National Strategy* and *SIP* in the context of the current threat stream and lessons learned since 2011.[65] A joint statement between DHS and DOJ reveals that the task force was housed within the DHS Office for Community Partnerships, that it worked in close coordination with DOJ, and that it was ultimately responsible for developing and releasing the updated *SIP* in 2016. The unique organizational structure and responsibility of this task force continue to play a role in understanding and assessing federal CVE efforts; therefore, this literature review further elaborates on it throughout.[66]

Of note, the literature indicates that the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services were the federal entities involved in the deliberative process of developing and revising the *National Strategy* and *SIP* prior to the 2016 rerelease. However, no publicly available information speaks to the participation of these agencies in the 2015 White House summit or in the pilot frameworks that each of the cities in the pilot program published. As the foundation for domestic CVE efforts is grounded in the need for a resilient civil society, defined by locally led prevention and intervention programs, and trusted, non-securitized, community-based partnerships, the

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[63] Paul Shinkman, "What Is the Point of This Week's Terror Summit?," *U.S. News and World Report*, February 16, 2015, http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/02/16/white-house-terror-summit-missing-the-mark-on-islamic-threats.

[64] Stephanie Condon, "White House Creating New Counter-terrorism Task Force," *CBS News*, January 8, 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/white-house-creating-new-counter-terrorism-task-force/.

[65] "Countering Violent Extremism Task Force," DHS, press release, January 8, 2016, http://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/01/08/countering-violent-extremism-task-force.

[66] DHS.

absence of these imperative federal agencies raises questions about the efficacy of the USG efforts.[67] Furthermore, it is arguable that such agencies would be better suited to lead—not just have a part in—federal CVE efforts than would a national security and/or law enforcement agency.

This thesis operates under the conclusion that DOJ and DHS are the informal federal leads for domestic CVE programming. Although the literature recognizes NCTC as one of the founding federal agencies to study, develop, and present CVE strategies to the government in support of implementing the *National Strategy*, the specific intelligence mandate of NCTC precludes it from engaging communities directly and leading federal efforts. Consistent with legal limitations of NCTC's congressional mandate, the literature does not place the NCTC as one of the federal leads for CVE implementation; rather, the NCTC serves in a supporting role as an expert advisor. As such, the following provides a review of open-source literature on respective DOJ and DHS strategies and programs.

1. Department of Justice

Although the *National Strategy* and *SIP* identify the USAO and FBI separately, the literature rightfully recognizes that both these federal entities operate under the same mandate within DOJ. The FBI and USAO serve as the investigative and prosecutorial law enforcement agencies, respectively, for the federal government. The literature on DOJ is limited in terms of information detailing USAO and FBI policies and programs that support the CVE mission; this limitation of the literature is not unique to DOJ, as evident in the forthcoming discussion on DHS programming. The most notable role DOJ plays in CVE efforts is serving as co-chair of the White House's CVE Task Force. While the task force is housed at DHS and is reported to be staffed by members of other departments and agencies, it is jointly led by DHS and DOJ.[68]

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[67] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2011).

[68] "Counting Violent Extremism Task Force," DHS, accessed March 25, 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/cve/task-force.

From a strategic perspective, CVE is not specifically called out in DOJ's *Fiscal Years 2014–2018 Strategic Plan*.[69] However, the plan has numerous references to terrorism and crime prevention and intervention, primarily as part of the goals and objectives associated with the reentry of prisoners into society.[70] Despite the absence of CVE specifically, through its recent efforts, including a leading role in the White House three-city pilot program, it is clear DOJ is committed to engaging in CVE efforts.[71] While DOJ's priority remains to investigate and prosecute, with an emerging intelligence mission, there is increasing recognition, especially at the field level, that law enforcement cannot be the only tool to combat the threat of violent extremism in this context.[72]

With regard to their support of the *National Strategy* and *SIP*, a role is increasingly developing for the FBI and USAO in the prevention and intervention mission space. However, given the inherently conflicting need to engage in the pre-crime space for CVE efforts, this role is a complicated one. Under the Obama administration, publicly available information indicates a more holistic and consolidated DOJ approach to CVE efforts, which included leveraging capabilities within the Civil Rights Division and Community Relations Service. Established after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the DOJ Community Relations Service is a unique, nationwide "peacemaker" program; while it addresses "community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identify, sexual orientation, religion, and disability," it has no law

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[69] U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), *Fiscal Years 2014–2018 Strategic Plan* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/jmd/legacy/2014/02/28/doj-fy-2014-2018-strategic-plan.pdf.

[70] DOJ.

[71] As previously stated, this information is accurate prior to the arrival of Attorney General Jeff Sessions under the Trump administration. For more information on DOJ support to the pilot program, see "Attorney General Holder Announces Pilot Program to Counter Violent Extremists," U.S. Department of Justice, press release, September 15, 2014, http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-holder-announces-pilot-program-counter-violent-extremists.

[72] "Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin Delivers Remarks on Domestic Terrorism at an Event Co-Sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the George Washington University Center for Cyber and Homeland Security's Program on Extremism," DOJ, October 14, 2015, http://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/assistant-attorney-general-john-p-carlin-delivers-remarks-domestic-terrorism-event-co.

enforcement authority.[73] Under the proposed Trump-Pence fiscal year 2019 budget, however, the Community Relations Service would be eliminated and any remaining services transferred to the Civil Rights Division. This would eliminate the inherent trust-building capability and autonomy, and the public has met this decision with significant resistance.[74] Under the Obama administration, DOJ consolidation of CVE efforts also included a coordinated focus on addressing domestic terrorism threats through the newly established Domestic Terrorism Counsel.[75] Any update on the status of this counsel—or information about organizational structure, goals, and evaluative metrics—remains unknown to the public.

The 2016 DOJ budget request included $15 million for prioritizing CVE as a mission area. However, details on how funding is used and allocated to empower local communities, as specifically stated in the *SIP*, are unclear.[76] As the leading federal official in the state, each U.S. Attorney's Office plays an important role in CVE efforts and would likely be responsible for managing such funding. While the status of the three-city pilot initiative remains unclear, the Minneapolis and Boston USAOs led development of their local CVE frameworks and the presentations of the framework documents at the White House CVE Summit.[77]

The establishment of the FBI's Countering Violent Extremism Office is another example of DOJ programming efforts. The office is responsible for developing the FBI CVE model, which can be tailored to the needs of any of the FBI's fifty-six field offices. The model is designed to provide a set of tools and resources that "educates and builds

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[73] "Community Relations Service," U.S. Department of Justice, accessed February 21, 2018, https://www.justice.gov/crs.

[74] Chantal Da Silva, "Trump Administration Wants to Ax Office That Helps Combat Racial Conflict," *Newsweek*, February 13, 2018, http://www.newsweek.com/trump-ax-office-combat-racial-conflict-804787.

[75] DOJ, "Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin Delivers."

[76] DOJ, *FY2016 Budget Request Overview: State, Local, and Trial Assistance* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015), http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/jmd/pages/attachments/2015/02/02/7._state_and_local_fact_sheet.pdf.

[77] DOJ, *A Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015), https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-ma/pages/attachments/2015/02/18/framework.pdf; "Building Community Resilience," U.S. Department of Justice, accessed October 15, 2017, http://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/building-community-resilience.

awareness within communities; develops an internal FBI CVE Community of Interest; leverages FBI subject matter experts, existing resources, and initiatives; and expands preexisting protocols and relationships."[78] Details on the social science leading to the development of these resources, how the programs are implemented consistently across jurisdictions, the training protocols and metrics to evaluate competency, and success of agents, stakeholders, and programs are not understood or publicly available.

As part of its Countering Violent Extremism Office toolkit, the FBI has developed a program entitled "Don't Be a Puppet." This Web-based resource, designed for middle and high school students, leads the user through a series of interactive games to explain the threat of radical extremism.[79] Information on the tool's efficacy, or the decisions behind its methodology, is not publicly available. Despite an intended launch date of November 2015, the FBI postponed the launch after significant critical feedback from a group of academics, faith leaders, and advocacy organizations who previewed the program.[80] Concerns with the Don't Be a Puppet campaign include the use of the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment, which the civil rights community contends relies upon stereotypes and racial profiling.[81] The FBI did launch the Don't Be a Puppet program in February 2016; however, there is limited information on how grievances with the program are being adjudicated.

Although not all DOJ efforts are cohesive in development or implementation, the literature is clear: DOJ continues to take a leading role in implementation of CVE efforts in the United States, especially with regard to engaging communities in prevention and intervention. Interestingly, despite multiple DOJ efforts that demonstrate the department's

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[78] "A New Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Sharing Expertise and Empowering Local Communities," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 7, 2014, https://leb.fbi.gov/2014/october/a-new-approach-to-countering-violent-extremism-sharing-expertise-and-empowering-local-communities.

[79] Laurie Goodstein, "F.B.I. Tool to Identify Extremists is Criticized," *New York Times*, November 1, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/02/us/fbi-tool-to-identify-extremists-is-criticized.html?smid=nytcore-iphone-share&smprod=nytcore-iphone&_r=1.

[80] Goodstein.

[81] Yolanda Rondon, "Do Not Target Our Children, Do Not Make Our Teachers Government Puppets," *Huffington Post*, February 8, 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/yolanda-rondon/do-not-target-our-children_b_9169538.html.

continued federal leadership in the CVE space, by its own accord in the final report of the 9/11 Commission, the FBI does not believe it should be the federal lead on the social prevention aspects of CVE.[82] The report identifies DHS as an agency better suited for the role, as it has greater resources and authority in statue.[83] This fact is of increasing relevance in both the findings leading to projected unintended consequences and recommendations for improvement outlined in this thesis.

This review of the literature on DOJ CVE efforts identifies deeply rooted and ongoing challenges with meeting the intent of the *National Strategy* and *SIP*. These include a lack of transparency and detail on the disparate programs; the inherent legal, privacy, and civil rights concerns that stem from an investigative and prosecutorial agency leading a mission grounded in pre-crime and societal-based programming; and the lack of visibility in methodology and social science behind the development and implementation of DOJ initiatives since 2011.

2. Department of Homeland Security

DHS is a lead or co-lead of forty-three of the sixty-two activities directed by the 2011 *SIP*.[84] In response to this call to action, DHS has hosted numerous workshops, inter- and intra-agency working groups, community- and law enforcement–based trainings and exercises, grant development, and research programs under the CVE umbrella.[85] This section discusses publicly available information related to these facets, and other implications of DHS's role in the federal CVE space.

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[82] Bruce Hoffman, Edwin Meese III, and Timothy J. Roemer, *The FBI: Protecting the Homeland in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015), https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/the-fbi-releases-final-report-of-the-9-11-review-commission.

[83] Hoffman, Meese, and Roemer.

[84] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2011).

[85] Kylie Bull, "Who Is Responsible for Countering Violent Extremism in the US?," *Homeland Security Today*, February 28, 2014, http://www.hstoday.us/briefings/daily-news-analysis/single-article/who-is-responsible-for-countering-violent-extremism-in-the-us/45b60a3709c30cd3605bb8b6e90525bb.html; "Countering Violent Extremism," DHS, April 2, 2015, http://www.dhs.gov/topic/countering-violent-extremism.

a. Office for Community Partnerships

In September 2015, DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson announced a new Office for Community Partnerships; its mission was to coordinate all DHS programs supporting innovative and locally based CVE efforts.[86] The White House later announced that the director of this new office would also be the director for the White House CVE Task Force. Under this leadership, the federal interagency, composed mainly of DHS and DOJ representatives, evaluated CVE efforts since 2011 and developed the revised *SIP* in 2016.

The Office for Community Partnerships set forth a plan to improve DHS efforts and meet the outstanding requirements of the 2016 *SIP*.[87] Secretary Johnson tasked the office with implementing four main goals, outlined in the new 2016 *DHS Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism*:

- Enhancing understanding of the evolving violent extremism threat
- Raising community awareness by disseminating information to community partners
- Supporting community-based efforts to counter violent extremism
- Enhancing oversight and coordination of DHS CVE activities.[88]

A priority in support of these goals was to enhance the DHS "strategic engagement model." Accordingly, DHS dedicated a fulltime subject-matter expert to facilitating the implementation of the *National Strategy*. This included facilitating community-led prevention and intervention programing from a whole-of-community perspective. DHS had piloted this engagement model in Los Angeles in 2011, immediately after the government launched the original *National Strategy* and *SIP*. In April 2014, the White

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[86] "Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on DHS's New Office for Community Partnerships," DHS, September 28, 2015, http://www.dhs.gov/news/2015/09/28/statement-secretary-jeh-c-johnson-dhs%E2%80%99s-new-office-community-partnerships.

[87] DHS, *Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/16_1028_S1_CVE_strategy.pdf.

[88] DHS.

House declared the Los Angeles model as a federal government best practice for CVE engagement.[89] The sequence of events suggests this public announcement launched the White House three-city pilot initiative in 2015 as well as the creation of the Office for Community Partnerships and the attempted expansion of the strategic engagement model. However, the status of this expansion effort remains unclear.

In December 2017, DHS informed the public that Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke had dismantled the Office for Community Partnerships and transitioned responsibilities to the new Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships (OTPP).[90] Other than removing "CVE" from the title and making the broad goals more specific, the distinction between the two efforts remains unclear. This new DHS program office is charged with the following:

- Community Engagement. OTPP works with the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to facilitate community engagements to build awareness and promote dialogue with community partners, which includes engagements with DHS senior leadership;

- Field Support Expansion and Training. OTPP supports DHS field staff across the country to develop and strengthen local partnerships and to provide training opportunities;

- Grant Support. OTPP is working closely with FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] to issue a notice of funding opportunity for community-based programs this summer. More information will be available on this website.

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[89] "Remarks by the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco," White House Office of the Press Secretary, press release, April 15, 2014, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/16/remarks-assistant-president-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism-lisa-.

[90] "Terrorism Prevention Partnerships," DHS, December 7, 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/terrorism-prevention-partnerships.

- Philanthropic Engagement. OTPP works with the philanthropic community to maximize support for local communities, and encourage long-term partnerships;

- Tech Sector Engagement. OTPP engages the tech sector to identify and amplify credible voices online and promote counter-narratives against violent extremist messaging.[91]

b. CVE Grant Program

One of DHS's most recent projects is the CVE Grant Program, for which Congress appropriated $10 million to support local CVE efforts.[92] The program received over 200 applications from forty-two states and territories; applicants ranged from local and state governments and coalitions to universities, nongovernmental organizations, and law enforcement agencies.[93] There is limited information available regarding the management and oversight of the program. It is known, however, that DHS issued a privacy impact assessment that discussed the security review required of the grant recipients; the review, for instance, ensures that the applicant plans to use the funding for the intended purpose and not to fund terrorism or other criminal activity. It is unclear if DHS requires other nonprofit grant recipients to go through a similar security screening process. Suffice to say, however, the discrepancy in the unbalanced allocation of government funds that ensued, whether real or perceived, matters in the context of identifying consequences.

In 2016, during the Obama administration, DHS selected thirty-one organizations to receive grant funding under this program, but it did not allocate funding prior to the administration change in 2017.[94] This is relevant for three reasons. First, although the

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[91] DHS.

[92] Tammy Waitt, "Identifying the Enemy: 'Radical Islamist Terror' Statement by DHS OCP," American Security Today, September 22, 2016, https://americansecuritytoday.com/identifying-enemy-radical-islamist-terror-statement-dhs-ocp/.

[93] Waitt.

[94] "Statement by Secretary Jeh Johnson Announcing First Round of DHS's Countering Violent Extremism Grants," DHS, press release, January 13, 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/01/13/statement-secretary-jeh-johnson-announcing-first-round-dhss-countering-violent.

grants were originally intended to support multidisciplinary approaches to CVE, concerns about racial profiling early in the Trump administration and campaign for the presidency made grantees apprehensive; they believed that accepting the grant money would force them to focus on combatting radical Islam as opposed to *all* forms of violent extremism. Vaguely unconstitutional in itself, the term "radical" has been deemed inflammatory, discriminatory, and counterproductive by many of the groups the USG seeks to partner with for CVE efforts, such as CVE practitioners and community members, law enforcement, and public officials. This shift in sentiment about public funding for CVE efforts is the second reason this issue is relevant. It exemplifies one of the adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts: that the efforts are wrongly isolating the violent extremist threat to a specific narrative. Four of the grant recipient organizations ended up turning down the funding before it was allocated to them, arguing that the grant program had turned into an unofficial war on American Muslims.[95]

The third reason the delayed allocation of grant funding is relevant came about in June 2017, when DHS released a revised list of twenty-six grant recipients. The new list eliminated eleven of the organizations that had previously been awarded funding and added several new organizations; there was no clear explanation as to how or why DHS made the decisions.[96] Comparing the two lists of grant recipients shows that DHS added additional law enforcement agencies to the new list and removed organizations that focus on preventing violent white supremacy, or that feature efforts led by ethnic minority groups.[97] Within days of the new list's release, the program fell under scrutiny; dissenters made claims about racial profiling and the use of public policy to limit free speech and promote fear, hate, and systemic discrimination.[98]

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[95] Laura Yuen, "Minnesota Somali Nonprofit Declines $500,000 Federal Grant," MPR News, February 2, 2017, http://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/02/02/mn-somali-nonprofit-declines-federal-grant.

[96] "DHS Countering Violent Extremism Grants," DHS, June 23, 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants.

[97] Jennifer Hansler, "DHS Shifts Focus of Funding to Counter Violent Extremism," CNN, July 4, 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2017/07/01/politics/cve-funding-changes/index.html.

[98] Yuen, "Minnesota Somali Nonprofit."

The CVE Grant Program (further discussed in Chapter IV) demonstrates how federal efforts can lead to the adverse consequence of greater national insecurity. Despite limited, if any, publicly available information on CVE grantee deliverables as of the writing of this thesis, backlash concerning the CVE program has already prevented credible community-led organizations from collaborating with the USG. It has also prevented experts from developing effective programs to mitigate threats posed by *all* violent extremism within and outside the criminal justice and law enforcement realms. Insecurity and marginalization among individuals and communities has resulted. This narrative has also fueled efforts that promote unproductive and potentially dangerous messaging against government activities.[99]

c. Science and Technology Directorate

The Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) is a leading DHS component that has been studying and producing analytical reports on violent extremism for several years. S&T has funded more than twenty projects related to understanding and combating violent extremism for diverse stakeholder groups, and it has hosted more than a dozen nationwide workshops for CVE academics and practitioners.[100] For instance, S&T funded the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Center of Excellence at the University of Maryland. START—in addition to leading dozens of research projects and being a leading publisher in the CVE field to date—houses both the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States and the Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States programs and databases.[101]

Through S&T, DHS is also funding CVE research fellowship programs for undergraduate students along with a faculty-led study on de-radicalization and community

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[99] Hansler, "DHS Shifts Focus."

[100] DHS, "Terrorism Prevention Partnerships."

[101] Michael Jensen, Patrick James, and Herbert Tinsley, "Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States: Preliminary Findings," START Research Brief, January 2015, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/PIRUS%20Research%20Brief_Jan%202015.pdf; "The Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS) Database," START, accessed October 15, 2015, http://www.start.umd.edu/research-projects/terrorism-and-extremist-violence-united-states-tevus-database.

engagement in Singapore, and is developing nationwide CVE training over the next three years based on START's findings.[102] Information on activities funded by S&T is far more transparent than other CVE activities across DHS components, as further discussed later in this literature review.

d. Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) is another DHS component that builds local partnerships between communities and the government for various purposes, including CVE to some extent. Specifically, the CRCL Community Engagement Section is charged with advising senior department officials on the public impact of DHS policy and programming, and it serves as a trusted conduit of timely and accurate information between DHS and communities.[103] This section within CRCL supports information sharing between DHS and federal, state, and local law enforcement as well as communities; part of this effort means exploring redress options for DHS efforts that may negatively impact the civil rights and liberties of people in the United States.[104] CRCL also conducts community awareness briefings, designed to help communities and law enforcement develop the necessary understanding of the threat of all violent extremist recruitment tactics and explore ways to holistically address the threat.[105]

e. Congressional Efforts

Congress has given more attention to DHS's CVE efforts than it has to DOJ's efforts, specifically regarding prevention. In June 2015, the House Homeland Security Committee unanimously brought forth the Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015

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[102] "Program Fact Sheet: START's CVE Education and Training Initiatives," START, accessed October 15, 2015, http://www.start.umd.edu/publication/program-fact-sheet-starts-cve-education-and-training-initiatives.

[103] "Community Engagement," DHS, last updated January 26, 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/community-engagement.

[104] DHS.

[105] DHS, "U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress" (report, DHS, December 6, 2017), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/crcl-annual-2016.pdf.

(H.R. 2899), also known as the CVE Act.[106] The act allocates $10 million annually from 2016 to 2020 to formalize a CVE capability within DHS, as well as to fund local programming efforts, grant opportunities, and additional research. In November 2015, the committee updated the bill to require coordination with DHS emergency management and civil rights components, the development of qualitative and quantitative metrics, and the establishment of a grants program.[107] Although the bill was not enacted by the 114th Congress, there are still efforts to move it forward in the 115th Congress. If passed, this legislation would be an amendment to the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

The Senate of the 114th Congress proposed another DHS-centric bill entitled S. 2418, the Countering Online Recruitment of Violent Extremists Act of 2016.[108] This proposed bill would authorize DHS to establish a physical environment, referred to in the bill as a "CVE Lab," which would house and foster student-developed, technology-based solutions for countering online recruitment of violent extremists. As with the CVE Act, Congress did not enact the CVE Lab bill, and it remains undetermined if it will be addressed by Congress.

As with other proposed CVE legislation, these bills have been met with resistance from civil rights organizations and community organizers at both the national and local levels. Dissent largely centers on the legislation's targeting of Muslims and foreign terrorist organizations, despite current statistics on actual attacks in the homeland, which point to a broader threat. This singularly focused approach to CVE is a recurring theme, and it is a key analytical finding in projecting unintended consequences.

f. Other Programs and Evaluations

DHS statutory authority requires the department to work on preventing terrorism and also on supporting national efforts to prepare for and recover from terrorist attacks. As

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[106] "H.R.2899—CVE Act," U.S. Congress, last updated July 15, 2015, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/2899/text.

[107] "H.R.2899—CVE Act."

[108] "S.2418 (114th): Countering Online Recruitment of Violent Extremists Act of 2016," GovTrack, last updated October 27, 2016, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/s2418/text.

such, some DHS components tangentially contribute to the CVE mission by prioritizing efforts to build well-informed and resilient communities. Through established, trusted, and non-securitized relationships with interfaith, nonprofit, and community-based partners, DHS works with diverse stakeholders to enhance the physical security of locally identified critical infrastructure against violent extremism.[109] Similarly, DHS's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships within FEMA leads a program entitled "Building Resilience with Diverse Communities" to advance local efforts to understand and implement a whole of community approach to national security.[110] FEMA also leads the DHS Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides funds to local community organizations to build sustainable capabilities across the prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery mission areas.[111] These efforts do not appear to be a current priority for the department, however.

A 2012 GAO report on CVE provides more comprehensive, but still incomplete, information outlining DHS components engaged in CVE activities. While beneficial because it is publicly available, the information provided in the report is superficial. Other DHS components with a nexus to CVE, as the GAO report identifies, include the Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the Office of Policy; however, there is minimal information available on program details or activity updates since the 2012 report.[112]

Despite expansion of DHS CVE efforts, there remains a lack of open-source, authoritative information on the social science and methodology by which DHS initiatives are developed and implemented. There also do not appear to be qualitative metrics to measure the impact of initiatives, and there is little transparency about how federal agencies receive and adjudicate on-the-ground feedback from communities and practitioners.

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[109] "Critical Infrastructure Security," DHS, last updated February 1, 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security.

[110] "Building Resilience Steps to Whole Community Engagement," Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), September 6, 2016, https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/images/123403.

[111] "Nonprofit Security Grant Program," FEMA, June 2, 2017, https://www.fema.gov/nonprofit-security-grant-program.

[112] U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Countering Violent Extremism: Additional Actions Could Strengthen Training Efforts*, GAO-13-79 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012), http://www.gao.gov/assets/650/649616.pdf.

B. ASSESSING IMPACT: EVALUATIVE LITERATURE ON FEDERAL AND INTERNATIONAL CVE PROGRAMS

This section describes broad, publicly available information on the impact that U.S. CVE initiatives are having on mitigating the threat posed by violent extremism, as well as on the communities the initiatives seek to serve. As mentioned in the research design section of this thesis, this qualitative review focuses on end-user narratives about federally funded research services, academia, sociopolitical think tanks, national and local advocacy groups, and nonprofit organizations. These groups are discussed within two categories: federal and congressional assessments, and academic and advocacy group assessments. When combined with the comparative case study analysis in the next chapter, this review serves as the foundational data to identify the adverse, unintended consequences on which this thesis focuses.

While this literature review may appear critical of USG efforts, it is important to reiterate that the focus of this research is to identify adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts in an effort to improve future program iterations and mitigate negative impacts that have begun to take root in communities nationwide. As such, this literature review establishes a compelling understanding of the majority feedback on federal CVE programming from key stakeholders of this shared mission.

1. Federal and Congressional Assessments

As previously stated, the 2012 GAO report was one of the first assessments to evaluate USG–funded CVE training support.[113] As the *National Strategy* commits the USG to support state and local communities with CVE-related training, the GAO designed the study to assess the work of the DOJ and DHS as training leads. The report's conclusions are critical and unequivocally establish the need for a more comprehensive approach to CVE. For example, the study cites inaccurate and offensive training, inadequate instructors, and a need for USG to better understand the complexities of the violent extremism challenge.[114]

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[113] GAO.

[114] GAO.

Another CVE—authored by Jerome P. Bjelopera for the Congressional Research Service in 2014—identifies risks and challenges associated with the *National Strategy*'s objectives. The report also recommends areas for greater congressional oversight and offers recommendations to address each of the challenges associated with the current strategy and programs.[115] Challenges include the absence of a lead federal agency, resource and grant availability for local communities, and First Amendment infringements in the name of challenging terrorist narrative and promoting American ideals.[116] While the government has addressed some of these challenges, such as the availability of grants (discussed in more detail later), it is unclear how this assessment influenced changes across federal agencies and departments.

More specifically, the 2014 report focuses extensively on one primary concern: misleading motives. Bjelopera cites terrorism and violent extremism expert Marc Sageman, who cautions against government efforts that focus on outreach under the auspices of building meaningful partnerships in communities but that really only establish superficial engagements as means to collect information.[117] According to Bjelopera, Sageman cites a number of assessments, and conducts his own analysis, of negative legal and social impacts on communities as a result of this activity. His findings further validate one of Sageman's key arguments; communities continue to advocate against law enforcement and intelligence organizations leading outreach or trust-building efforts to develop CVE initiatives, despite the prominence of this strategy in the *National Strategy* and *SIP*.[118]

Furthermore, in 2015, the House Homeland Security Committee held a number of staff and member-level meetings with DOJ (both USAO and FBI), DHS, and NCTC to

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[115] Jerome P. Bjelopera, *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States*, CRS Report No. R4255, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R42553.pdf.

[116] Bjelopera.

[117] Bjelopera.

[118] Bjelopera.

discuss activities, resources, and metrics.[119] Current and former public officials have spoken on the record about CVE efforts across the USG; most often, they cite the inability of congressional and federal government officials to fund the mission appropriately. Additionally, public officials have expressed concern about the limited resources available to fund locally led efforts—an identified goal in the *SIP*—and about a lack of federally employed subject-matter experts to guide local communities and government leadership. Further validating this assessment is former NCTC official Seamus Hughes, current deputy director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University's Center for Cyber and Homeland Security. During congressional testimony in 2015, Hughes stated, "Resources devoted to CVE have been highly inadequate, and CVE units within each relevant agency [DOJ, DHS, and FBI] remain understaffed."[120] Such reports may explain the aggressive push for the passing of the DHS Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015, for example, despite the lack of validating literature on the successful impacts of current USG CVE efforts.

Perhaps the most influential government-led assessment, however, is an April 2017 GAO report to congressional requestors. The GAO designed this report to determine the extent to which DHS, DOJ, and other government organizations have successfully implemented the *National Strategy*, and it assesses the CVE Task Force as a facilitator of the *SIP*.[121] The GAO determined that the federal government achieved nineteen of the forty-four tasks outlined in the *SIP* in support of the three core *National Strategy* objectives (community outreach, research and training, and capacity building). The report ultimately finds that the GAO cannot determine if the United States is "better off today as a result of its CVE efforts than it was in 2011."[122] Specifics of this report are explored throughout

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[119] "Hearing: The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?" Homeland Security Committee, July 15, 2015, https://homeland.house.gov/hearing/rise-radicalization-us-government-failing-counter-international-and-domestic-terrorism/.

[120] James Gordon Meek, "Officials: 'Inadequate' Government Efforts to Prevent U.S. Terrorists Radicalization," ABC News, July 15, 2015, http://abcnews.go.com/International/officials-inadequate-government-efforts-prevent-us-terrorist-radicalization/story?id=32472382.

[121] GAO, *Countering Violent Extremism*, 1–2.

[122] GAO, 16.

this research, as the GAO corroborates its findings with a body of evidence from open-source information.

2. Academic, Think Tank, and Nongovernmental Organization Assessments

This segment of the research reveals an abundance of unfavorable reviews about USG CVE efforts, while concurrently reiterating the need for deliberate and expanded violent extremism prevention efforts. Despite specific improvements in public-private partnerships and engagement efforts, the overarching sentiment from credible partners in local communities across the nation is negative. The academic and advocacy group assessments reviewed in this section vary slightly from one another while still agreeing on one central theme: CVE is a flawed and problematic mission that is unsupported by the very communities at the crux of the solution posed in the *National Strategy*. Though critical in nature, these assessments are constructive in terms of identifying challenges and gaps in current CVE efforts. These gaps include the need to improve community awareness about the threat, the need to improve information exchange on available resources, and the need to develop qualitative metrics to assess impact and efficacy.

The review of literature from these organizations is divided into three main parts, or findings. The first, and arguably most essential, finding is that CVE programs address a narrow scope of violent extremism. The second is that CVE efforts have securitized communities, both among lay community members, and between lay community members and local law enforcement. The third and final finding is the need for federal agencies to incorporate global lessons learned into the development of a new strategy to counter violent extremism in the United States.

Despite good intentions, the literature reveals a majority opinion that USG CVE efforts remain disjointed, misguided, and underfunded, all of which contribute to adverse,

unintended consequences.[123] This section highlights the schism between CVE policy, implementation, and assessment, and places stakeholders at a crossroads for determining if and how to engage the government in CVE efforts. For example, the West Coast chapter of the Muslim Student Association put out a solicitation to hire five anti-CVE campaign managers in May 2015.[124] The chapter argued that the CVE framework is rooted in "flawed radicalization theory" with misleading indicators and, most importantly, it conflates Islam and counterterrorism to a point that American Muslims are becoming victims of bigotry and hate.[125]

The following sections discuss three predominate themes found in literature evaluating federal CVE programs: the discriminate targeting of American Muslims and American Arabs, the impact of securitizing relationships within communities, and the lack of evaluating and applying international CVE lessons learned.

a. Targeting American Muslims and American Arabs

Although the *National Strategy* calls for CVE efforts that address the entire range of threats posed by violent extremism, current efforts—as previously mentioned—focus on American-Muslim and American-Arab communities. For the first time since the period immediately following 9/11, the literature suggests that life for American Muslims and American Arabs is worsening.[126] Hate crime reports against American Muslims increased

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[123] The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?: Written Testimony of Seamus Hughes Deputy Director, Program on Extremism Center for Cyber and Homeland Security George Washington University before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, 114th Cong. (2015), https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/7.15.15%20-%20HHSC%20-%20Testimony.Hughes.pdf.

[124] "MSA West: Hiring Anti-CVE Campaign Managers," MSA West, May 13, 2015, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1mvnh8yzKxOwUG5C69hN6ccZlXhRmX9kUd4xdjWlNh0Y/viewform?c=0&w=1.

[125] "Muslim Student Associations across CA against Federal Government's Countering Violent Extremism Programs," MSA West, February 21, 2015, http://us4.campaign-archive2.com/?u=30d739eaae2442c8d20aad278&id=25a5c44b43&e=[UNIQID].

[126] Rebecca Clay, "Muslims in America, Post 9/11," *Monitor on Psychology* 42, no. 8 (2011): 72–74, http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/09/treating-muslims.aspx.

by 67 percent between 2014 and 2015 and, across the nation, anti-Arab and anti-Islam rhetoric, protests, and backlash are rampant.[127]

In 2014, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), along with twenty-six other co-signors from human rights, civil liberties, and community-based organizations, issued a six-page coalition letter expressing concerns about the contradictions between the *SIP* and federal programs—namely, that the programs focus singularly on actions proliferated by self-proclaimed Muslims.[128] Michael German, a former FBI agent who is currently a fellow with New York University's Brennan Center for Justice, wrote the following in the *Boston Herald* in October 2014:

> There is no doubt that many dedicated federal employees … are deeply committed to building relationships and addressing community concerns about crime and policing issues that affect them. But the unmistakable implication behind "CVE" programs is that certain communities are suspect and particularly vulnerable to becoming terrorists. There were no DHS or Justice Department CVE programs, for example, directed to white, Christian communities after former Ku Klux Klansman Frazier Glenn Miller murdered people at a Jewish community center last April, even though West Point's Combatting Terrorism Center reported that far right extremists attack and kill more Americans than any other terror groups.[129]

Seeking records on CVE programs, the ACLU also filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against DHS in 2016; specifically, the ACLU was searching for evidence of federal programs that "cast suspicion on law abiding Americans and unfairly target American-Muslims."[130] Advocacy groups and American Muslims generally support the lawsuit and the ACLU's position: that it is unacceptable for the public to know so little about CVE

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[127] Eric Lichtblau, "U.S. Hate Crimes Surge 6%, Fueled by Attacks on Muslims," *New York Times*, November 14, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/15/us/politics/fbi-hate-crimes-muslims.html?_r=0.

[128] "Coalition Letter to Obama Administration on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program," American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), December 18, 2014, https://www.aclu.org/coalition-letter-obama-administration-countering-violent-extremism-cve-program.

[129] Michael German, "Stigmatizing Boston's Muslim Community Is No Way to Build Trust," Brennan Center for Justice, October 9, 2014, https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/stigmatizing-boston-muslim-community-no-way-build-trust.

[130] "ACLU v. Department of Homeland Security: FOIA Lawsuit Seeking Records on 'Countering Violent Extremism' Programs," ACLU, last updated February 9, 2017, https://www.aclu.org/cases/aclu-v-department-homeland-security-foia-lawsuit-seeking-records-countering-violent-extremism.

programming when the USG identifies it as a top national security priority. Neither DHS nor DOJ have publicly responded to the ACLU as of this writing.

Following the 2015 White House Summit, there was a noticeable increase in public concerns over federal initiatives from community-based and nationally recognized advocacy groups. For example, twenty-seven separate Muslim Student Associations of West Coast universities voted collectively to oppose federal CVE efforts due to the narrow scope of violent extremism they target.[131] Also in 2015, fifty Islamic organizations in Minnesota signed a letter addressed to federal agencies and state and local law enforcement about the "stigmatizing, divisive, and ineffectiveness" of CVE initiatives.[132] Yusufi Vali, the executive director for the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, too, openly objected to CVE programs in 2015; "For the government to offer us [the Muslim community] services based on concerns of violent extremism," he says, "seems to reinforce the same stereotype that society holds of American-Muslims: that they or Islam are inherently violent."[133]

To better explain American-Muslim community members' attitudes toward CVE practices, START led a field study beginning in 2014.[134] The research divided the community, or data sample, into two groups—engagers and disengagers. Disengagers question the intent of CVE; engagers support CVE efforts, despite their reservations about the term "CVE," which can conflate counterterrorism efforts with building a strong civil society.[135] Nonetheless, engagers adopt the term CVE and accept the community-led solution to countering the threat of violent extremism. However, reservations about terminology are not the only concerns shared by engagers and disengagers. Figure 1 shows

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[131] "Brief on Countering Violent Extremism CVE," Council on American-Islamic Relations, July 8, 2015, https://www.cair.com/brief_on_countering_violent_extremism_cve.

[132] Council on American-Islamic Relations.

[133] Brian Bender, "Islamic Leader Says U.S. Officials Unfairly Target Muslims," *Boston Globe*, February 18, 2015.

[134] Steven Weine, Chloe Polutnik, and Ahmed Younis, "Understanding Communities' Attitudes towards CVE," START Research Brief, February 2015, http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTResearchBrief_UnderstandingCommunitiesAttitudesTowardCVE_Feb2015.pdf.

[135] Weine, Polutnik, and Younis.

some other findings from the START research that demonstrate shared concerns about the development and implementation of U.S. CVE efforts.

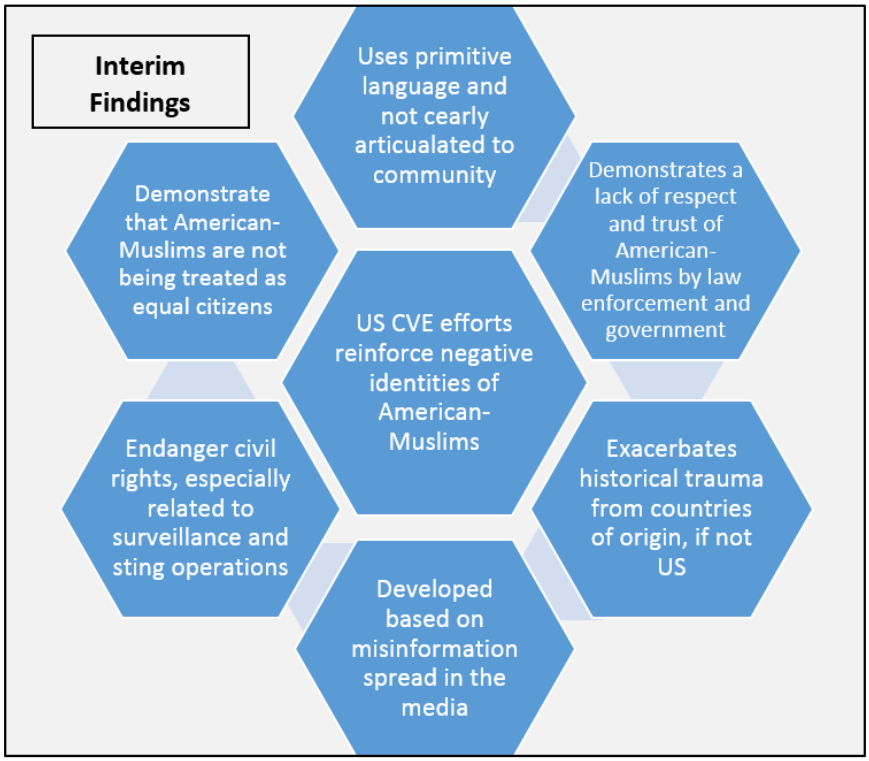

Figure 1. Shared Concerns between CVE Engagers and Disengagers[136]

b. Impact of Securitizing Communities

Despite the USG's best efforts to avoid securitizing communities as part of the *National Strategy*, communities are concerned about the presence of informally deputized law enforcement informants who are scrutinizing community members. There are over 15,000 official FBI informants across the nation, many of whom work specifically in Muslim communities.[137] The Fordham Law Center on National Security reported that 65 percent of Daesh-related FBI cases in 2016 involved government informants or

[136] Adapted from Weine, Polutnik, and Younis.

[137] Trevor Aaronson, The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism (New York: Ig Publishing, 2013), 44.

undercover agents—a 97-percent increase from 2014; by August 2017, this number rose to 83 percent.[138] The purpose here is not to argue the validity of informants, but rather their impact on communities in the name of the federal CVE mission.

In 2015, in an unprecedented public letter sent to Lisa Monaco (former homeland security advisor to President Obama), a conglomerate of community groups attacked the inherent conflict of tasking DOJ with building pre-crime prevention programs to counter violent extremism, while it concurrently serves as the lead federal agency for investigating and prosecuting terrorism cases.[139] Citing problematic language in an unclassified NCTC CVE guide on indicators of violent radicalization and the concerns with securitizing community partnerships, the authors of the letter also informed the administration that individuals and communities have been feeling increasingly vulnerable about having their personal, social, and behavioral health challenged or exposed when incorporated into federal intelligence and investigations processes.[140] Case studies demonstrate how families—sometimes for generations—have been adversely impacted by failed engagement between law enforcement and communities in this space. The New York Police Department serves as one example: its failure to accurately report the use of informants, its classification of entire mosques as terrorist organizations, and its increased surveillance in only Arab and Muslim communities are benchmarks of ineffective, counterproductive CVE efforts.[141]

The literature predominantly agrees that law enforcement should not lead the federal CVE initiative, but that DHS, DOJ, and local law enforcement should play an important role in the whole-of-community approach to building resilience. There are numerous examples of law enforcement partnering successfully with communities; case

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[138] Katherine Greenberg, ed., *The American Exception. Terrorism Prosecutions in the United States: The ISIS Cases, March 2014–August 2017* (New York: Center on National Security at Fordham Law, 2017), https://news.law.fordham.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/TheAmericanException9-17.pdf.

[139] "Grave Concerns Regarding 'Countering Violent Extremism' Pilot Programs," Muslim Advocates, February 13, 2015, http://www.muslimadvocates.org/files/Boston-Organizational-Letter-re-CVE-Concerns.pdf.

[140] Muslim Advocates.

[141] Muslim Advocates.

studies from such examples could be used to build a framework or set of best practices. One example is the Muslim American Homeland Security Congress, a voluntary partnership between nonprofit, interfaith organizations and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department that is dedicated to promoting understanding between the American-Muslim community and law enforcement.[142] Other examples are found within DHS's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Office for State and Local Law Enforcement, and the Office for Infrastructure Protection. These three programs dedicate resources to building and improving trusted, non-securitized, relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities in which they serve. On the flipside, law enforcement has been criticized for applying community-oriented policing practices to outreach activities in American Muslim communities in the name of CVE efforts; the Foreign Policy Research Institute has condemned this as a flawed model for preventing violent extremism.[143]

c. Incorporating Global Lessons Learned

Academics, advocacy groups, and practitioners at all levels of government, as well as in the nongovernmental space, believe the USG should use lessons learned to inform an evidence-based approach to CVE efforts.[144] Comparative literature in this space is plentiful, and CVE programs in the UK and Denmark are some of the most intensely researched. Researchers also heavily analyze Australian CVE efforts (explored in great detail in Chapter III). The Global Center on Cooperative Security recently published a comparative report specifically for CVE practitioners that sustained the findings of much of the previously published literature: initial CVE programs in the UK and Australia failed, and subsequent attempts to improve them simply by changing the programs' titles to reflect more socially "acceptable phraseology" not only failed as well but worsened the

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[142] Sankari Walid, "Law Enforcement Strategies in Muslim Communities Need Reform," *Chicago Monitor*, October 22, 2013, http://chicagomonitor.com/2013/10/law-enforcement-strategies-in-muslim-communities-need-reform/.

[143] McCants and Watts, U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism.

[144] Peter Romaniuk, *Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism* (Goshen, IN: Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2015), http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf.

situation.[145] The literature reveals one predominate theme among academics and advocacy groups, both domestically and abroad: trusted relationships between the state and its citizens is essential to successful CVE efforts, and only possible through transparent, data-driven programming. Furthermore, once trust is broken between a community and public officials, a ripple effect derails forward progress.

The UK established its counterterrorism strategy—called *Prevent*—in 2006, which is equivalent to U.S. CVE efforts. Prevent is also part of a greater security effort called *Channel* and it is featured throughout literature that focuses on impacts of CVE programs. Today, the UK recognizes that a singular focus on one ideology—or community—is unhelpful, perpetuates stigmas, and creates counterterrorism program setbacks.[146] Prevent programs and the differing interpretations of *intelligence gathering*, *surveillance*, and *engagement*, led to unwarranted scrutiny on Arab and Muslim communities, as well as on communities perceived to be Arab or Muslim. Another unintended consequence of the original Prevent program was the stigmatization of Muslims into two groups: *legitimate*, meaning moderate and assimilated, and *illegitimate*, meaning radical and suspicious.[147] One of the most concerning initial Prevent failures was the discrepancy in the justice system between the treatment of violent antigovernment and right-wing extremists and self-proclaimed Muslim extremists. An individual in the former category would be investigated and prosecuted as a lone criminal, while individuals in the latter category would be deemed terrorists, and therefore tried and prosecuted accordingly.[148]

In July 2015, the UK introduced legislation that required public service providers, such as teachers, doctors, and social workers, to report people they believe are at risk for

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[145] Romaniuk.

[146] House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, *Preventing Violent Extremism*, Sixth Report of Session 2009–2010 (London: House of Commons, 2010), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf.

[147] House of Commons Communities.

[148] House of Commons Communities.

radicalization.[149] Within a few months, CAGE, an independent advocacy organization, conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Prevent program and the scientific methodology behind the new anti-radicalization legislation, which had resulted in a tool called the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+. Public service professionals use this tool, also referred to as ERG22+, to assess an individual's pathway to radicalization and to determine if he or she should be referred to the Channel program. This raises a host of issues, from scientific legitimacy to legality, and negates lessons learned as well as current research on violent extremism.[150] The CAGE report reveals that the UK government developed the ERG22+ program in secret, relying on unproven evidence and intentionally excluding political and social grievances from the research methodology.[151] In 2016, over 140 academics publicly signed a letter to the UK government criticizing the ERG22+ study and tool; this served as the foundation for the UK's revised Prevent program.[152]

In February 2016, UK officials called for an independent review of the government's anti-radicalization strategy in light of increasing grievances and concerns. Prevent had exacerbated mistrust and fear in British Muslim communities, and years of ineffective and discriminatory programming had led to greater insecurity.[153] Efforts focused on using a theologically based radicalization process as a means of addressing violent extremism, as opposed to evaluating social, political, and psychological factors—a

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[149] Of note, "being radical" is a constitutionally protected activity in the United States; therefore, the term "radical" is not an accepted term as a standalone concern warranting CVE activity. It is *radicalization to violence* that U.S. CVE efforts should seek to address to avoid infringement on First Amendment rights and establishment clause protections. The notion of being "at risk of radicalization" without the nexus to violence is not apparent in UK CVE policy and programming.

[150] Asim Qureshi, The Science of Pre-Crime, The Secret 'Radicalisation' Study Underpinning Prevent (London: CAGE Advocacy UK, 2016).

[151] Qureshi, 6.

[152] "Anti-radicalisation Strategy Lacks Evidence Base in Science," *Guardian*, September 28, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/sep/29/anti-radicalisation-strategy-lacks-evidence-base-in-science.

[153] David Batty, "Prevent Strategy 'Sowing Mistrust and Fear in Muslim Communities,'" *Guardian*, February 3, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/03/prevent-strategy-sowing-mistrust-fear-muslim-communities.

misstep, according to the literature.[154] As discussed in Chapter IV, it would have been helpful for the United States to study the unintended consequences in the UK before implementing CVE efforts, which could have prevented similar mistakes.

Lessons learned go far beyond only the UK, as further reviewed in Chapter III. For instance, the Brookings Institute published a report in 2014 about a successful violent extremism prevention framework established by women in peace building and conflict prevention in Bangladesh and Morocco.[155] Additionally, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, in partnership with Curtin University of Perth, Australia, and members of the international Against Violent Extremism network, recently published the results of a pilot intervention program in Australia focusing on leveraging technology as part of the solution.[156] Most importantly, using the lessons learned from past European programs, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue team identified a gap in research and practice with regard to one-on-one communication and evaluating the impact of messaging.[157]

In the United States, civil liberty and community-based advocacy groups, like the Arab American Institute and the Brennan Center, have also called upon the government to review global lessons learned before acting domestically.[158] The USG has spent significant resources collaborating internationally, including work to pass the 2014 UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which condemns violent extremism. Through the Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism and the Office for Countering Violent Extremism, the

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[154] Basia Spalek and Alia Imtoual, "Muslim Communities and Counter-Terror Responses: 'Hard' Approaches to Community Engagement in the UK and Australia," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2007): 185–202, http://doi.org/10.1080/13602000701536117.

[155] Krista London Couture, *A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2014), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2014/07/30-gender-conflict-prevention-countering-violent-extremism-couture/women-cve-formatted-72914-couture-final2.pdf.

[156] Ross Frenett and Moli Dow, *One to One Online Interventions, A Pilot CVE Methodology* (Perth: Curtin University, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015), https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/One2One_Web_v9.pdf.

[157] Frenett and Dow.

[158] "AAI Issue Brief: Countering Violent Extremism," Arab American Institute, November 4, 2015, http://www.aaiusa.org/countering_violent_extremism_cve; Faiza Patel, "Counter-Radicalization Lessons from the United Kingdom," Brennan Center for Justice, July 28, 2011, https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/counter-radicalization-lessons-united-kingdom.

USG has dedicated resources to hosting and sending delegations abroad to discuss CVE methods, best practices, and lessons learned.

In the summer of 2015, members from the Department of State's Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral body representing over thirty countries, agreed to meet in cities across the globe to discuss advancing CVE efforts. This summer of summits plan intended to precede the UN General Assembly Summit, which took place in September 2015. The summit focused on the following violent extremism issues:

- Researching the local drivers of violent extremism threats and how to coordinate our responses;
- Strengthening protections for all people, including religious and ethnic minorities;
- Empowering civil society, especially youth, women, religious leaders, and victims of terrorism
- Expanding economic and educational opportunities, particularly for marginalized populations;
- Undermining violent extremists' messages by amplifying authentic and credible counter narratives.[159]

It is unclear, however, how international CVE programs, assessments, and best practices from various summits translate into improving domestic prevention and intervention capabilities. Certainly, U.S. leadership in the international forum is an essential part of national security. But in a resource-restricted environment and a dynamic threat landscape, investing such capital into efforts that may not translate to the *National Strategy*'s local focus is arguably an ineffective use of resources. Of course, these international programs may positively affect domestic efforts; without government transparency and publicly available information, however, it is difficult to tell.

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[159] "The White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism," U.S. Department of State, June 2014, http://cvesummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/CVE-Summit-One-Pager.pdf.

C. THE LANGUAGE OF CVE: WHY WORDS MATTER

Communication makes sense of the world and helps explain shared experiences filtered by attitudes, beliefs, and values.[160] Even so, communication may contribute to adverse, unintended consequences when the meaning of a word faces resistance or presents a psychological barrier. In their book *More Than Words*, authors Richard Dimbleby and Graeme Burton contend that the meaning or message of a word exists in the mind, not in the word itself.[161] Since psychological barriers are inevitable, given individual and group beliefs, bias, and dynamics, the authors argue that it is important to be conscious of the alternative messages we project when speaking, interpreting, and engaging others.[162]

There are a number of psychological barriers associated with common terminology in the CVE realm. The following sub-section evaluates two polemically relevant terms (international terrorism versus homegrown violent extremism, and Daesh versus Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL and Salafi jihad) to demonstrate the divisiveness of these issues in general and among specific identify groups. It also reveals how words—if not handled with care—are both part of the solution and part of the problem.

a. Terrorism Is Terrorism: International Terrorism versus Homegrown Violent Extremism

Bruce Hoffman defines terrorism less by the identity of the actor and more by the intent of the act. In *Inside Terrorism*, he describes terrorism as

> the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. All terrorist acts involve violence or the threat of violence. Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack. It is meant to instill fear within, and thereby intimidate, a wider "target audience" that might include a rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country, a national government or political party, or public opinion in general. Terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is little. Through the

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[160] Richard Dimbleby and Graeme Burton, *More Than Words: An Introduction to Communication* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 80.

[161] Dimbleby and Burton, 81.

[162] Dimbleby and Burton, 82.

> publicity generated by their violence, terrorists seek to obtain the leverage, influence and power they otherwise lack to effect political change on either local or international scale.[163]

The further terrorism is explored through the offenders' motives, as opposed to the offenders themselves, however, the narrower the distinction becomes between violent extremism and terrorism. The distinction between these two terms is importance in this thesis, especially when discussing the implications of domestic violent hate crimes and domestic acts of terror. This is a legal and philosophical issue discussed further in Chapter IV.

Furthermore, what is the difference between international terrorism and domestic terrorism, and does the distinction matter? Is Boston bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev a homegrown terrorist because he was a legal permanent resident of the United States, or an international terrorist because he was also a Russian and Kyrgyz citizen who traveled abroad? Perhaps the distinction lies in *where* the individual was radicalized to violence, as suggested by Dr. Erroll Southers of the University of Southern California.[164] For purposes of this research, this thesis defines *international terrorism* as an ideologically motivated act of violence to incite political change; it is committed against a foreign country by an actor who is not native to that country, and does not require the actor to leave his or her native country (as the act could be committed against assets of the target country located in the terrorist's native land or by issuing a command to a subordinate in the target country itself).[165] *Homegrown terrorists* are born or naturalized citizens who draw inspiration and/ or receive guidance (direct or indirect) from violent extremist organizations that recruit them to commit acts of violence in pursuit of a political agenda.[166]

To what extent does the distinction between international and homegrown terrorism (or violent extremism) matter? The literature argues that the distinction is not statistically

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[163] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 40–41.

[164] Erroll Southers, *Homegrown Violent Extremism* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[165] Southers, 6.

[166] Ally Pregulman and Emily Burke, *Homegrown Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), http://csis.org/publication/homegrown-terrorism.

significant. In this increasingly globalized world, influence is not constrained by physical boundaries. As we see increasing instances of targeted ideological propaganda designed to recruit and radicalize individuals to violence, regardless of geography, the psychological and statistical evidence of violent extremist activity warrants further examination.[167] According to Dr. David Brannan, a homeland defense and security professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, "The domestic-versus-international split creates an artificial divide between intelligence and response capabilities" insofar as it limits information flow between foreign and domestic intelligence agencies (for example, jurisdiction of the Central Intelligence Agency verses the FBI) and the role of state and local law enforcement.[168] Increasing homogeneity brought on by globalization makes it increasingly difficult to categorize, identify, and prosecute individuals for terrorism when they are American citizens or legal U.S. residents.[169]

A hyper-focus on international versus homegrown terrorism and violent extremism may prove detrimental to empirically validating current CVE threats and mitigation strategies. When agencies implement international and domestic counterterrorism efforts, they are required to consider constitutional protections and federal law, including the right to privacy and the latitude of domestic intelligence capabilities.[170] Ultimately, in the context of CVE and this thesis, the distinction matters only in the sense that inconsistent use of the term terrorism based on its classification as international, homegrown, or domestic negatively impacts data-driven decision-making and policy development efforts.

b. Daesh, the Islamic State, or Salafi-Islam

This thesis intentionally uses the term Daesh to describe the terrorist organization referred to commonly in the United States as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or

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[167] David W. Brannan, "Beyond International Terrorism: Thinking about the 'Domestic' versus 'International" Divide,'" in *The MIPT Terrorism Annual 2002* (Oklahoma City, OK: National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, 2004).

[168] Brannan, 20.

[169] In his article, Brannan discusses the example of Jose Padilla, a born American citizen who was decaled an enemy combatant and held without recourse after trying to detonate a dirty bomb as part of collaboration with Al-Qaeda contacts. Brannan, "Beyond International Terrorism," 20.

[170] Brannan, 20.

the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL; the two are used interchangeably). *The Levant* is French for "lands of the rising sun" and is the historical term used by the French to describe present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.[171] Daesh is the acronym for the Arabic term *al-Dawla al-Islamyia fil Iraq wa'al Sham*, which specifically translates to the Islamic State (or Nation) in Iraq and Syria.[172]

Established under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 1999, the terror organization was originally known as *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, Arabic for the Society for Monotheism and Jihad, before it identified as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2004. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became AQI's leader in 2010 and renamed AQI to Daesh, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, after a series of attacks and land seizures.[173] Upon self-declaration of the restored caliphate, al-Baghdadi demanded the group drop the ending (of Iraq and Syria) and that the group just be referred to as the Islamic State (or IS).[174]

Those who oppose use of the term Islamic State argue that the terror organization is neither a state nor Islamic. Continued reference to this argument is pejorative and exacerbates harmful anti-Islamic sentiments caused by associating violent extremism explicitly with Islam. The University of Chicago published a 2012 study that found using a foreign language reduces decision-making biases, ultimately influencing perceptions of risk and benefit.[175] For example, the Nigerian terrorist organization name that translates to "Western Education is Sin" is more commonly known as Boko Haram (albeit this "sinful education" translation has more to do with colonial imposition than the banishment of all

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[171] Lizzie Dearden, "Isis vs Islamic State vs Isil vs Daesh: What Do the Different Names Mean—and Why Does it Matter?" *Independent*, September 23, 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-vs-islamic-state-vs-isil-vs-daesh-what-do-the-different-names-mean-9750629.html.

[172] Ian Black, "The Islamic State: Is It Isis, Isil—or Possibly Daesh?" *Guardian*, September 14, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2014/sep/21/islamic-state-isis-isil-daesh.

[173] Dearden.

[174] Dearden.

[175] Brandon Keim, "Thinking in a Foreign Language Makes Decisions More Rational," *Wired*, April 24, 2012, http://www.wired.com/2012/04/language-and-bias/.

Western education).[176] Similarly, the terrorist organization called "The Base" is more infamously known as Al-Qaeda. The logic behind the United States' decision to use an English-translated name for a designated foreign terrorist organization now, with the rise of Daesh, remains unclear in the literature. European countries have chosen to reverse this rhetoric by using the term Daesh, rather than the English translation, following backlash from communities. Perhaps this is another lesson that the United States should heed.

Changing U.S. linguistic rhetoric may positively influence needed reform for discourse in America about Islam. Public officials and political pundits regularly call upon Muslims to denounce the actions of Daesh or to delegitimize their agenda and propaganda.[177] Such calls to action have done nothing to stifle Daesh activity. In fact, in the United States, such actions may be contributing to greater fear of and stigmatization toward American Muslims. The same inciters have yet to call upon Christians to denounce violent actions committed at the hands of other self-identified Christians. A 2015 report by the Public Religion Research Institute validated this double standard in how Americans judge acts of violence in the name of religion. According to the report, 75 percent of the Americans polled believe that self-identified Christians who commit acts of violence in the name of Christianity are not truly Christian, but only 50 percent extend that same attitude to self-identified Muslims who commit acts of violence in the name of Islam.[178]

Additionally, this thesis argues that the term Salafi Islam—or violent Salafi jihadism—is another misnomer when describing the ideology of Daesh.[179] *Salafi* is defined as a series of movements to return to the purest form of Sunni Islam following a perceived weakness in the Islamic world, which as described in the book *Islamism*;

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[176] Dan Murphy, "Boko Haram' Doesn't Really Mean 'Western Education Is a Sin,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, May 14, 2014, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2014/0506/Boko-Haram-doesn-t-really-mean-Western-education-is-a-sin.

[177] Zeba Khan, "Words Matter in 'ISIS' War, so Use 'Daesh,'" *Boston Globe*, October 9, 2014, https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/10/09/words-matter-isis-war-use-daesh/V85GYEuas EEJgrUun0dMUP/story.html.

[178] Daniel Cox and Robert P. Jones, "Nearly Half of Americans Worried That They or Their Family Will Be a Victim of Terrorism," PRRI, December 10, 2015, http://www.prri.org/research/survey-nearly-half-of-americans-worried-that-they-or-their-family-will-be-a-victim-of-terrorism/.

[179] Lisa Palmieri, "Would the U.S. Benefit from a United National Strategy to Combat Violent Salafi Jihadism?" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 49, 62–69.

however, this definition is subjective and struggles with competing definitions in and of itself.[180] Although the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia is responsible for some of the most brutal violence and human rights violations in the name of Salafi Islam, the Salafi movement is inherently pacifist. In the truest application of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" adage, Salafi Islam is yet again proven a misnomer of Daesh. The Iraqi Baath Party, a predominately secular, pan-Arab nationalist movement inherently at odds with the principles of the Salafi Islam ideology, had leadership alliances with Daesh.[181] While not the only hypocrisy demonstrated by Daesh, this atypical coalition and the rise of Baath Party leaders within Daesh further distinguishes Daesh from any sort of Salafi movement.

It is also argued that *jihad* is another term used to prevent confliction with the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech."[182] Actions by the USG that imply or suggest the religious term jihad has a definition associated with terrorism comes uncomfortably close to infringing on the Establishment Clause. Neither a violent interpretation of Salafi jihadism, violent extremists referring to themselves as jihadis, nor the placement of preemptive qualifying language such as *violent* before Salafi jihadism warrant occupation of the term to describe this terrorist organization.[183] Calling this group anything other than Daesh does not lend it any credibility—because words matter.

D. CONCLUSION

There is a substantial amount of information on violent extremism from the perspectives of the psychology of human behavior, criminal justice, and international

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[180] Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn, *Islamism Religion, Radicalization, and Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 21.

[181] Charlotte Alfred, "The Strange Irony Hidden among the Highest Ranks of ISIS," The Huffington Post, September 12, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/12/isis-baathist-alliance_n_5792172.html.

[182] U.S. Constitution, Amendment I.

[183] Palmieri, "Would the U.S. Benefit," 63.

comparative studies. However, there is limited publicly available information about federal policies, plans, and programs associated with CVE. By leveraging open-source, evaluative information from federal agencies and departments, congressional research and testimony, community-based advocacy organizations, and counterterrorism experts and practitioners, this chapter has established a new body of knowledge. While the intended and unintended consequences of U.S. CVE efforts are not all adverse, it is the purpose of this research to explore and identify those that in order to make improvements and achieve goals. The unique data set established here, in conjunction with findings from the comparative case study analysis of Australia in the next chapter, serve as the information source applied to the *staircase to terrorism* theory in Chapter IV.

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III. THE CASE OF AUSTRALIA

> A strong and trusting relationship between the government and communities is crucial to ensuring the right messages reach the hearts and minds of those who might be vulnerable to the propaganda of terror groups.
>
> Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia[184]

This chapter explores the CVE experience of the Commonwealth of Australia. Over the years, Australia's CVE policy has shifted from largely punitive and kinetic-based programming to a more community-driven and prevention-focused effort. Evidence from Australia—using a case study approach—supports the identification of adverse, unintended consequences of U.S. CVE efforts. The chapter concludes with an impact assessment that identifies lessons learned from and ongoing implementation challenges in Australia. A comparative analysis between Australia and the United States, when combined with the data synthesized in the literature review, validates the hypothesis that adverse, unintended consequences of U.S. CVE efforts not only exist but also are pervasive—to the point that they create greater national insecurity.

Australia was selected for comparative analysis for three primary reasons. First, the threats posed by violent extremism in Australia and the United States are similar. While many other countries also prioritize mitigating violent extremist threats, a shared threat profile between the two countries—including the types and techniques of violent extremist activity—make them particularly comparable. Second, Australia is an English-speaking country with a federal system of government; although Australia is a constitutional

[184] Malcolm Turnbull, "National Security Statement," November 25, 2015, https://www.malcolmturnbull.com.au/media/national-security-statement.

monarchy and the United States a republic, they share a belief in liberal democracy.[185] When studying nuanced, politically charged, and complex social issues, such as those associated with the CVE mission, similarities in political systems go a long way for comparison. Finally, Australia was also selected because its government expressly considered the outcomes of early CVE efforts in the UK prior to launching its own CVE program, called Building Community Resilience, in 2010.[186] However, upon implementation, Australia soon experienced challenges that mirrored the UK's. It is therefore worth examining how the developers of the Australian model applied their observations from the UK experience, and how earlier studies of adverse, unintended consequences could have influenced their initial efforts. Like in the UK and United States, however, there is an absence of qualitative and quantitative metrics through which to evaluate the effectiveness of Australian CVE programming.

A. BACKGROUND

In March 2009, Australian Attorney-General Robert McClelland warned that an attack from a "disgruntled and alienated Australian youth" was just as credible a threat to national security as one from an international terrorist organization.[187] The threat of Australians radicalizing to violence within national borders and the return of foreign fighters remain the government's primary terrorism concerns. The Australian government continues to prioritize counterterrorism legislation and CVE programming as two critical parts of its national security strategy. In 2010, the Department of the Prime Minister issued a counterterrorism white paper titled *Securing Australia: Protecting Our Community*,

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[185] Australia is both a representative democracy and a constitutional monarchy under Queen Elizabeth II. This parliamentary style of government, meaning executive power comes from and is responsible to the Parliament, consists of six independently governed states and three territories that operate within a centralized federal government. The federal government is established by three powers—the legislative, executive, and judicial. The Parliament is at the center of the Australian federal government and consists of the queen, represented by the governor-general in the executive power, and two houses in the legislative power, the House of Representatives and the Senate, also known as the Ministry. More information can be found at "How Government Works," Australia Government, accessed March 22, 2018, http://www.australia.gov.au/ about-government/how-government-works.

[186] Romaniuk, "Does CVE Work," 25.

[187] Romaniuk, 25.

which determined violent extremism to be a "real and enduring" threat and a "persistent and permanent feature of Australia's security environment."[188]

Despite high rates of terrorism-related activity in the country, Australia has been comparatively spared from acts of violent extremism.[189] Shandon Harris-Hogan estimated that since World War II, there have been 150 incidents of executed, attempted, or planned acts of violent extremism in Australia.[190] These cases have been largely nationalist and political in nature. Starting with the 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing in Sydney, 113 people died in Australia as a result of terrorism, including Australians killed in international terror attacks, between 1978 and 2014.[191] In December 2014, however, a pivotal change in the history of terrorism took place in Australia.

On December 15, 2014, a known and violent criminal named Man Haron Monis held eighteen people hostage—and ended up killing two people—at a Lindt Chocolate Café in Sydney. Toward the end of the seventeen-hour ordeal, and before he was killed by law enforcement, Monis boasted ties to Daesh and proclaimed that a new era of terrorism in Australia had launched.[192] Monis was already on law enforcement radar for a "long history of violent crime, infatuation with extremism, and mental instability."[193] His violent criminal past included accessory to murder—for stabbing and burning his ex-wife—and

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[188] Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Securing Australia: Protecting Our Community* (Canberra, Australia: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2010), https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/basic_pages/documents/counter-terrorism-white-paper.pdf.

[189] Nadav Morag, *Comparative Homeland Security: Global Lessons* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 74.

[190] Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia: An Overview," *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, no. 491 (March 2017), https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi491.

[191] Bernard Keane, "The Real Threat of Terrorism to Australians, by the Numbers," Crikey, September 4, 2014, http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/09/04/the-real-threat-of-terrorism-to-australians-by-the-numbers/.

[192] Michael Pearson, Jethro Mullen, and Anna Coren, "With Two Hostages and Gunman Dead, Grim Investigation Starts in Sydney," CNN, December 15, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/15/world/asia/australia-sydney-hostage-situation/.

[193] Keane, "The Real Threat of Terrorism to Australians."

over forty sexual assault charges.[194] Mental health professionals familiar with his condition still debate whether or not he was actually radicalized to violence by Daesh, or if he claimed the affiliation for notoriety.

Australia does not define the severity of its threat environment by the number of terrorism-related deaths, but rather by the availability of credible intelligence and information derived from over 400 ongoing terror-related investigations and foiled plots since 2014.[195] Australia reports that between 2014 and 2016, at least fifteen terror attacks would have occurred had law enforcement not thwarted the plans.[196] Furthermore, since September 2014, sixteen counterterrorism operations have resulted in law enforcement charging more forty people with terrorism and other related offenses.[197] The Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) contends that more "low capability soft target attacks" are probable, and that this probability warrants an approach "far broader and more sustained than simply a security and law enforcement response."[198] In March 2017, extensive government-funded research concluded that this form of violence can be categorized into groups that may help explain and counter the threat: ethno-nationalist violence, far-right violence, issue-oriented violence, jihadist violence, and jihadist foreign fighter violence.[199]

Although the Australian government acknowledges that violent extremist threats are not singular in nature, the literature shows that the government's focus is unequivocally singular in practice. The majority of Australian counterterrorism and CVE resources are

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[194] Ben McClellan, "'Hate' Sheik Man Horan Monis and Girlfriend Amirzh Droudis Granted Bail on Murder Charges," *Daily Telegraph*, December 13, 2013, http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/hate-sheik-man-horan-monis-and-girlfriend-amirzh-droudis-granted-bail-on-murder-charges/story-fni0cx12-1226781623998.

[195] Cat Barker, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism," Parliament of Australia, Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security, accessed November 25, 2017. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook45p/ViolentExtremism.

[196] Megan Palin, "The Other 'Imminent' Terror Attacks Australia Narrowly Escaped," *News*, July 31, 2017, http://www.news.com.au/national/crime/the-11-imminent-terror-attacks-australia-narrowly-escaped/news-story/86fc734df0963e21fe038c0eecce7d80.

[197] Barker, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism."

[198] Barker.

[199] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia."

dedicated to threats stemming from the rise of Daesh, the impact of conflict in Syria and Iraq, and the effective recruitment and radicalization of young people toward this specific brand of violence.[200] Australia's counterterrorism strategy states:

> Terrorism based on other ideological, religious, or political beliefs—such as right wing or left wing extremists—is also of concern, though it does not represent the same magnitude of threat as that posed by violent extremists claiming to act in the name of Islam.[201]

Like the United States, Australia continues to focus on a singular type of violent extremist threat; however, unlike the United States, Australia publicly admits to the decision.

B. AUSTRALIA'S APPROACH TO CVE

The 2015 *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* report states that despite improvements in counterterrorism capabilities, a terror attack in Australia remains probable; all terrorism-related metrics are worsening.[202] While the commonwealth did not formally endorse the findings of the report at first, the attorney general's budget portfolio for 2015–2016 suggests concurrence. The government has responded by substantially increasing offensive counterterrorism efforts (via law enforcement and legislation) and defensive efforts (e.g., infrastructure protection and border security).[203] From 2001 to 2014, the overall budget of the ASIO increased more than five-fold, the budget for the Office of National Assessments nearly quadrupled, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service's budget almost tripled, and the Australian Federal Police's budget doubled.[204]

Additionally, the commonwealth has enhanced international efforts by giving $3 million to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and endorsing the

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[200] Barker, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism."

[201] Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Strengthening Our Resilience* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2015), https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Media-and-publications/Publications/Documents/Australias-Counter-Terrorism-Strategy-2015.pdf.

[202] Council of Australian Governments, *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2015).

[203] Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., *Countering Violent Extremism Literature Review*, No. DSTO-TR-2522 (Edinburgh South Australia: Defence Science and Technology Orgnisation, 2011).

[204] Council of Australian Governments, Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery.

UN Secretary General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*.[205] Domestically, Australia has made great strides in recognizing the dynamic and complex nature of violent extremism. In addition to dedicating $2.5 million to establish the Commonwealth Secretariat Counter-Violent Extremism unit, the government also released a new CVE framework entitled "Development Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism."[206]

As previously mentioned, the Australian government formally recognized a national CVE approach as a part of its counterterrorism strategy in the 2010 white paper, *Securing Australia: Protecting Our Future*. The authors of the paper state, "[The] Commonwealth and the states and territories are working cooperatively to develop a national approach to CVE which will form an integral part of Australia's national counter-terrorism strategy."[207] Before launching the national strategy, Australian findings were a result of a federal multi-organization subcommittee on CVE charged with building a comprehensive, data-driven approach. The Australian government recognizes community engagement and partnership as a cornerstone of its violent extremism prevention strategy, as outlined in the 2012 *National Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.[208]

In August 2014, the government announced a new CVE program focused on three areas:

- Establishing early intervention and counter-radicalization programs to help people disengage from violent ideologies.
- Working with communities to prevent their members from moving down the path of radicalization to violence.

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[205] "Countering Violent Extremism through Australian Aid," Minister for Foreign Affairs [Australia], press release, March 1, 2017, https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2017/jb_mr_170301.aspx.

[206] Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[207] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia."

[208] National Counter-Terrorism Committee [Australia], *National Counter-Terrorism Plan* (Canberra: National Counter-Terrorism Committee, 2012), http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Media-and-publications/Publications/Documents/national-counter-terrorism-plan-2012.pdf.

- Reducing the impact of terrorists' use of social media by helping people develop the digital skills needed to critically assess claims, and promoting alternative messages online.[209]

While the language reflects that of U.S. CVE programs, the point of deviation is significant. The updated Australian program focuses on identifying, assessing, and referring individuals to health care, mentoring, educational, and counseling support services.[210] It also focuses on preventing foreign fighters from leaving Australia and requires programs to discourage, deter, and prohibit Australians from traveling to conflict zones overseas. Conversely, the U.S. CVE strategy intends for communities to develop and sustain programs themselves. The USG primarily serves as a convener, facilitator, and to a lesser extent funder, supporting efforts led by civil society.

To implement this revised strategy, the Australian government created the Living Safe Together initiative to replace the Building Community Resilience program. Living Safe Together is as an online portal to share information about building resilient communities against violent extremism.[211] The website offers a suite of specifically tailored tools, resources, and multilingual materials. Whereas the Building Community Resilience program focused on developing frameworks and redesigning existing services, Living Safe Together focuses on operationalizing frameworks and plans.[212] Moreover, Living Safe Together consolidates resources to help organizations prevent and report extremist activity, maintains a comprehensive calendar of trainings and multicultural events for communities, and provides credible information to communicate the government's counterterrorism and civil liberty policy and programs.[213]

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[209] "Countering Violent Extremism Strategy," Living Safe Together, accessed September 15, 2015, http://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/aboutus/Pages/countering-violent-extremism-strategy.aspx.

[210] Council of Australian Governments, Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery.

[211] Living Safe Together, "Countering Violent Extremism Strategy."

[212] Barker, Australian Government Measures.

[213] Living Safe Together, "Countering Violent Extremism Strategy."

Living Safe Together has had its challenges. A 2016 report by the Australian National Audit Office condemned the coalition for mismanaging the grant program, citing deficiencies in the program's approach to assessing grant applications.[214] In addition to awarding grants to ineligible organizations, the report states the government failed to follow up with people referred to intervention programs to ensure they registered with the Countering Violent Extremism Intervention Services Directory, as required.[215] The program continues to draw criticism for being excessively grounded in law enforcement, contributing to stigma against Australian Muslims, and inciting anxiety by not releasing the names of grant awardees. It is unclear, through open-source research, if DHS officials discussed unintended consequences with Australian colleagues prior to launching the similar U.S. grant program. However, given that at least four U.S. grant recipients have since refused participation in the grant program—citing fear and insecurity—this thesis argues that even if discussions had occurred, implementation has not reflected the lessons learned.[216]

While much debate continues domestically about which federal department or agencies should lead CVE efforts in the United States, the Australian Attorney-General Department, akin to the U.S. DOJ, takes a predominate role in CVE in Australia. Over the last ten years, the Attorney-General Department has broadened the scope of the committee to include prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery into its counterterrorism approach.[217] The Attorney-General Department also leads the ASIO and the Australia-New Zealand National Counter-Terrorism Committee, which is responsible for the implementation of the national counterterrorism plan. The committee is made up of federal, state, and territorial representatives, and provides strategic policy advice to the various

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[214] Tessa Akerman, "'Failed' Bids for Living Safe Together Funding Awarded Money," *The Australian*, September 7, 2016, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/terror/failed-bids-for-living-safe-together-funding-awarded-money/news-story/8f2998c8d5257b70d307f015f2188b58.

[215] Akerman.

[216] Deepa Bharath, "Trump Plan Leads to Uncertain Future for Countering Violent Extremism Program," *Orange County Register*, February 24, 2017, http://www.ocregister.com/articles/muslim-744939-communities-community.html.

[217] Davis, "Now Is the Time for CVE-2."

levels of government, conducts threat assessments and analysis, and supports investigations.

In its role as an advisory committee, the Australia-New Zealand group helps shape Australian counterterrorism policy and initiatives. In 2012, it edited the *National Counter-Terrorism Strategy* to emphasize community-based efforts to CVE as part of its resilience objective. Specifically, the Attorney-General Department and the committee are able to intervene in communities to help individuals disengage from violent radicalization or recruitment. They also support Prime Minster Malcolm Turnbull's statement that government efforts need to focus on intervening and diverting individuals from radicalization, helping institutions and the public sector combat violent extremist ideology, and maintaining a strong, multicultural society.[218] While the plan pledges resources that promote soft-power civil society programs partnering with communities to counter violent extremist narratives, Australia remains steadfast on hard-power approaches to counterterrorism with law enforcement at the center; thus securitizing and conflating community engagement and CVE.[219]

The Attorney-General's CVE group is also responsible for the aforementioned grant programs, and issued approximately fifty-eight grants between 2011 and 2014 that focused on youth mentoring and building resilient communities.[220] The literature reveals eighty-seven distinct CVE projects in Australia between 2010 and 2014.[221] CVE programs led by the government, especially those with an inherently investigative and prosecutorial mandate, lacked an understanding of challenges facing local communities. Given their mandate, the Attorney-General Department in Australia and DOJ in the United States do not have the ability to serve as honest brokers in the pre-crime space.

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[218] "National Security Statement," Prime Minister of Australia, November 24, 2015, https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2015-11-24/national-security-statement.

[219] Mark Taylor, "Australian, British, and U.S. Approaches to Countering Islamic Extremists," E-International Relations Students, June 4, 2015, http://www.e-ir.info/2015/06/04/australian-british-and-us-approaches-to-countering-islamic-extremists/.

[220] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia."

[221] Dan Box, "Paris Attacks: Anti-terror Programs 'Don't Reach Radicals,'" *The Australian*, November 20, 2015, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/paris-attacks-anti-terror-programs-dont-reach-radicals/story-fn59niix-1227616124171?sv=6f5d6b2375a70362d62f7a6004ede5d7.

C. LESSONS LEARNED

Australia has been actively attempting community-based approaches to counterterrorism for over a decade. However, as with the United States, publicly available and authoritative metrics for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of Australian CVE efforts are limited. This section provides two significant lessons learned from Australian CVE programs and policy, which, because of the similarity to the U.S. CVE model, support the unintended consequences discussed in Chapter IV.

1. Programs Do Not Reach People; People Reach People

One initial finding regarding early CVE efforts in Australia (2004–2010) is that programming tended to be too broad and failed to engage with at-risk individuals directly. In addition to communities having concerns with individuals being classified as "at risk," the mentoring programs to deter these targeted populations from being influenced by violent radical ideologies were unsuccessful.[222] Similarly, interfaith and multicultural educations programs in schools have had little effect in deterring individuals from radicalization to violence either.[223] Additionally, trusted, non-law enforcement–focused intervention programs for individuals to turn to prior to committing any crimes remains a gap in both Australia and in the United States, despite both countries identifying this as one of the main goals for CVE success. The updated Australian approach to CVE launched in 2014 prescribes allocation of funding to individual interventions and community-level programming to narrow the scope of efforts and reach people more directly.[224]

As the shift to updating Australian CVE programs is still emerging and as past programs either phase out or adapt, the metrics for evaluating success of Australian CVE efforts remain undeveloped. Publicly available, evaluative literature, especially after 2016, remains scarce. In addition, given the noticeable decrease in grant funding for communities

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[222] Andrew Zammit, *Australian Foreign Fighters: Risks and Responses* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2015), http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/australian-foreign-fighters-risks-and-responses.pdf.

[223] Zammit.

[224] Zammit.

and increase in funding for CVE efforts internationally, the future of Australian CVE efforts within the commonwealth remains unclear.

2. Stigmatization

Despite recognized forms of violent extremism beyond those related to Al-Qaeda and Daesh, the focus of Australian CVE efforts remains on young Australian Muslims. This is not a new challenge in Australia, however. As early as 2006, when the government established the Muslim Community Reference Group to advise the government on terrorism and social cohesion, feedback from the Australian Muslim and Australian Arab communities regarding stigmatization and discrimination persisted.[225] Like the United States and the UK, prior to CVE efforts, Australian communities were dealing with the social backlash of their nations going to war to "win hearts and minds" overseas. Pervasive backlash against particular communities is also evident by recent political activity and speech, including Brexit in the UK and the 2016 presidential election in the United States.[226] Also similar to what has happened in the United States, early CVE approaches in Australia undermined democratic principles, destabilized the credibility of religious leaders who cooperated with government officials, and ultimately exacerbated stigma against Australian Muslims.

Over the years, efforts to ameliorate distrust between the Australian government and individuals within communities targeted by CVE programming have been futile. Community members continue to express sentiments of alienation and stigmatization after years of disproportionate scrutiny (whether real or perceived). As seen in the United States as well, advocacy groups and citizens in Australia view CVE efforts with suspicion, and organizations and community leaders are calling for boycotts of CVE engagement efforts. Critics argue the singular focus on Islam, specific ethnicities, and demographics is

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[225] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia."

[226] Anne Aly, "The Policy Response to Home-grown Terrorism: Reconceptualising Prevent and Resilience as Collective Resistance," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 8, no. 1 (2013): 2–18.

inherently counterproductive to promoting "social cohesion."[227] Rather, efforts are feeding terrorist narratives by implying that Islam as a religion must be moderated and influenced by government to distinguish a "good" Muslim from a "bad" Muslim.[228]

A recent example of stigmatization plaguing Australia is requests for state and federal education ministers to approve a new curriculum designed to combat radicalization of homegrown terrorists in Australia.[229] The strategy, developed by Executive Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute Peter Jennings, teaches Islam and Middle Eastern politics; Jennings says that if students could "spend one less hour learning about Gallipoli and one extra hour having a sensible discussion about contemporary Middle Eastern politics, they might not be seeking that information out online."[230] While he suggests the curriculum should teach about all religions and what it means to be Australian, the current approach specifically addresses terrorism by focusing on Islam, the Middle East, and violent extremist ideology.

This systemic propaganda is an unintended consequence of CVE efforts in Australia, and one that is gaining momentum in the United States. The issues of stigma and propaganda in Australia draw a critically concerning parallel to U.S. CVE efforts. In addition to legal precedence restricting religious speech when content incites illegal activities and fighting words, the call for educating Americans on "moderate" versus "extreme" forms of religion also violates the intent of the Establishment Clause under the First Amendment.[231] Such a legal precedent does not exist in Australia; as a result, the Australian government launched a pilot program for administering a national curriculum

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[227] Paul Thomas, "Between Two Stools? The Government's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Agenda," *The Political Quarterly* 80 (2009): 282–291, http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2009.01985.x.

[228] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism in Australia."

[229] Lauren Wilson, "School Students in Australia Could Soon Be Taught about Islam to Combat Radicalisation and Jihadists," *News Corp Australia Network*, December 5, 2015, http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/school-students-in-australia-could-soon-be-taught-about-islam-to-combat-radicalisation-and-jihadists/news-story/60efbdfb9e52c5b8a39cddbb44e28d9e.

[230] Wilson.

[231] Jamil Ammar and Songhua Xu, "Yesterday's Ideology Meets Today's Technology: A Strategic Prevention Framework for Curbing the Use of Social Media by Radical Jihadists," *Albany Law Journal of Science and Technology*, 26, no. 2 (2016): 282–293, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2987605.

on Islam.[232] However, despite the Establishment Clause, U.S.-based organizations regularly advocate programs that educate Muslim communities on their definition of moderate Islam.

The American Islamic Forum for Democracy and the Muslim Reform Movement are examples of organizations working along the party lines of Congress to promote agendas to reform Islam in the United States institutionally. The highly divisive Zuhdi Jasser, a self-identified Muslim and the president and founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, argues that terror is rooted in Islam itself. In his book *A Battle for the Soul of Islam: An American Muslim Patriot's Fight to Save His Faith*, Jasser writes, "If we [Muslims] inoculate them [youth and young Muslim adults] with the ideas of liberty and freedom, they can never be taken over by the supremacism of political Islam."[233] The suggestion that Islam inherently conflicts with the democratic tenets of liberty and freedom is one of many controversial notions put forth by Jasser, making him one of the most antagonistic public figures working as an expert on the issue of violent extremism. As co-founder of the Muslim Reform Movement and author of the *Declaration for Muslim Reform*, Jasser has mobilized a politically and socially charged cult following, and his narratives are gaining attention from both sides of the political aisle.

While private, independent institutions have the constitutional right to promulgate such messaging, legal boundaries are dangerously crossed when such propaganda is endorsed in the public sector. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) appointed Jasser as commissioner and vice chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, where Jasser served from 2012 to 2016.[234] In addition, Jasser has briefed the House and Senate a number of times, providing his brand of expertise to Congress on mitigating the

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[232] Sowaibah Hanifie, "Islamic Experts Work toward National Religious School Curriculum to Apply Faith to Modern Australian Life," ABC News, July 10, 2017, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-11/islamic-national-curriculum-push-to-apply-faith-for-australia/8696330.

[233] Zuhdi Jasser, A Battle for the Soul of Islam: An American Muslim Patriot's Fight to Save His Faith (New York: Threshold Editions, 2012), 196.

[234] "Leading the Movement," American Islamic Forum for Democracy, accessed November 28, 2017, https://aifdemocracy.org/our-work/our-team/dr-jasser/.

threat of political Islam. He also publicly supports some of the most contentious religiously motivated public policy proposed and enacted by the Trump administration.[235]

Regardless of the ethical and legal conflict of government engaging in such discourse and activity, the U.S. and Australian governments entertaining such methodology as part of CVE efforts is grounded in undeniable adverse, unintended consequences. In Chapter IV, these unintended consequences are further revealed as a contributor to greater national insecurity.

D. CONCLUSION

The Australian approach to counterterrorism and CVE has proven agile in its ability to change policy and distribute grant funding. However, the literature on the success and implications of efforts suggest programming is still not achieving the intended goal of preventing young Australians from falling prey to violent extremist recruitment. The renewed $13.4 million commitment to Australian CVE programming is a step in addressing these shortcomings, so long as organizers bear the impact of unintended consequences in mind when developing and implementing programs.[236] The continued conflation of counterterrorism and community-based CVE efforts is a pervasive contributor to unintended consequences of CVE efforts in both Australia and the United States.

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[235] Conor Gaffey, "Islam and America: Trump's Religious Freedom Ambassador Should Be 'Disqualified," Says Biggest Muslim Group," *Newsweek*, July 28, 2017, http://www.newsweek.com/islam-and-america-president-donald-trump-american-muslims-643370.

[236] Emma Reynolds, "The $1m Method to Deradicalise Australia's Youth and Prevent a Terrorist Attack," *News*, November 3, 2014, http://www.news.com.au/national/the-1m-method-to-deradicalise-australias-youth-and-prevent-a-terrorist-attack/news-story/f9a10921a4af265cb660d7bbd14eb884.

IV. THE ADVERSE, UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF U.S. CVE EFFORTS

> The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.
>
> Alexis de Tocqueville[237]

Based on the publicly available information describing existing federal policies and programs and the narratives about CVE efforts from academics, advocacy groups, practitioners, and impacted community-based individuals and organizations, this research has established a credible data set for analysis. This analysis yields a number of adverse, unintended consequences, explored further in this chapter; however, they ultimately distill into one overarching finding: current CVE efforts are contributing to greater national *insecurity*. Simply put, this thesis argues that the opposite of CVE's intended purpose has resulted from current efforts; while CVE programs may be having positive effects, this adverse consequence outweighs any positive outcomes. This chapter explores two detailed examples of unintended consequences that provide further explanation leading to this alarming conclusion.

A. VULNERABILITIES IN STRATEGY AND APPROACH

The current U.S. CVE strategy is dated, does not reflect the evolving threat, and does not consider lessons learned from historical CVE efforts. When the strategy was updated based on the 2016 *SIP*, the changes attempted to streamline federal activities, with a focus on interagency responsibilities and coordination. Yet there is no indication that this revised strategic plan considers statistical data about violent extremist acts, including thwarted attacks, or feedback on efforts in the United States between 2011 (when the original *SIP* was published) and 2016. Thus, the vulnerability in the *SIP* is inherent, both strategically and operationally.

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237 "Alexis de Tocqueville Quotes," Allauthor, accessed October 27, 2018, https://allauthor.com /quote/34656/.

Perhaps one of the most apparent vulnerabilities is the USG's lack of attention to the grievances raised by the organizations and practitioners directly affected by CVE initiatives—especially considering that effective implementation of the *SIP* is reliant upon trusted collaboration with those very communities. The grievances raised by professionals who conduct prevention and intervention work in communities remain inadequately addressed by the federal agencies who seek their collaboration, which almost immediately delegitimizes CVE efforts in the eyes of credible community voices.[238] As discussed in Chapter II, these grievances include the stigmatization of Americans of Arab and South Asian descent and American Muslims, insufficient transparency regarding the USG's methodology for developing policies and programs, and the inconsistent training and role of law enforcement in conducting CVE efforts. U.S. CVE strategy is built on the foundation that the best defense against violent extremism is a well-informed, resilient, and empowered community, which makes these grievances especially problematic.[239]

Another vulnerability in U.S. strategy and approach to CVE is the lack of attention on nonsecuritized engagement—specifically, regarding soon-to-be released prisoners who have been incarcerated for terrorism and/or violent extremist–related convictions.[240] The 2011 *SIP* rightfully included nearly fifty future activities for various federal agencies to undertake, including deradicalization of violence in prisons.[241] Specifically, the strategy instructs interagency efforts to unite to

- Improve awareness of the risk of violent extremism in correctional systems;
- Enhance screening of new inmates to detect individuals associated with violent extremist organizations;
- Improve detection of recruitment efforts within the correctional environment; and

[238] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2016).

[239] Executive Office of the President.

[240] GAO, Countering Violent Extremism, 15.

[241] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2011).

- Increase information sharing, as appropriate, with federal, state, and local law enforcement about inmates who may have adopted violent extremist beliefs and are being released.[242]

The updated 2016 *SIP* has eliminated most of this language, however, including one sub-objective in Interventions Task 3.3, which instructs the DOJ to leverage the CVE Task Force to develop disengagement and rehabilitation programs for individuals reentering society following incarceration. The reissued SIP completely removes this topic from the mission.[243] Furthermore, it does little to operationalize *how* the DOJ and the CVE Task Force—a temporal, non-congressionally mandated function within the USG—would collaborate with one another and the Bureau of Prisons to accomplish such a goal.

Figure 2 shows a vignette from the 2016 *SIP* that highlights Life After Hate—a federally supported nonprofit organization focusing specifically on violent extremist interventions. Government and community-based organizations have lauded Life After Hate as a program that understands individual pathways toward violent extremism, as well as pathways that voluntarily lead individuals away from violent extremist movements. The program is led by a self-identified former neo-Nazi, and it specializes in building community-based prevention and intervention models for violent extremist organizations and movements. Despite federal recognition of the need for disengagement and rehabilitation programs, and Life After Hate's success in executing this very mission, Life After Hate—originally selected as a DHS CVE grant awardee—was later denied its $400,000 grant and removed from the list of awardees.[244] The criteria for the grants, prescribed by former DHS Secretary General John Kelly and the new Trump administration, largely focuses, instead, on law enforcement–centered applicants.[245] This

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[242] Statement of Jerome P. Bjelopera, Specialist in Organized Crime and Terrorism Before Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, U.S. House of Representatives, Hearing on "Terror Inmates: Countering Violent Extremism in Prison and Beyond" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), http://docs.house.gov/meetings/ HM/HM05/20151028/104102/HHRG-114-HM05-Wstate-BjeloperaJ-20151028.pdf.

[243] Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2016), 12.

[244] Hansler, "DHS Shifts Focus."

[245] Hansler.

is an essential and recurring finding of this research: that DHS and the USG are leaning on law enforcement to counter violent extremism.

Task 3.3 – Identify and support the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs.

Drawing on existing research and models, DOJ, in coordination with the CVE Task Force, will identify and support the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs for possible use by the criminal justice sector in cases involving violent extremism. Such programs would be tailored for individuals in the justice system as well as those reentering society following incarceration. *(Lead: DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force)*

The National Institute of Justice funded a partnership between Life After Hate/ExitUSA and the Research Triangle Institute to examine individual-level pathways into and out of violent extremism. This project examined the reasons why individuals from the white power movement participated in violent activities and also looked at cases of those who voluntarily choose to leave the movement. The study utilized former violent extremists as mentors to those seeking to disengage. The findings will provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways disengagement relates to individual-level factors (e.g., identity, work, motivations) and structural forces (e.g., community organizations, the criminal justice system, barriers). This can shape future interventions with individuals looking for the support and skills they need to build a new life free from hate.

Figure 2. *SIP* Task 3.3: Intervention Efforts[246]

A dangerously overlooked issue is the larger number of violent hate groups and gang members in prison compared to those who claim to be affiliated with a foreign terrorist organization. Since 9/11, more than 250 self-identified Muslims have been charged and convicted for involvement in terror-related plots; 132 of them currently have release dates.[247] In October 2015, the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence indicated more than 100 federal prisoners linked to terrorism would be released in the next five years.[248] To keep this data in perspective, these numbers represent roughly 13 percent

[246] Source: Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2016).

[247] Hansler, "DHS Shifts Focus."

[248] Kristina Mastropasqua, "Terrorism Sentencing: Challenges for Criminal Prosecutors in the U.S. and Abroad," Journalist's Resource, December 8, 2015, http://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/criminal-justice/terrorism-sentencing-prison-crime.

of all prisoners nationally, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.[249] The Aryan Brotherhood has a national-level prison gang with approximately 15,000 members in and out of incarceration, and the Nazi Low Riders, a regional gang, has 800 to 1,000 inmates incarcerated across the West Coast and southwest.[250] One of the largest violent extremist groups in prisons is the Aryan Circle, an offshoot of the Aryan Brotherhood based out of Texas that is rapidly expanding its ideologically motivated violence nationwide and beyond prison walls.[251] The Aryan Circle is particularly dangerous in that, unlike many other prison gangs, it prioritizes violence to advance the white supremacy movement over traditional criminal activity.[252] In the context of national security, this is alarming. While U.S. counterterrorism efforts remain focused on violent extremist acts linked to self-identified Muslims, the data shows this threat makes up 26 percent of ideologically motived murders, compared to 71 percent of murders carried out by violent right-wing extremists.[253] This disparity is a contributing factor to the adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts.

In a 2015 report, the National Institute for Justice concluded that, despite the unprecedented problem of radicalization in prisons, only a "small fraction" of radical beliefs materialize into a terror attack.[254] According to the report, "Prisoner radicalization grows in the secretive underground of inmate subcultures through prison gangs and extremist interpretations of religious doctrines that inspire ideologies."[255] Rehabilitation during incarceration and reintegration services provided post-release are necessary to

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[249] Statement of Jerome P. Bjelopera.

[250] Statement of Jerome P. Bjelopera.

[251] Anti-Defamation League, *White Supremacist Prison Gangs in the United States: A Preliminary Inventory* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2016), https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/CR_4499_WhiteSupremacist-Report_web_vff.pdf.

[252] Anti-Defamation League, *The Aryan Circle: Crime in the Name of Hate* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2016), https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Aryan-Circle-Report.pdf.

[253] Anti-Defamation League.

[254] "ADL Report: White Supremacist Murders More than Doubled in 2017," Anti-Defamation League, press release, January 17, 2018, https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-white-supremacist-murders-more-than-doubled-in-2017.

[255] Anti-Defamation League.

mitigate risk and build mutually beneficial partnerships with individuals who formerly radicalized to violence.

This issues of disengagement, rehabilitation, and reentrance are a microcosm of another vulnerability within the *SIP*. In addition to its vague guidance to identify requirements, conduct research, and develop frameworks, the *SIP* fails to support communities by directly providing resources and tangible solutions. The following sections demonstrate how related unintended consequence are leading to greater national insecurity.

1. CVE Implementation: Word versus Deed

The disparity between word and deed in U.S. CVE policy is one of the most significant vulnerabilities and best exemplified by the way violent extremism is defined in rhetoric versus the way it is defined in practice. Although the *National Strategy* and *SIP* imply the USG will address all forms of violent extremism, there is no evidence that the USG has conducted any engagement activities to help communities understand and thwart radicalization to violence. Rescinding funding from Life After Hate—among other actions—has furthered sentiments that the current administration is directing federal funding toward the threats posed specifically by foreign-born or foreign nationals, largely at the hands of self-identified Muslims and/or Al-Qaeda- and Daesh-inspired activity. Violent extremism holistically does not appear to be a priority. Anti-Semitic and anti-Islam rhetoric from a number of current and former administration officials contribute to this finding.

For example, Katharine Gorka, a politically appointed senior advisor to DHS and a member of President Trump's transition team, and her husband, Sebastian Gorka, a former advisor to President Trump, are known for public and controversial rhetoric about Islam.[256] By promulgating the belief that white supremacy is not "the problem" in the United States, DHS officials divert federal resources away from countering white

[256] Eli Stokols, Bryan Bender, and Michael Crowley, "The Husband-and-Wife Team Driving Trump's National Security Policy," *Politico*, February 13, 2017, https://www.politico.com/story/2017/02/trump-national-security-gorka-234950.

supremacy movements.[257] Even more recently, in July 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services put Trump appointee Ximena Barreto, a senior leader within the organization, on administrative leave for publishing a number of controversial social media posts, including posts that referred to Islam as a cult and made other racist attacks against Muslim, Jews, and African Americans.[258]

Much like in the UK and Australia, the United States' CVE efforts operate with a singular focus: engaging American-Muslim and American-Arab communities in CVE efforts to the exclusion of other credible threats. One of the most concerning vulnerabilities associated with this narrow scope is the disproportionate resources being extended to the singular threat. The names James Von Brunn, Wade Michael Page, Frazier Glenn Miller, and Jerad and Amanda Miller all have something in common: although each of these people used violence to express an ideology and promote political change, none of them are classified as terrorists or violent extremists under current U.S. law.[259] Similarly, Dylann Roof, a violent extremist who killed nine congregants at a historical African American Church in Charleston, South Carolina, maintained a social media profile with ties to pro-apartheid and segregationist activity; however, he was convicted of murder and a hate crime, not terrorism—skewing the data on national security threats and terrorism in America.[260]

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[257] Jessica Schulbert, "Controversial Trump Aide Katharine Gorka Helped End Funding for Group That Fights White Supremacy," *Huffington Post*, August 15, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/katharine-gorka-life-after-hate_us_59921356e4b09096429943b6.

[258] Andrew Kaczynski, Chris Massie, and Nathan McDermott, "HHS Official Shared Post Saying 'Forefathers' Would Have 'Hung' Obama, Clinton for Treason," CNN, April 13, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/13/politics/kfile-hhs-official-obama-clinton-treason/index.html.

[259] In 2009, Scott Roeder killed Dr. George Tiller, an abortion provider, at a Lutheran Church where Tiller served as an usher. In an act of aggression against the USG, Joseph Andrew Stack flew a plane into an Austin, Texas, IRS building, killing one person, in 2010. In 2012, known white supremacist Wade Michael Page killed six people at a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Frazier Glenn Miller, who has a long history of KKK activity, killed three people near a Jewish community center in Overland Park, Texas, in 2014. Also in 2014, Jerad and Amanda Miller, active anti-government actors, randomly murdered two police officers and a civilian. See Ben Mathias-Lilley, "The Long List of Murders Committed by White Extremists Since the Oklahoma City Bombing," Slate, June 18, 2015, http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2015/06/18/white_extremist_murders_killed_at_least_60_in_u_s_since_1995.html.

[260] Rebecca Hersher, "Jury Finds Dylann Roof Guilty in S.C. Church Shooting," NPR, December 15, 2016, http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/12/15/505723552/jury-finds-dylann-roof-guilty-in-s-c-church-shooting.

Defining right-wing (or far-right) extremism is as challenging as it is subjective. Similar to the absence of an agreed-upon definition for terrorism and violent extremism, there is no standard definition for the term *violent right-wing extremism*. To stay within the scope of this research, this thesis frames the term by elaborating on the work of Professor Arie Perliger's report *Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right*. Simply put, Perliger concludes that there are three main ideological movements within the American violent far right: racists, white supremacists, and anti-federalist or anti-government movements.[261] While this is a strong foundation, Perliger's anti-federalist group only loosely correlates to a major violent right-wing extremism sect—theologically motivated violent extremists such as the Christian Identity Movement. The Southern Poverty Law Center cites nearly two dozen organizations associated with the Christian Identity Movement, such as America's Promise Ministries and Kingdom Identity Ministries.[262] This number rises exponentially with the inclusion of individual churches, militia groups, and issue-specific organizations with similar ideologies. The Christian Identity Movement originated from the nineteenth-century British Israelism movement in which followers desired racial supremacy and biblical law as the governing structure and for which violence served as a means to an end.[263]

Using this definition and the discussion in Chapter II, the threat from violent right-wing extremist groups is increasingly grave and yet alarmingly unaddressed in the United States when compared to political or ideological violence committed by self-identified Muslims. The GAO reported that between September 2001 and December 31, 2016, far-right violent extremists killed 106 people in 62 separate incidents, whereas self-identified Muslim violent extremists killed 119 people in 23 separate incidents.[264] Of note, 58 of those 119 victims of Muslim violent extremism perished in a single event—the Pulse Night

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[261] Arie Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2012), 3.

[262] "Christian Identity," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed April 29, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/christian-identity.

[263] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 24–28.

[264] GAO, *Countering Violent Extremism* (2017), 3.

Club shooting in Orlando, Florida, in 2016. In ten of the fifteen years studied by the GAO, violent far-right attacks exceeded those caused by self-identified Muslims; and in three of the years the numbers were the same.[265]

In September 2017, the FBI was unable to identify the number of agents working on domestic terrorism investigations, but it indicated it had 176 related arrests and over 1,000 open investigations.[266] A study by the Investigative Fund documented 201 terrorist incidents in the United States from 2008 to 2016, in which 63 cases were related to Al-Qaeda or Daesh–inspired terrorism, versus 115 at the hands of violent far-right organizations.[267] During this 2008 to 2016 period, as reported by *The Hill*, independent research suggests that the ratio of violent far-right plots and attacks against those from self-identified Muslims could have been as much a 2 to 1.[268]

The domestic threat of violent extremism warrants attention and a whole-of-society approach, as stated in the *National Strategy*. However, the disparity between the rhetoric and implementation of the *National Strategy* remains a primary vulnerability—one that has cascading influence on the adverse, unintended consequences of American CVE policy. This research argues that domestic CVE programs are in reality an extension of problematic post-9/11 counterterrorism efforts, specifically toward American-Muslim and American-Arab communities.[269]

2. The Legal Limitations of Domestic Terrorism

Vulnerabilities in the U.S. CVE strategy also stem from how the country legally defines, investigates, and prosecutes acts of violent extremism. Because there is no

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[265] GAO, 3.

[266] Katie Bo Williams, "FBI Has 1,000 Open Domestic Terror Investigations: Director," *The Hill*, September 27, 2017, http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/352670-fbi-has-1000-open-domestic-terror-investigations-director.

[267] David Neiwert, "Charlottesville Underscores How Homegrown Hate Is Going Unchecked," *Reveal News*, June 21, 2017, https://www.revealnews.org/article/home-is-where-the-hate-is/.

[268] Neiwert.

[269] U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Federal Civil Rights Engagement with Arab and Muslim American Communities Post 9/11* (Washington, DC: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2014), http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/ARAB_MUSLIM_9-30-14.pdf.

consistent, federally recognized distinction between terrorism and violent extremism—and because they are classified similarly—the data is insufficient and skews statistical analysis for developing data-driven public policy.

Current U.S. Code on definitions and criminal charges related to terrorism is deeply problematic. The U.S. Patriot Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2331 (as shown in Figure 3), expands existing terrorism definitions to include domestic terrorism without establishing a *crime* of domestic terrorism.[270] Instead, the Patriot Act provides laws to expand investigative and prosecutorial authority. The inclusion of "aggravating factors" to law enables prosecutors to link acts of violent extremism with domestic terrorism to enhance criminal charges. If the individual is convicted, this would also enable harsher penalties. For example, a domestic terrorism aggravating factor could increase the penalty for "obstructing a federal investigation by refusing to testify before a grand jury in a case involving terrorist fundraising allegation" from two or three years of imprisonment to more than ten years.[271] The most commonly applied aggravating factor to federal charges against violent extremists is 18 U.S.C. § 2339A, Providing Material Support to Terrorism.

However, this legal expansion does not sufficiently replace an actual criminal charge of domestic terrorism. For example, in 2016 three convicted criminals—who called themselves the Crusaders—discussed attacks on members of Congress, contemplated burning down churches that helped refugees, and considered killing property owners who rented to Muslims.[272] Ultimately, they bombed a residential prayer complex largely occupied by Somali immigrants. Despite their legal defense, which claimed that the FBI was trespassing on their first amendment right to "idle talk" inspired by President Trump's campaign, a jury found them guilty of conspiring to use a deadly weapon and conspiracy against rights, which is a hate crime. Though these men potentially face life in prison, they

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[270] "Terrorism," Federal Bureau Investigation, accessed March 21, 2018, https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/terrorism/terrorism-definition.

[271] Mastropasqua, "Terrorism Sentencing."

[272] Katherine Burgess, "3 Kansas Men Found Guilty of Plot to Bomb Garden City Muslims," *Wichita Eagle*, April 19, 2018, http://www.kansas.com/news/local/crime/article209244489.html; Mitch Smith, "Kansas Trio Convinced in Plot to Bomb Somali Immigrants," *New York Times*, April 16, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/18/us/kansas-militia-somali-trial-verdict.html.

are not legally defined as terrorists, thus skewing research, data, and public perceptions. The exclusion of a specific domestic terrorism crime does a disservice to victims and to national efforts to prevent violent extremism.

Definitions of Terrorism in the U.S. Code

'International terrorism" means activities with the following three characteristics:

- Involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law;
- Appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and
- Occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S., or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.*

"Domestic terrorism" means activities with the following three characteristics:

- Involve acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law;
- Appear intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination. or kidnapping; and
- Occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.

18 U.S.C. § 2332b defines the term "federal crime of terrorism" as an offense that:

- Is calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct; and
- Is a violation of one of several listed statutes, including § 930(c) (relating to killing or attempted killing during an attack on a federal facility with a dangerous weapon); and § 1114 (relating to killing or attempted killing of officers and employees of the U.S.).

Figure 3. Legal Definitions of Terrorism[273]

[273] Source: "18 U.S. Code Chapter 113B-Terrorism," Office of the Law Revision Counsel, accessed March 21, 2018, http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title18/part1/chapter113B&edition=prelim.

This thesis recognizes the vulnerabilities in U.S. CVE strategy by exposing disconnects between policy rhetoric and practice and exposing the legal limitations of criminal terrorism codes. The aforementioned examples of vulnerabilities contribute to the unintended consequence of greater national insecurity. These issues negatively impact the government's ability to collect, analyze, and leverage empirical data on radicalization to violence, acts of violent extremism, and terrorism. Given the relevance and reoccurrence of the challenges with the *National Strategy* and *SIP*, the differences between what the strategy implies *should* occur and what open-source information indicates is actually happening warrants examining these unintended consequences.

B. ENDANGERING DEMOCRACY

The Federalist Papers, written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, were one of the first efforts to propagate an American narrative by mobilizing Americans to stand behind a shared set of values and beliefs centered on a representational constitutional democracy with checks and balances.[274] These philosophers and scholars, arguably violent extremists of their times, represent the foundation on which the United States was established. It is because these principles define the American narrative that our laws ultimately serve to protect, and violating them in the name of national security is in and of itself a threat to national security. These shared values are grounded in law and ensure limited government, checks and balances, due process, and equality regardless of religion, country of birth, and gender—among other liberties. Democracy is in danger because of the declining prioritization of these values. Racial profiling and stigmatization associated with CVE are dangerously testing and negatively affecting these fundamental values. While each adverse, unintended consequence this thesis identifies contains overlapping themes, this section explores the unintended consequences of racial profiling and stigma in the context of contributing to greater national insecurity.

[274] Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 168, 222, 223, 239, 246–264.

1. Racial Profiling in Counterterrorism

As the conflation of CVE and counterterrorism policy remains an issue, this thesis must include an examination of racial profiling as part of the unintended CVE consequences contributing to the endangerment of American democracy. It is the responsibility of the federal government to balance public safety and civil liberties, and the two are not mutually exclusive. In addition to violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, racial profiling also poses a threat to targeted communities as well as to law enforcement effectiveness.[275] Rising violent hate crimes and continued public exposure of excessive federal, state, and local law enforcement screenings, searches, and detainments, as well as the higher proportions of minority incarceration, are all outcomes of racial profiling.[276]

Two extinct security programs, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) and New York City's Zone Assessment Unit, are examples of counterterrorism programs based on the racial profiling of American Arabs and American Muslims. These programs had no demonstrated or proven success in mitigating threats posed by terrorists. Even with the elimination of such programs, however, racially and ethnically motivated questions, such as "When did you become a Muslim?" "How do you know this contact?" (upon a mobile phone search), and "Which mosques do you attend?" are questions still permissible by federal investigators, airport security personnel, and border law enforcement officials.[277] Perhaps such questioning would be a concern to the public if, as part of their efforts to mitigate violent extremists from entering or moving around the country, authorities were asking individuals if they attend the Westborough Baptist Church or Aryan Nation Church. Perhaps.

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[275] Jack Glaser, *Suspect Race: Causes and Consequences of Racial Profiling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 163.

[276] Glaser.

[277] "Cost of War: Cases of Profiling in the Post-9/11 United States," Watson Institute International and Public Affairs Brown University, last updated March 2015, http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/rights/profiling.

Despite Supreme Court rulings that racial profiling is unconstitutional based on equal protection laws, evidence that widespread use of racial profiling in counterterrorism and immigration law enforcement remains a misguided practice.[278] As evident in the formative program analysis and exposure of unintended consequences, the U.S. CVE programing is arguably racially motivated and discriminatory by design. Current programming by DOJ, DHS, and the intelligence community remain disproportionately isolated on diverse, minority communities despite the rise in violent right-wing extremism. This fact does not go unnoticed by the very communities with which the government seeks to engage—especially as they are often the same targets of hate-inspired speech and attacks.

The literature review evaluating federal CVE efforts from the perspective of nongovernmental organizations, academia, and community-based practitioners demonstrated, to recap, the following concerns: the targeting of American Muslims and American Arabs, the securitizing of their communities, and the mirroring of international CVE efforts despite proven damaging and discriminatory results. Additionally, the lack of resources dedicated to preventing and countering domestic terrorism or violent extremism is an increasing threat to national security. Threats posed by domestic violent extremist movements are the greatest concern identified by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are statistically on the rise, further substantiating the ineffectiveness of racial profiling in CVE holistically.[279] With essential community-based organizations mobilizing against federal CVE efforts (because of issues such as racial profiling and the lack of comprehensive federal terrorism laws), the USG's ability to gain and sustain needed partnerships with credible voices in local communities is fractured. One such community-based campaign is TAKE ON HATE, a project of the National Network for Arab American Communities to stand against discrimination, stereotyping, and the fostering of distrust

[278] "Restoring a National Consensus: The Need to End Racial Profiling in America," National Coalition to Protect Freedoms, March 2011, http://www.civilfreedoms.org/?p=7292.

[279] Neiwert, "Charlottesville Underscores."

within communities.[280] This movement is specifically dedicated to using education and engagement to rise up against institutional discrimination, profiling, and bigotry. Since its inception, the TAKE ON HATE campaign has facilitated summits and issued public white papers on the harmful effects of CVE efforts in America.

Racial profiling is not simply a perception of U.S. CVE efforts, but a reality demonstrated in this research. Efforts are disturbingly close to infringing upon civil rights and constitutionally protected activity, and they contribute to an environment of increased isolation, fear, and discrimination against CVE communities of interest. It remains unclear in publicly available information how these challenges impact USG-funded efforts, such as the DHS CVE grants and DOJ/National Institute of Justice–funded efforts, or how the USG addresses them, if at all.

2. The Threat of Persistent Stigma

Stigma is defined as "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance," wherein the *virtual social identity* of an individual may exist in the eyes of others before the *actual social identify* one holds presents itself.[281] Stigma alters an individual's social identity by cutting off the individual from society as a discredited person facing an unaccepting world.[282] Especially in the context of the criminal justice system and process, stigma occurs when "elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination co-occur together in a power situation."[283]

Research on stigma—whether real, perceived, and/or anticipated—show that it is a complex social concept that can be categorized into three forms:

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[280] "Racial Profiling Disguised: Countering Violent Extremism Programs and Our Community's Role," National Network for Arab American Communities, November 6, 2015, http://www.nnaac.org/racial_profiling_disguised_countering_violent_extremism_programs_and_our_community_s_role_arabamericansummit.

[281] Ayse Ciftci, Nev Jones, and Patrick W. Corrigan, "Mental Health Stigma in the Muslim Community," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 7, no. 1 (2013): 18; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 2–3.

[282] Goffman, *Stigma*, 19.

[283] Kelly Moore, Jeffrey Stuewig, and June Tangney, "Jail Inmates' Perceived and Anticipated Stigma: Implications for Post-release Functioning," *Self and Identity: The Journal of the International Society for Self and Identity* 12, no. 5 (2013): 527–547, http://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2012.702425.

- Structural (the institutional marginalization of groups through law and policy);
- Social (the public attitude and discriminatory behavior toward a group); and
- Self (the individual response to stigma, including internalizing the stigma to the point of accepting stereotypes as true).[284]

One similarity between all categories of stigma is the individual's journey to belong to an in-group, or real group, which is defined by Erving Goffman as comprising individuals who are likely to have suffered the same deprivation because of shared stigma.[285]

The threat of self-stigma and the pattern of those similarly categorized to form an in-group alliance poses one of the greatest threats to the nation when applied in the context of unsuccessful counterterrorism efforts. Particularly vulnerable individuals are at risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy by taking on the attributes of the assigned stigma, while concurrently looking for acceptance by their new in-group. Persistent stigma also threatens our democracy by leading to violations of free speech, due process, and equal protection statues in the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments, respectively.[286]

U.S. CVE efforts are in line with other archaic post-9/11 counterterrorism and national security policies that disproportionately focus on a singular type of violent extremism. Minority communities, especially those of Mid- and Near-East, South Asian, and North African descendants and individuals perceived to be Muslim, are increasingly living in fear, uncertainty, and isolation after years of stigmatization as perceived terrorists.[287] As discussed in the literature review, this fear is on the rise, as are hate-inspired incidents against American Muslims and American Arabs. For example, in 2015, there was a 150-percent rise in workplace discrimination against Muslims.[288] In 2016, the

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[284] Moore, Stuewig, and Tangney.

[285] Goffman, *Stigma*, 112–113, 123.

[286] Glaser, *Suspect Race*.

[287] Andy Campbell, "Hate Crimes against Muslims Have Tripled Since Attacks in Paris, San Bernardino," *Huffington Post*, December 18, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/hate-crimes-against-muslims-have-tripled-since-attacks-in-paris-san-bernardino_us_567428bbe4b0b958f6564f3d.

[288] Watson Institute, "Cost of War."

FBI released new statistics that revealed 6,121 hate crime incidents, of which over 57 percent were motivated by race, ethnicity, or ancestry.[289] Additionally, a recent FBI report indicates that hate crimes targeting Muslims and/or people believed to be Muslim grew by 67 percent between 2014 and 2015.[290] In December 2015, following the Daesh-inspired attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) recruiters sent flyers out to people in Alabama recruiting members and encouraging like-minded Americans to stop "The Spread of Islam" (see Figure 4).[291]

Figure 4. KKK's Remake of a WWII Recruitment Poster[292]

More recently, examples of racial profiling and stigma have been perpetuated at the highest levels of authority. In November 2017, President Trump tweeted—to his 44 million followers—false videos of Muslims violently assaulting non-Muslims, inciting greater fear

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[289] "2016 Hate Crime Statistics Released," Federal Bureau of Investigations, November 13, 2017, https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2016-hate-crime-statistics.

[290] Katayoun Kishi, "Anti-Muslim Assaults Reach 9/11-era Levels, FBI Data Shows," Pew Research Center, November 21, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/21/anti-muslim-assaults-reach-911-era-levels-fbi-data-show/.

[291] Jaime Ritter, "Anti-Muslim KKK Fliers Pop up in Alabama," CBS 42, December 9, 2015, http://wiat.com/2015/12/09/anti-muslim-kkk-fliers-pop-up-in-alabama/.

[292] Source: Ritter.

and misinformation about Arabs, Muslims, and national security.[293] Although the videos were discredited—and the perpetrator convicted in Britain of religious aggravated harassment—the videos were retweeted 10,000 times, and the White House stood by the president's decision to share them. It said, "Whether it's a real video, the threat is real and that is what the president is talking about."[294] Former KKK leader David Duke responded on social media by thanking God for President Trump, as he showed people "what the fake news media won't."[295]

Another concerning stigma associated with terrorism is mental illness. Following an attack, invariably the mental health of the perpetrator is questioned, despite psychological studies confirming most terrorists are "quite normal."[296] Insofar as CVE efforts are stigmatizing targeted communities as being prone to terrorism and violence, the same is true for mental health communities. Undoubtedly, some violent extremists suffer from mental health and psychological problems, such as Ted Kaczynski (the Unabomber), and Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hassan. However, many other individuals categorized as terrorists, violent extremists, or lone wolves are normal by psychological standards, despite instability and extreme perspectives.[297] In attempting to make sense of, or perhaps explain, the terrorist mindset, there is a tendency to lean toward a plausible explanation of mental health disorders.[298]

Stigma conflating terrorism/violent extremism with mental health is damaging to the mental health community—as not all psychopathic individuals engage in violence—but it is also a common outlet for "aggressive and impulsive tendencies associated with the

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[293] Catherine Lucey and Jill Lawless, "Trump Stokes Anti-Muslim Sentiment; Censured in US, Abroad," Fox News, November 29, 2017, http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/11/29/trump-retweets-videos-critical-muslims.html.

[294] Brian Naylor, "Trump Retweets Incendiary Anti-Muslim Videos from Controversial Group," NPR News, November 29, 2017, https://www.npr.org/2017/11/29/567159205/trump-retweets-incendiary-anti-muslim-videos-from-controversial-group.

[295] Lucey and Lawless, "Trump Stokes Anti-Muslim Sentiment."

[296] Jeffrey Simon, *Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2013), 223.

[297] Simon, 234.

[298] John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 48–50.

psychopath."[299] While it seems valid that an individual who commits murder and discriminate acts of violence must have some level of psychopathic tendencies, this argument is unfounded in research. In fact, research suggests terrorist groups avoid recruiting individuals with mental health issues, as they likely share the same stigmatized views of those with mental health as the rest of society; additionally, these individuals may be unreliable, difficult to work with, and pose a threat to the organization.[300] Even in cases of lone-acting violent extremists, who are without a specific identity group and who tend to have a higher tendency toward psychopathic issues, mental health professionals remain unable to link specific diagnoses to motivation.[301] The use of mental health disorders as a singular or overarching causation for violent extremism contributes to already pervasive stigma on the community and impedes violent extremist and terrorism prevention efforts.

The institutional, social, and self-fulfilling manifestations of stigma exemplified in this research as a result of CVE briefly demonstrates the impact on democracy, civil rights, and the fracturing of civil society. In this context, the fracturing of civil society is defined as sentiments of fear and mistrust that prevent individuals from meaningfully engaging with and being a part of- civil society. As such, this thesis argues that a more relevant nexus between terrorism/violent extremism and mental health worthy of deeper research is the lasting, generational impacts of stigma in a community targeted by U.S. counterterrorism efforts, such as CVE.

C. THE STAIRCASE TO TERRORISM—AND TO GREATER NATIONAL INSECURITY

At the crux of this research is the conclusion that, despite any positive or intended outcomes of domestic CVE efforts between 2011 and the present, policies and programs are actually leading unintentionally to greater national insecurity. This section leverages the staircase to terrorism theory, developed by Dr. Fathali Moghaddam, to examine the

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[299] Horgan.

[300] The BJM, "Linking Terrorism with Mental Illness Fuels Stigma and Impedes Prevention Efforts," *Science Daily*, September 16, 2016, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/09/160916104843.htm.

[301] The BJM.

ways in which the consequences of CVE efforts have led to this alarming conclusion, and how they will continue to spread at dangerous rates if not corrected.[302] While the staircase to terrorism theory is the social science lens this thesis uses, it is certainly not the only research methodology that could be applied to understanding the radicalization–to-violence process and identifying unintended consequences.

In 2011, Michael King and Donald Taylor, as part of a RAND study, reviewed five different theories and social psychological models found in literature and attempted to bring them together to represent the process of radicalization to violence.[303] Understanding *why* individuals radicalized to violence—versus the kinetic understating of *how* they commit acts of violence—is an essential yet marginalized part of counterterrorism. Focusing on the tactical ways in which individuals journey toward criminality and ultimately radicalize to violence is an understandable approach for law enforcement to take to counterterrorism when the mitigation strategy is grounded in law enforcement intervention and the criminal justice system. When the focus of counterterrorism is prevention, however, the sociopsychological factors influencing the individual's decision making and journey toward criminality require far greater attention.

In their research on the radicalization-to-violence process, King and Taylor evaluate five separate theories found in literature, one of which is Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism.[304] Although this thesis specifically applies findings to the staircase to terrorism model, it recognizes that any single model or combination of other models will arguably draw similar results. For example, King and Taylor also explore Marc Sageman's four-phase approach, based on cognitive and situational factors.[305] This research loosely applies unintended consequences of CVE efforts to Sageman's model—which emphasizes the psychological mobilization processes through which interactions with like-minded

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[302] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007).

[303] Michael King and Donald M. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 4 (2001): 602–622, http://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2011.587064.

[304] King and Taylor.

[305] King and Taylor, 608.

people, based on perceptions of moral violations—and yields the same result: the unintended consequences of current CVE policy and programs are contributing to various sociopsychological factors associated with individuals' radicalization to violent extremism.[306] Simply put, when examined through the lens of social science, CVE efforts are having the exact opposite impact on society of their intended purpose.

The staircase to terrorism theory, shown in Figure 5, provides one perspective on individuals' radicalization to violence using a metaphor of a staircase. The fundamental importance of this theory is not simply the number of floors (or stages) in the process (Moghaddam identifies five) but rather the "decision tree" factor of behavior and perception of options afforded to the individuals during escalation.[307] According to Moghaddam, as people climb the staircase, they see fewer and fewer choices available to them "until the only possible outcome is destruction of others, or oneself, or both."[308]

The ground floor of the staircase is where individuals engage in a comparative analysis and become aware of their own circumstances. They determine the relative deprivation of their own circumstance compared to others, though a process called egotistical deprivation. Similarly, relative deprivation of their in-group, as compared to someone else's in-group, is called fraternal deprivation.[309] In either form, the result is that, without effective redress to the perceived deprivation, people are more likely to move up the staircase. The unintended consequences of CVE efforts, previously identified, include vulnerabilities in the national strategic plan, legal limitations to addressing domestic terrorism, the discrepancy in word and deed by failing to address all forms of violent extremism, and the endangerment of democracy through racial profiling and the stigmatization of targeted communities. These findings provide substantial grounds for sentiments of relative deprivation by communities and the individuals within them, thus putting them at risk for embarking up the staircase.

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[306] King and Taylor, 608.

[307] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007).

[308] Moghaddam, 70.

[309] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2005).

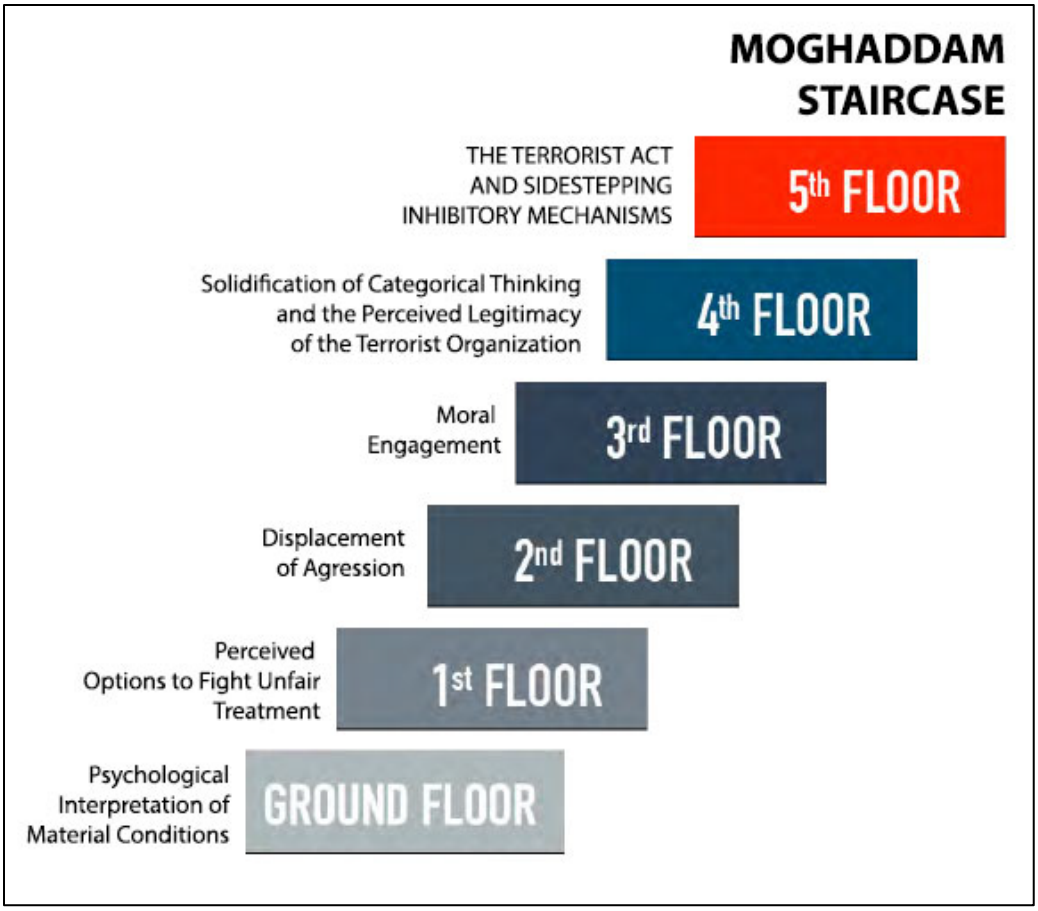

Figure 5. Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism[310]

The majority of people with feelings of relative deprivation, marginalization, and/or discontent do not embark on a violently radical path and essentially remain on the first floor while they seek resolution. The space between the first and second floors is where CVE prevention and intervention programming resides. Moghaddam argues it is on the second floor that individuals begin to focus on a target, which is where displaced aggression manifests. This displaced aggression is a result of a feeling of powerlessness to address and improve the source of grievances related to relative deprivation.[311]

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[310] Source: Moghaddam.

[311] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 606.

Without a means to intervene and rectify displaced aggression, an individual's escalation to the third and fourth floors is probable. In an oversimplification of the next level, on the third floor the individual begins to morally disengage from society, increasing the distinction between self and the "enemy" and considering radical, though not necessarily violent, ideas to counter the injustice.[312] It is at this point that the individual is more vulnerable to skilled recruiters seeking prey for terror-inspired movements. As Sageman's theory suggests, the application of one's situational factor, or the individual's mental state (not mental health), experiences, and beliefs feed into existing social identity issues, making some more susceptible than others to terror recruitment and violent radicalization.[313] The third floor also focuses on moral engagement with the terror organization in terms of giving legitimacy to the terror organization's mission.[314]

On the fourth and fifth floors the radicalization process becomes increasingly dangerous; individuals begin to narrow their options for resolution and determine that violence is a viable means to right the wrong being committed.[315] Once individuals have climbed to the fourth floor, there is little to no opportunity to leave. More than any physical impediment to leaving, new recruits are heavily socialized into the traditions, tactics, and goals of the terrorist organization.[316] The powerful psychological effects of this new in-group lead to a perception that the narrowed options for amelioration, other than committing acts of violence against civilians—and often themselves—are considerably fewer than they truly are.

The fifth floor is where the act of violence is ultimately carried out. In the final stages, conformity and obedience are the psychological motivations contributing to violence, according to King and Taylor.[317] Moghaddam explains that two essential

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[312] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007), 74.

[313] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 607.

[314] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007), 74.

[315] Moghaddam, 73–75.

[316] Moghaddam, 75–76.

[317] King and Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists," 608.

psychological processes occur in this phase that essentially eliminate any inhibitory mechanisms. The first is social categorization, wherein individuals fully understand civilians to be the enemy and part of the out-group. This is underscored by the second phase, which exaggerates the differences between the in-group and the out-group, known as logical distance.[318] When considering the influence of conformity and obedience in conjunction with the previously discussed psychological implications of stigmatization, it is more easily understood how inhibitory mechanisms are removed from the equation. This finding does not fully consider the impact of situational factors, the potential for mental health issues, the role of technology in facilitating recruitment, or operational terrorist activity.

One of the most telling results from leveraging the staircase to terrorism theory is that it empirically demonstrates the main fallacy with current CVE practices: that efforts are best implemented by law enforcement. Neither the first nor the second levels of the staircase require the individual to carry out any criminal acts. It is only on the upper-level floors where a legal argument for law enforcement intervention can apply. Efforts by law enforcement to engage in prevention, prior to any actual criminal activity, contribute to the ineffectiveness of CVE efforts.

D. CONCLUSION

While the purpose of CVE programming is to prevent individuals from embarking on the metaphorical staircase, the comprehensive analysis of CVE policy, practice, and feedback in this thesis reveals that the unintended consequences may encourage—rather than counter—violent extremism. If the USG does not immediately recognize and reverse the problems with existing domestic CVE policy and programming, federal efforts may be putting vulnerable individuals from communities targeted by domestic CVE efforts on a pathway to violence.

[318] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007), 75.

V. CONCLUSION

> One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.
>
> Milton Friedman[319]

This thesis has studied the adverse, unintended consequences of U.S. CVE efforts to explore their effectiveness as part of the nation's counterterrorism mission to prevent violent extremism. Unintended consequences are neither easily proven nor applied regularly in social science. The ultimate goal for this research is to provide a constructive contribution toward the shared CVE mission, and this chapter specifically serves to unite the problem with research that empirically substantiates or disproves the hypothesis. To do so, this chapter summarizes the problem, research, and analytical methodologies that empirically substantiate the hypothesis. This concluding chapter also offers data-driven recommendations to improve CVE efforts moving forward. It is worth repeating that the adverse, unintended consequences identified in this thesis do not suggest the absence of any positive outcomes. Rather, as also mentioned, this thesis argues that the consequences are so damaging and pervasive that they unfortunately cannot be offset by positive, intended outcomes.

A. RESEARCH SUMMARY

Violent extremism in America is no longer an unfamiliar threat. It has become a familiar complexity in the highly political and divisive nature of U.S. counterterrorism and national security policy. This thesis hypothesized that, since 2011—with the implementation of the *National Strategy*, including updated guidance in 2016—the adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts in the United States have made the intended strategy goals unachievable. The hypothesis further projects that USG efforts to operationalize the *National Strategy* through the *SIP* are resulting in greater national

[319] Ben Duronio, "9 Unforgettable Quotes from Milton Friedman," Business Insider, July 31, 2012, https://www.businessinsider.com/milton-friedman-quotes-2012-7.

insecurity by contributing to various sociopsychological incubators of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism. The research herein has proven this hypothesis correct.

To create a comprehensive foundation of publicly available information from which to identify the unintended consequences, the researcher first evaluated existing CVE strategies and approaches. The result—an extensive literature review—catalogued previously dispersed, anecdotal narratives from a broad range of individuals and organizations into a single data set. Next, the researcher conducted a comparative case study analysis of the Commonwealth of Australia, which has been developing, evaluating, and revising similar CVE programming longer than the United States; the maturity of these findings offer credible lessons learned for U.S. strategy and approaches. The researcher applied these findings to Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism theory to identify the consequences of domestic CVE efforts.[320] This multifaceted approach exposed impacts to CVE-targeted communities and determined CVE efforts' effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—as part of the national security strategy.

No research is without limitations. Two noteworthy limitations of this research include the deliberate use of only open-source information and the specific use or omission of terms commonly associated with CVE efforts. Leveraging only open-source information was an intentional design element, as it exposed both the quantity and quality of authoritative information. This offers public officials managing CVE programs a better understanding of how and why public perception about CVE exists as it does, and offers opportunities to improve information sharing. Additionally, information free from government "For Official Use Only," "Sensitive but Unclassified," or "Law Enforcement Sensitive" restrictions ensures the widest dissemination and critique of this research. Both are necessary if this research is to be a constructive contribution toward national security and counterterrorism policy improvements. As for the deliberate inclusion or omission of terminology and case studies commonly associated with studies on violent extremism, Chapter I extensively explained this intentional design element. Examples include:

[320] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007).

- Using the term Daesh rather than ISIS
- Avoiding religious terms such as Salafi and jihad
- Leveraging existing definitions of terrorism and violent extremism instead of redefining these debated concepts
- Eliminating Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as comparative case study candidates despite extensive literature available on their programs.

Finally, a core theme contributing to the findings is validation of the *words matter* platitude and disparity between word and deed in CVE policy and programming. Careful word choice speaks to the integrity and intent of this work.

B. FINDINGS

The research determined an overarching conclusion, as previously mentioned: that U.S. CVE practices have resulted in greater national insecurity. This thesis explored adverse, unintended consequences within two organizational themes: inherent vulnerabilities in the *National Strategy* and flawed execution of the *SIP* that endanger core democratic principles. Not only is the United States failing to address the actual evolving threat of violent extremism, but in its attempt to do so, it could also be pushing marginalized individuals further along the complex journey toward radicalization to violent extremism.

CVE efforts are plagued by inherent strategic and implementation vulnerabilities. Such challenges include a lack information on the status and/or outcome of the three-city pilot initiative and future of the CVE Task Force. There is little publicly available information on the role that non-law enforcement–centered federal agencies play in CVE programming, such as the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, a significant gap in the foundation of CVE is the lack of priority on rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated and recently released inmates who were charged with material support to terrorism. The evidence also suggests a lack of attention on domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism in CVE programming,

despite rhetoric suggesting its importance. In part because of the absence of federal domestic terrorism criminal statues, the divisive socio-political ideologies that drive national security agendas in the United States appear to play a large role. For instance, the 2016 iterations of the CVE *National Strategy* and *SIP* fail to address the liability around incarceration issues or domestic terrorism.[321] More so, as discussed at length in the literature review, the 2016 update has drawn heavy criticism for not reflecting three main areas: stakeholder and researcher feedback from community-based individuals and organizations involved with CVE, updated research on the social psychology of violent extremism published after 2011, and preventing all types of violent extremism consistent with threat data.

The disparity between word and deed in terms of U.S. efforts to prevent all forms of violent extremism is perhaps the most essential inherent vulnerability in U.S. CVE efforts. There is little evidence that current efforts seek to prevent radicalization to violence from actors outside the Muslim community, or inspired by Daesh or Al-Qaeda. CVE efforts neither identify nor prioritize individuals inspired by domestic violent extremist organizations or ideologies. This decision contradicts the concerns expressed by law enforcement agencies and communities implementing the national CVE strategy nationwide, as established in Chapter IV. It also most significantly contributes to the systemic and institutional racial profiling and stigmatization issues addressed throughout this thesis.

DHS's decision in July 2017 to revoke CVE grant funding from organizations that use nonsecuritized (or non-law enforcement–centered) methods and that focus on sociopsychological approaches to prevent all forms of violent extremism only exacerbated this vulnerability.[322] An absence of publicly available information on the USG CVE decision-making process only further opens the aperture for anti-CVE narratives. These intrinsic issues contribute to greater national insecurity by misidentifying actual violent

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[321] Executive Office of the President, *National Strategy* (2011); Executive Office of the President, *Strategic Implementation Plan* (2016).

[322] Hansler, "DHS Shifts Focus of Funding."

extremist threats, leading to the misappropriation of federal risk-mitigation funds and the alienation of the very stakeholders charged in the *National Strategy* as the center of the whole-of-society solution to violent extremism.

Another theme encapsulated by the adverse, unintended consequences is the danger to democracy. This research demonstrates the ways in which CVE is, or appears to be, encroaching on the shared values of limited government, right to privacy, due process, and equality among protected classes. The inherent vulnerabilities in the U.S. CVE strategy and approach feed into racial profiling and stigmas. These findings are all disconcertingly interrelated. Racial profiling as a contentious element of U.S. policy did not begin with CVE, but this research demonstrates how it has unequivocally intensified issues of systemic racism in America. The lasting sociopsychological impacts of racial profiling and stigma on individuals within communities targeted by CVE efforts contributes to the endangerment of democracy.

Literature on stigma reveals little difference between real, perceived, or anticipated stigma as it pertains to impact on the stigmatized individual. As an unintended consequence of CVE efforts, the distinction matters even less. The way that stigmatized individuals respond to societal categorization is of specific concern to CVE. Through a complex, individualized process, self-stigma suggests individuals may adopt the psychology and behavior of the *virtual social identity group* to which they have been assigned as part of their search for a social identity group.[323] Similar to racial profiling, stigma threatens democracy by leading to violations of equal protection statutes and providing substance for developing and fostering sentiments of relative deprivation.[324] This thesis explains the destructive and lasting generational effect to individuals who believe persistent and systemic stigma has infringed on their rights and on the democratic principles on which the nation relies as a contributing threat to national security.

The principal finding of this research—achieved through a holistic identification of unintended consequences analyzed through Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism—is that

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[323] Moore, Stuewig, and Tangney, "Jail Inmates' Perceived and Anticipated Stigma."

[324] Glaser, *Suspect Race*, 123.

the adverse, unintended consequences of CVE efforts act as drivers toward an individual's complex journey of becoming a violent extremist.[325] Chapter IV explains that although the majority of people with feelings of relative deprivation, marginalization, or discontent do not become violent extremists, the persistent and deteriorating conditions leading to those sentiments catapult vulnerable individuals toward path of radicalization to violence. While provocative and alarming, a key finding of this research is that CVE efforts are arguably doing more harm to national security efforts.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis offers a foundation for reconstituting CVE strategy and for providing risk mitigation and national security improvements. The recommendations in this section discuss both what the USG should and *should not* do as part of the improvement process. However, before implementing the recommendations and above all else, it is essential for the USG to fundamentally shift two national security principles. First, the federal government must emphasize in both rhetoric and practice its commitment to balanced public safety and civil liberties; the two are not mutually exclusive. Second, the federal government must assess the threat to national security thorough a comprehensive and bipartisan geopolitical lens. Despite current ideological and political propaganda, data from the last forty-one years shows that the chance of someone dying in a terror attack on U.S. soil at the hands of a foreign-born *individual* is 1 in 3.6 million, while the chance of being killed by a foreign-born *refugee*, specifically, is 1 in 3.6 *billion*.[326] As such, current public policy that conflates criminal violent extremist and terrorist activity with partisan, civil immigration reform as part of national security policy is increasing the nation's vulnerability.

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[325] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism" (2007).

[326] Alex Nowrasteh, *Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis* (Policy Analysis No. 798) (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2016), https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa798_2.pdf.

(1) What *Not* to Do

When it comes to CVE specifically, the first recommendation is something the USG should *not* do: maintain the CVE status quo. Doing so will perpetuate more harm than good; it will continue to incubate violent extremist radicalization. There is little publicly available information that explains the Trump administration's decision to either terminate or sustain the White House CVE Task Force mission through which DHS and DOJ receive strategic guidance and oversight. This lack of clear guidance, combined with divisive sociopolitical and ideological content from individuals within this administration (as discussed in Chapters II and IV), makes the notion of continued status-quo programming gravely concerning.

Additionally, the USG should *not* replace the term *countering violent extremism* with revised language without addressing the very issues that substantiate the name change. Anonymous government sources have reported discussion among the Trump administration about changing CVE to "countering Islamic extremism."[327] It is inadvisable to institute a new, inflammatory title that excludes all types of violent extremism. Such a change would exacerbate the consequences of current CVE efforts, along with sentiments of relative deprivation—as proven by lessons learned from international partners.[328] While a new, Islam-centered title would more appropriately reflect the apparent interest of current CVE efforts, it does little to accomplish the terrorism prevention mission. That said, so long as the USG fails to establish legal statute criminalizing domestic terrorism and designating domestic terrorist organizations, a generic terrorism prevention rename would also be inconsequential.

(2) What to Do

The following four recommendations (listed in no particular order) explain what the USG *can* do to improve CVE. While the recommendations are individually important, they are also codependent for maximum overall success.

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[327] The Soufan Group, "Rebranding Countering Violent Extremism," *IntelBrief*, February 3, 2017, http://www.soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-rebranding-countering-violent-extremism/.

[328] Romaniuk, "Does CVE Work?"

The first recommendation is to restructure CVE efforts such that policies and programs are evidence-based. Employing credible information as the foundation for strategic policy and planning would ensure data-driven decision making and the appropriate allocation of resources to threat mitigation.

Second, Congress must establish a federal criminal statue for domestic terrorism. Despite the PATRIOT Act's enhanced definition of domestic terrorism—allowing for additional investigative freedom and stricter sentencing guidelines for convicted individuals—there remains no federal criminal domestic terrorism statue. It is unclear why Congress has yet to take on the issue of domestic terror. While this unknown provides an opportunity for future research, it also provides an opening for individual agendas to shape and propagate narratives. For example, some hypothesize that there remains no federal criminal domestic terrorism statue because adding such a statute would likely result in the classification of certain domestic hate groups as terrorist organizations. Such a change in public policy would certainly be of concern for publicly elected officials who have personal, professional, and economic ties to these organizations.

Third, and importantly, the government must fundamentally restructure its CVE programming to prioritize prevention over intervention. An informed and resilient community is one that is well positioned to prevent, respond to, and recover from natural and manmade threats and disasters, such as hurricanes and gang activity, respectively. Just as whole-of-community approaches are used to foster security and resiliency, they should be applied to preventing violent extremists from grooming and recruiting vulnerable individuals. Prevention focuses on building resilience through community-led programs supported (economically and otherwise) by all levels of government and social services. New CVE policies should reflect the social psychology of gang recruitment tactics and apply prevention best practices before individuals ever enter the criminal justice system. Rather than focusing on the tactical means by which radicalized individuals commit acts of violence, the key to prevention is focusing on the sociopsychological factors of why individuals radicalize to violence at all.

Finally, this thesis recommends that the USG redevelop its CVE strategy to mandate and resource non-security-focused federal agencies, such as the Department of

Health and Human Services rather than the Department of Justice, to engage in the rehabilitation and reintegration process of incarcerated and released prisoners with related convictions. This goal further justifies the need for a criminal domestic terrorism statute to identify and capture needed metrics accurately. This recommendation includes requiring the DOJ and Bureau of Prisons to disclose personally identifiable information on incarcerated and recently released individuals, and grant federal agencies and/or federally funded organizations access to those still in prison. Successful execution of this recommendation would also require the USG to create a standard lexicon of terms, such that policymakers and those implementing policy work through the conflation of complex and/or divisive terminology and use terms appropriately. Extensive training for these practitioners is also required to ensure they understand the constitutionally protected rights and liberties of the individuals they engage, regardless of their criminal history.

D. CONCLUSION

Current CVE efforts in the United States serve as a strong example of the ends not justifying the means. In this case, the research shows that the means are actually contradicting the intended outcomes by enhancing the threat of violent extremism. While the purpose of CVE programming is to prevent individuals from ascending the metaphorical staircase to terrorism, a comprehensive analysis of CVE policy and practice reveals that the adverse, unintended consequences may actually push vulnerable individuals toward radicalization to violence.

Credible nongovernmental organizations with which the USG seeks to partner are returning federal grant funding out of fear of disingenuous intentions and alienating their constituents; this shows that relationships between government and nongovernmental entities, for the purpose of preventing terrorism, are moving in the wrong direction. The Trump administration has produced little publicly available information evaluating the *National Strategy* implementation, including its successes. However, in its April 2017 report to congressional requestors, the GAO determined that the government has achieved only nineteen of the forty-four tasks outlined in the *SIP* and that it cannot be determined if

the United States is "better off today as a result of its CVE efforts than it was in 2011."[329] By analyzing open-source information, this research furthers the GAO finding by demonstrating that the United States is, in fact, not better off; it is actually less secure as a result of CVE efforts.

This GAO report is but one example of how the federal government's communication on national security strategies is worsening. Both remaining post-9/11 public policy and recent conflation of counterterrorism and immigration reform have further highlighted CVE as an ineffective means of reducing the threat. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants of Mid- and Near-East, South Asian, and North African descent remain the target of discriminatory public policy (or public policy attempts) more now than ever. Discussed at length in Chapter IV, the violent extremist threat from domestic hate groups far surpasses the threat from self-identified Muslims. As the GAO reported in 2017, violent far-right extremist attacks were the most prevalent type of violent extremism during ten out of the fifteen years of study since 9/11.[330]

Nonetheless, the Trump administration released a presidential executive order in 2017 that temporarily banned all refugees and suspicious travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States; this is a prime example of U.S. policy reacting to politics and perception instead of intelligence reports and data-driven threat information.[331] Further evidence of this is President Trump's October 22, 2018, tweet in which he made false, racist, and stigmatizing propaganda that "criminals and unknown Middle Easterners" were partaking in a group of asylum seekers traveling to the United States through the southern border.[332] Furthermore, even if these asylum seekers and refugees had been of Middle Eastern origin, the implication of an inherent national security

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[329] GAO, *Countering Violent Extremism: Actions*, 16.

[330] GAO, 3.

[331] White House, "Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorists Entry into the United States," March 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states-2/.

[332] Maegan Vazquez, "Trump Admits 'There's No Proof' of His 'Unknown Middle Easterners' Caravan Claim," CNN, October 23, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/23/politics/donald-trump-proof-unknown-middle-easterners-migrant-caravan/index.html.

threat is xenophobic and unfounded. To date, no refugees accepted in the United States have been implicated in a terrorist attack. Most terrorist attacks in the United States have been at the hands of born or naturalized citizens, or legal permanent residents originally from countries *not* identified in the presidential executive order.[333] For the first time since immediately after the 9/11 attacks, research shows the quality of life for American Muslims and American Arabs is substantially worsening.[334] Instances of Anti-Muslim and Anti-Arab sentiments, targeted hate speech, and hate crime activity increased 67 percent between 2014 and 2016.[335] Furthermore, despite government reports of Daesh foreign fighter recruitment efforts steadily declining since 2015, reducing the foreign fighter threat remains a national security priority.[336] Meanwhile, domestic gang recruitment—from nearly 33,000 known violent street, motorcycle, and prison gangs already totaling more than 1.4 million people—is on the rise.[337]

Probabilistic-based national security versus catastrophic or risk-based national security is not a new concept. When applied to national security risk in the context of this research, however, an even stronger case is made for legally redefining terrorism and fundamentally redeveloping counterterrorism strategies in the United States. While undoubtedly a more difficult task, this thesis argues that an alternate approach to improve national security efforts more consistently and holistically is to prioritize policy and resources toward probable, rather than improbable, security incidents, despite a potentially more catastrophic outcome.

The culmination of all the adverse, unintended consequences identified in this thesis has led to the conclusion that CVE efforts are exacerbating—and even contributing to—factors that push marginalized individuals toward a path to violent extremism, thus

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[333] Nowrasteh, *Terrorism and Immigration*.

[334] Clay, "Muslims in America, Post 9/11," 72.

[335] Lichtblau, "U.S. Hate Crimes Surge 6%."

[336] "Flow of Foreign ISIS Recruits Much Slower Now, U.S. Says," CBS News, April 26, 2016, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/less-foreign-isis-recruits/.

[337] "What We Investigate: Gangs," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed March 21, 2018, https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/gangs.

making the nation less secure. The threat of the USG contributing to sociopsychological drivers of radicalization to violence is real. Recognizing this, and improving national security policy and the CVE strategy, is not simply an act of pontification. As proven in this research, reform is an urgent responsibility of publicly elected officials and civil servants alike.

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