



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Foreign Terrorist Fighters Challenges & Responses, Tabletop Exercise  
July 27-30, 2015, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany**

**INTRODUCTION**

More than 90 practitioners and researchers from over 40 countries gathered at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC) in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, to test an educational tabletop exercise module designed to address the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) phenomenon. Organized by the Partnership for Peace Consortium's (PfPC) Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) and the London-based Asia-Pacific Foundation, the successfully executed TTX module is now ready to "export" to defense education and security studies institutes.

The three-day event featured many prominent figures in the counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) communities, including Professor Alex Schmid, Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative in Vienna; Holland Taylor of the LibForAll Foundation; Brian Jenkins, Senior Advisor to the President of the RAND Corporation; George Selim, White House Director for CVE Policy; Daniel Bartlett, White House Director for Identity Management and Biometrics; and Shaarik Zafar, U.S. Department of State's Special Representative to Muslim Communities. The CTWG is currently fine-tuning the TTX module, and plans to conduct follow-on capacity building exercises in partner countries starting in 2016.

**OVERVIEW**

The CTWG successfully piloted a "Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Challenges and Responses" tabletop exercise (TTX) training module. The conference brought together more than 90 experts to examine the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) phenomenon through expert analysis and debate and a first-of-its-kind interactive TTX. A strong contingent of youth representatives and religious leaders participated in the event in a pioneering effort to bridge generational and inter-disciplinary gaps and infuse fresh perspectives on counter-radicalization and counterterrorism issues. Several CTWG members and participants expressed interest in future collaboration, particularly in utilizing TTX concepts for local, national, and regional capacity-building, educational, and training initiatives – including via defense academies and security studies institutions. For example, participants from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Albania, Belgium, and Bosnia-Herzegovina expressed interest in having the CTWG conduct similar TTXs in their countries. Pending available resources, the CTWG is prepared to "export" the TTX module accordingly.

The event featured many prominent CT and CVE practitioners, who provided valuable perspectives on the challenges and responses related to FTF issues. Professor Alex Schmid, Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative in Vienna, delivered the conference's keynote speech and emphasized the need to counter the contagion of "pious idealism, which is the overriding motivation for violent extremism." Dr. Sajjan Gohel, APF International Security Director, assessed the importance of the ideological narrative that feeds transnational terrorism, and discussed the vital need to develop a robust counter-narrative to expose the half-truths of terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and al-Qaeda. Mr. Shaarik Zafar, U.S. Department of State's Special Representative to Muslim Communities, advocated the importance of being "for" something and not just against violent extremism.



This could be accomplished by changing what it means to be a hero (e.g., highlighting the important work of aid workers). With respect to countering terrorist narratives, he argued for a range of messages, including myth busting, familial appeals, religious arguments, and humor/satire. Dr. Anita Perešin, from Croatia's Office of the National Security Council, examined how social media is used to recruit and groom impressionable women to serve as fighters' wives. Dr. Edit Schlaffer, Executive Director of Women without Borders, highlighted the unique insight and role of the mothers of radicalized youth and emphasized their need for greater societal support. Dr. Veronika Morhart-Klute, Forensic Psychiatrist from Germany, introduced a psycho-analytic perspective to understanding the role of susceptible and at-risk youth, identifying specific personalities that are more likely to become radicalized. Other notable presentations were given by Mr. Brian Michael Jenkins, Senior Advisor to the President of RAND Corporation; Mr. George Selim, White House Director for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Policy; and Mr. Daniel Bartlett, White House Director for Identity Management and Biometrics.

With increased challenges related to FTFs, interfaith dialogue has taken on a central role in helping communities address underlying factors and drivers that can promote radicalization to violence. Meaningful interfaith dialogue calls on faith leaders to think innovatively about possibilities for mutual collaboration based on shared interests. Several religious leaders who participated in the conference emphasized three programmatic development areas, including: 1) identifying and partnering with trusted religious leaders; 2) establishing certification criteria for faith mentors and preachers; and 3) developing reciprocal exchange programs for young adults of different faiths to encourage mutual respect, community cohesion, and cultural understanding. Critical to promoting de-radicalization objectives is a focus on building and strengthening resilient societies that reject extremism.

### ***Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Format***

The conference beta-tested an international TTX that utilized a multiple, concurrent case study methodology to help participants devise effective strategies, formulate policy recommendations, and develop programmatic responses to various terrorism threat scenarios. The event also demonstrated the proof-of-concept of utilizing a TTX as a testbed in developing and implementing comprehensive and synergistic CVE/CT strategies at the local, national, and international level, and helped establish an international counter-FTF "community of practice." International experts were assigned roles based on their experience and expertise in three separate case studies related to:

- 1) Challenging recruitment techniques and violent extremism in vulnerable communities**
- 2) Countering self-starter radicals and fortifying societal resilience**
- 3) Addressing returning foreign fighter challenges and threats**

### **CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

The TTX articulated two key challenges and considerations to be better understood. One challenge is bridging differing opinions regarding the nature of radicalization. Ideologically-based violent extremism and right-wing extremism are increasingly becoming polarizing factors in societies. Perhaps less violent, but still divisive, are views by some that the radicalization process is one in which "innocents" are exposed to and succumb to violent ideologies, while others argue that radicalization is more of a "two-



way street," in which troubled individuals seek violent ideologies that resonate with, reinforce, and rationalize previously held prejudices and aggressive tendencies. It is essential to understand these different drivers and seek ways to overcome the divide.

A second challenge relates to the creation of an "Islamic state" homeland which has galvanized violent Salafists worldwide. Operationally, there was consensus that the *awareness* campaign perpetrated by ISIL portends to exacerbated societal and security-related challenges in the near-term. ISIL's advertisement of unlimited violence in Syria/Iraq has attracted a unique population of violence-prone individuals, and the purposeful attempt to reach and recruit unstable young adults risk contributing to future waves of violence. It is feared that violent extremist ideology may enter popular culture and emerge as a conveyor of individual discontent.

The question remains whether governments, civil society, and the private sector are prepared to combat and address these challenges. To launch meaningful CVE initiatives, governments must "walk the talk" in funding efforts and developing long-term collaborative investments with communities while avoiding "over-securitizing" government-community CVE efforts. Authorities should endorse multi-faceted programs that can tackle online radicalization, but government resources should support, not crowd out private sector and civil society sponsorship of viable counter-narrative initiatives. Governmental authorities must ensure that civil rights and civil liberties are protected locally and nation-wide, while advocating for the same protections regionally and internationally. It was also noted that many countries experience problems in promoting inter-governmental and inter-communal trust and building and sustaining local community resilience.

Important macro-level FTF/CVE policy considerations followed from these concerns:

- **Integration:** are main societal threats from terrorist attacks or unassimilated communities?
- **Prevention:** public and political leaders demand prevention; early intervention is required
- **Volume:** the volume of potential threats could easily overwhelm current international and domestic law enforcement and security service surveillance capacity and capability levels
- **Detection:** actions may be carried out by individuals unknown as potential threat risks
- **Persistence:** years of surveillance may be required

## RESPONSES

The TTX focused on developing innovative, practical solutions from a "whole of society" perspective, including seven Track I (i.e., governmental) and seven Track II (non-governmental and private sector) roles. Participants in all three case studies explored the full spectrum of the FTF cycle, and identified prevention, intervention, and mitigation recommendations in three action-oriented response areas:

- 1) **Strategic communications**
- 2) **Policy recommendations**
- 3) **Program development areas**



## Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes *"Strengthening Democracies Through Knowledge"*

To confront today's FTF threats as well as address future violent extremism challenges, eight priority areas were identified: 1) developing inclusive local, national, and international CT and CVE strategies; 2) empowering youth, women, and religious leaders and civil society more broadly as CVE change agents and actors; 3) developing strategic communications and countering – including via social media – violent extremist messages; 4) generating more positive alternatives for young people vulnerable to FTF recruitment; 5) improving law enforcement and security forces engagement with local communities; 6) amplifying influential religious voices and critical thinking skills; 7) preventing and addressing radicalization to violence in prisons; and 8) rehabilitating and reintegrating disengaged FTFs. For a detailed list of recommendations synthesizing the combined outcomes from all three case study working groups, please see the attached Annex.

### **CONCLUSION AND WAY AHEAD**

In sum, more than 90 participants from national and local governments, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral bodies successfully tested a synergistic, whole-of-society TTX module to address and respond to FTF challenges. The TTX developed robust analytical and practical insights into efforts to address the full spectrum of the FTF threat, and disseminated good CVE/CT practice to promote high-quality, professional education, training, exercise, and evaluation responses for NATO partner defense institutions and security studies institutes, CTWG members, conference participants, NATO, the OSCE, and other international entities. A full, detailed report of the event's outcomes is provided in the attached Annex. The TTX module is now ready for targeted implementation in interested countries and local communities, as part of a broader, international CT/CVE capacity-building effort to address FTF phenomena.

### **Points of Contact:**

- Richard Prosen, U.S. Department of State, CTWG Co-Chair ([ProsenRL@state.gov](mailto:ProsenRL@state.gov));
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## **ANNEX: ACTION-ORIENTED COUNTER-FTF RESPONSE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Strategic Communications**

#### **A. Grass Roots-Level Communications**

##### **Conduct discussions at schools and community centers on the extremist threat and its narrative:**

- Discussions at schools and community centers on the extremist threat and its narrative provide teachers, counselors, and community centers with the information they need to intervene early in the radicalization process. These discussions also institutionalize dialogue between communities and local/national authorities. Best practices and current trends in radicalization can be shared at regularly scheduled meetings, and disillusioned former violent extremists may be brought in to discuss their experiences. Discussions in schools allow at-risk students to hear the truth about terrorist organizations such as ISIL/Da'esh, and discussions at community centers may help to connect local schools and religious institutions, which will support efforts at building a "CVE network." Further, local discussions will assist in shaping local, community-tailored counter-narratives that are essential in CVE and provide a platform for some to voice grievances.

##### **Pilot "Family Members or Victims Voices Portals" to host online testimonies of disillusioned foreign fighters and their potential return:**

- "Family Members or Victims Voices Portals" online specifically target at-risk youth and young adults. Family members of FTFs and/or disillusioned FTFs may share their experiences on an online platform designed to attract the attention of the next generation of potential FTFs. Family members may discuss the pain associated with seeing a loved-one travel to fight in a conflict area, and disillusioned FTFs may testify about the actual situation and living conditions in a conflict area like Syria. Online testimonies are critical as the use of the internet continues to grow, especially among youth. Governments should also promote "shared citizenship" concepts of identities that have broad, mass appeal, and community support.

##### **Issue government threat briefings; promote cooperation between local/national leaders:**

- Sharing information is a central pillar in CVE, and publicizing threat information helps to make citizens more aware, which will facilitate feedback and tipoffs from civil society. Information sharing should flow in all directions, from local authorities to national authorities, national to the local, government to civil society, and civil society to government. When government authorities begin to show their trust in civil society by providing threat briefings, civil society is more likely to reciprocate and share knowledge and information with officials. Threat briefings also allow civil society to understand the concerns of law enforcement and security services and promote shared understanding of actions and responsibilities. Trust and confidence build when all parties involved share information and proactively engage with each another.

##### **Develop speaker guidelines for voices against violent extremism:**

- Developing speaker guidelines for voices against violent extremism assists in institutionalizing presentations given by disillusioned FTFs or their family members (e.g., see: [www.usmmm.org](http://www.usmmm.org)). A centralized government bureau or NGO tasked with overseeing the arrangements and scheduling of



speakers allows interested parties (schools, communities, civic groups, etc.) to know who to contact and ensures that quality speakers are provided. The centralization of speakers also helps to coordinate activities and increases the chances that speakers and interested parties can be matched properly. Guidelines may specify the type of speaker format (lecture, interview, or panel discussions), assist in providing context, and support general planning related to the event. Guidelines should promote a memorable experience and not filter and/or restrict dialogue.

**Encourage proactive responses from religious and community leaders:**

- Given the centrality of religious and community leaders in establishing and maintaining strong societal resilience, they also have the potential to play fundamental roles in responding to issues connected to FTFs. Religious and community leaders also serve as effective multipliers for governmental authorities (police, intelligence communities) and can contribute to redefining what it means to be a hero by proactively speaking out in prevention of and in response to FTF events.

**Deploy solid crisis communication systems to prevent circulation of half-truths and disinformation:**

- Strategic communications and carefully crafted narratives are central tools used by extremist groups like ISIL to attract recruits. In the aftermath of FTF-related incidents, it is essential that communities deploy solid crisis communications systems to clearly and consistently address incidents' facts to prevent the circulation of half-truths and disinformation.

**Develop offline de-radicalization initiatives to counter online radicalization narratives:**

- While developing a strong and resonant counter-narrative is essential for combatting ISIL's own narrative, it must be accompanied by proactive and sustainable offline de-radicalization initiatives (community driven and peer-group enforced) to counter and deter susceptibility to ISIL propaganda.

***B. Construct a Strong and Resonant Counter-Narrative Based on Action***

**Promote discussions on questions of identity (e.g., what does it mean to be a responsible citizen?):**

- To prevent susceptibility to extremist ideology, it is important for citizens to feel a sense of belonging to and attachment with their national identity. Programs should be developed that foster a positive identity and emphasize citizens' responsibility to their community, society, and nation.

**Recognize significance of radical Islamist ideology, remove extremists' ownership of narrative; debunk myths within ideological narratives:**

- Radical Islamist ideology works, such as Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*, Abdullah Azzam's *Join the Caravan*, and Abu Bakr Naji's *Management of Savagery*, play a fundamental role in radicalizing susceptible recruits and inducing them to join the ranks of ISIL and other terrorist groups. It is important for this ideology-based link to be recognized and to be directly combatted by discrediting and removing extremists' ownership of the narrative and their perversion of Islam.

**Publicize alternative role models (redefine the "hero") and successful interfaith initiatives:**

- ISIL is succeeding in portraying its fighters as holy warriors and heroes. This myth must be met head-on by defining what it means to be a hero and publicizing alternative role models, based on common and relatable archetypes such as respected religious and community leaders.



**Develop community-led micro-strategies to ensure communication channels exist among at-risk populations, government authorities, and civil society leadership:**

- Governments must create a CVE joint task force that engages government and civil society organizations consistently to share information, build trust, and mitigate potential violent situations through a "whole-of-society" approach. This effort aims to provide early warning of potential problems so that interventions may occur as early as possible. Suggested channels include: mentoring and counseling for at-risk individuals or families; establishing Safe Spaces for families seeking legal advice on de-radicalization methods; ensuring schools, teachers, and social services are informed of potential at-risk individuals. New employment opportunities must also be created for inter-government/community agency positions that are given the appropriate security level clearances to ensure communities are informed.

**Utilize returnee narratives as a resource in communications:**

- Returnee narratives are imperative to expose the harrowing and inhumane nature of war, rather than allowing ISIL's glorification of war to continue poisoning society. Aligned with "Family Members or Victims Voices Portals," these messages will ensure returnees and victims can be effective resources to prevent and counter extremism.

**Policy Recommendations**

***A. Build Social Capital and Strengthen Societal Resilience***

**To promote integration, host communities must continue to create welcoming environments for immigrant communities:**

- Governments should be active in their support for immigrants, and NGOs must play a vital role, as well. Governments, NGOs, and host communities need to all work together to develop a proper system that provides immigrants with crucial services, such as financial support, education stipends, and language learning services. The goal must be to mitigate the isolation of immigrant communities and allow them to function as part of the larger civil society, while recognizing and permitting communities to retain their cultural identities. Community-based policing and a diversified government workforce also promote the type of welcoming environments required.

**Differentiate CVE programs from counterterrorism efforts, tactics, and operations:**

- CVE programs, while not completely isolated from counterterrorism efforts, should be differentiated in order to promote early intervention and allow individuals to exit the radicalization cycle with less consequence. Young people should feel safe to openly discuss issues related to their feelings, thoughts, and concerns about violent extremism without fear of reprisal from security services or law enforcement, if they have not yet broken any laws. Community hotlines for family members and conflicted individuals should not be connected to law enforcement channels. Authorities' differentiation between potential FTFs and those who may be in the process of radicalizing is important to determine what type of intervention is needed.



**Develop and implement strong CT and CVE legislation, consistent with international law:**

- Strong CT and CVE legislation provides law enforcement and security services with the necessary tools to protect civil society from threats and allows the government to intervene early with those seriously considering travel to conflict areas. UNSCR 2178 (2014) requires countries to prevent suspected FTFs from entering or transiting their territories and to implement legislation to prosecute FTFs. The ability for governments to prosecute FTFs remains a significant deterrent for many potential FTFs. CT and CVE legislation should be human rights compliant, while also ensuring that government authorities have the ability to share information with international partners.

**Develop meaningful policies and legislation on immigration, potential returnees, asylum seekers, use of force against expatriates participating in violence in conflict zones, and clearly define thresholds where radicalization and radical activities are considered criminal:**

- Implement a risk-based assessment (e.g., acquiring and analyzing information on probationers who are considered high risk) of individuals deemed to be threats to society. Such an assessment policy should be adapted for specific environments, including borders, prisons, and radical activities at educational institutions. Government authorities should develop enhanced training and responsibilities for border police and improve immigration background checks.

**Promote access to basic and intermediate-level language learning services:**

- Learning the language of the host community assists immigrants with their integration into the larger civil society. Governments may choose to tie "stay-permits" with language exams to ensure immigrants have equal access to careers in their new country, as language proficiency is a prerequisite for most jobs. Governments or NGOs may take the lead on promoting language-learning services. It is important for language-learning services to be easily accessible, and ideally immigrants should not have travel far to take advantage of these services.

**Promote anti-discrimination, civil rights, and civil liberties legislation (provide avenues of redress and address grievances):**

- Civil rights and civil liberties legislation should be promoted alongside strong CT and CVE legislation. Strong civil rights and civil liberties legislation proves that the government is committed to securing the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law. This legislation offers avenues of redress for individuals who feel their civil rights or civil liberties have been violated. It also provides outlets for grievances to be heard, which may provide an alternative to violent extremism for some individuals. Promoting respect for civil rights and civil liberties and promoting appropriate attention to discriminatory matters creates a more welcoming environment for immigrant and minority communities.

**Devise systematic standards to determine early intervention engagement:**

- Governments must be active in their narrative on what constitutes legal requirements for intervention to reduce the risk of radicalization. Law enforcement and inter-government agencies must be involved with local policing/community-level communication. Communities must also be involved in early detection and awareness of at-risk individuals and groups. To ensure information is exchanged at all levels, a platform should be established in which schools, religious leaders, peers, and/or parents can cooperate together with governmental authorities to tackle violent extremism.





**Consider criminalizing intent to travel abroad to conflict areas and support of violent extremism:**

- Governments must debate the legality of what determines 'criminalized intent' to travel abroad. Inter-agencies must be able to access information and communicate on at-risk travelling persons, whether that is oriented on e.g., previous criminal history or suspicious internet activity. To improve cooperation and utilize agencies such as Interpol, including use of databases and notices to contribute to risk-based assessment is necessary to assess quickly people entering their country; this is ensured by the sharing of information.

**Promote public service sector diversity and build training capacities:**

- The public service sector workforce should represent the diversity of the country. Specifically, public servants working in communities should represent the diversity of those communities. Public servants with daily access to communities, such as teachers and police officers, should receive training on how to spot and prevent radicalization, and how to interact with parents of youth who may be susceptible to being radicalized. Additionally, governments should assist in building the capacity of civil society to intervene when necessary without having to rely on government organizations. NGO and civil society platforms engaged in social work efforts are examples of potential mechanisms for governments to fund and train.

**Promote government agencies making themselves accessible to communities and organize community activities to prevent polarization:**

- Government agencies can make themselves more accessible to communities through a number of mechanisms. For example, governments could establish an interagency policy committee (IPC) platform that incorporates civil society. While such a platform would have to be held at an unclassified level, it would nevertheless assist the interagency in considering civil society's ideas when developing policy guidance. Aside from an IPC platform, governments can institutionalize dialogue with communities through regular meetings to discuss the current violent extremism landscape. Government agencies could also provide communities with the latest threat briefings, which may help to inspire community trust and confidence in local law enforcement. Countering polarization in communities and "us" versus "them" thinking is essential to de-escalating frustration within communities. If communities tend to be isolated and self-segregating, school exchanges and collaborative events when children are young may help bridge differences and give young adults the opportunity to get to know peers from other communities. Policies should be adapted for specific environments, including borders, prisons, and educational institutions (e.g., teachers should receive radicalization awareness training).

**Promote "Duty of Care" among social networks:**

- If citizens collectively identify with their statuses as community members and national citizens, their susceptibility to adopting an alternative identity rooted in the negativity of ISIL propaganda will arguably decrease. Inherent in this equation is the promotion of a "Duty of Care" among social networks (i.e., if citizens trust and feel responsible to one another, they will be more likely to report suspicious behavior that could prevent acts of violent extremism). Countries and communities should develop critical thinking and knowledge transfer in educational efforts to counter propaganda, given the centrality of extremist ideology and propaganda in the radicalization process, and equip individuals with the intellectual tools to debunk myths within extremist narratives.



**Develop critical thinking skills, integrate school systems, and invest in equitable education for all (bussing, classroom diversity):**

- Integrated school systems are essential as schools represent the primary mechanism for children to gain exposure to peers from different backgrounds and cultures. The government could close isolated schools and provide bussing for students to other schools in adjacent communities. Governments may provide financial assistance to families to help ensure equal access to top schools. Career training is equally important, and the business community could develop a program that partners businesses and schools, allowing at-risk students to complete internships at local businesses. If students successfully complete internships, businesses may sponsor the students and award scholarships for the students to continue their education. Critical thinking skills and knowledge transfer in educational efforts are necessary to counter extremist propaganda. Governments need to find a balance in their educational systems that promote host societal and cultural values and the needs of the communities as complementary.

**Promote development of consistent Islamic education curricula in non-Islamic world:**

- For upstream prevention, Governments must encourage equivalent Islamic education at home. Balance in the educational system must be developed to promote host societal and cultural values and the needs of the communities as complementary. Educational Islamic resources and teaching at home must be positive, which ultimately questions the morals of pan-Islamic radical ideology. If the correct platforms are in place, it reduces the attraction of studying Islam abroad.

**Promote interfaith dialogue and consider certification of trusted religious leaders:**

- Interfaith dialogue promotes tolerance, mutual collaboration, and future cooperation. It provides a platform for religious leaders to openly support each other's communities, bridging differences that would otherwise remain disconnected. The certification of trusted religious leaders allows government and civil society to know whether religious leaders are playing a positive role in the interfaith community and whether religious leaders are willing to speak-up against attempts to polarize faiths.

**Deepen and institutionalize engagement with communities (use gateways, not gatekeepers):**

- Governments can deepen and institutionalize engagement with communities by scheduling regular meetings and threat briefings in a "town hall" format where two-way communication is encouraged. Local level task forces comprising equal numbers of government and civil society representatives may serve as strategic planning committees for community-tailored CVE strategies. Governments can also allocate social workers to communities for long-term assignments, allowing time for social workers and communities to get to know one another, thereby building trust and confidence in the system. It is important for governments to use gateways into communities and not gatekeepers. Gateways provide every community member with access to government representatives rather than having to first go through a "middle man" or designated representatives. This allows all community members to feel that they have ownership in government-community relations.

**Exchange best practices, collaborate in diaspora engagement, and connect communities of interest:**

- Collecting and disseminating information and good practice, transnationally or internationally, to prevent radicalization is a verified method. To discredit and reduce the risk of FTF, we must engage



with de-radicalized returnees to expose the harrowing nature of war. By utilizing returnee narratives, families who have lost loved ones or communities affected by radicalization can discuss and address grievances and other sensitive issues. This can be achieved through online-testimonies, safe spaces, or engagement events that support and connect families, individuals, and key community organizations.

**Conduct inclusive engagement – women groups, youth, professional associations, and civil societies:**

- Governments must ensure they are reaching all sectors of the community including women's groups, youth, and professional associations. This can be done by ensuring engagements are always open and widely publicized. It is also crucial for governments to reach out directly and be proactive in attracting the attention of various sectors of the community, encouraging different sectors to take ownership and leadership on certain CVE initiatives.

**Develop more effective, rapid police response and promote police/NGO coordination during crises:**

- Rapid police response can only be achieved if the correct platforms of intelligence sharing and trust within the community have been built and are assured. Inter-agency intelligence sharing must be improved to develop rapid response. Governments must work with NGO's and community groups to promote positive coordination. Police Community Support Officers are vital to bridge gaps to ensure the community is actively involved in appropriate CVE responses. Government agencies should also promote cooperation, information-sharing, and team-building via realistic practical exercises that include civil society representatives.

**Identify and fortify soft targets during periods of heightened threats:**

- For potential vulnerable soft targets (such as theaters and shopping malls), risk-based threat analyses should be undertaken and strategies and contingency plans should be developed to fortify a select number of potential soft targets in a phased and coordination approach. Agencies should exercise and train to build resilience and security against wide-ranging hazards and challenges.

**Create robust prison rehabilitation programs; provide comprehensive pastoral care training; develop detainee risk assessments; create enhanced re-entry vocational programs:**

- Robust rehabilitation programs in prisons are necessary to reduce the chances of recidivism once imprisoned violent extremists are released. These programs may also diminish the chances of further radicalization in prison, especially if rehabilitation programs are prison-wide rather than focused on certain inmates. Prison chaplains play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of prisoners and should receive comprehensive training (including psychological, ethical, sociological, and societal training) and government certification. Training and certification of chaplains provides reassurance to prisons and allows chaplains to carry out their efforts as intended. Risk assessments for detainees' re-entry into society assist authorities in the prioritization and allocation of resources to monitor those who may continue to pose a threat after release from incarceration. Risk assessments should be based on multiple factors (i.e., seriousness of committed offense, behavior in prison, local and national dynamics at the time of release) and distributed widely to local authorities (including adjacent communities) and national authorities. Enhanced re-entry vocational programs provide former detainees with a job upon their release. Jobs allow former detainees to take ownership of their lives, create a sense of responsibility, and lessen the chances of recidivism.



Government agencies should also implement prison system rehabilitation initiatives, which include humane detainee treatment and visitation rights.

### **B. Promote Information Sharing**

#### **Coordinate intelligence communities to detect actions leading to plots (consider limited, targeted cooperation mechanisms with social media companies on high-value cases):**

- Governments should introduce policies to tackle the sensitive nature of intelligence sharing. If legal methods can be introduced, then channels of communication between social media companies, inter-government agencies, or community groups should be considered to raise awareness of suspicious actions. Moreover, there should be training to help raise the authorities' awareness of potential radicalization to violence factors.

#### **Provide early warning on potential problems so interventions may occur as early as possible with troubled individuals (i.e., not only those who begin pursuing violent extremist pathways):**

- Government authorities should establish and enhance channels of communication between law enforcement, security services, and military leaders so that they are robust and operable during times of civic unrest or crisis. This will promote cooperation, information-sharing, and interagency team-building via realistic practical exercises. Agencies must be able to provide and share early warnings on at-risk individuals. A model based on potential trigger factors must be distributed to civil society and governments to ensure maximum collaboration and awareness. Triggers can be based on multifaceted issues: change in behavior, disrupted family life, and criminal behavior, aligning with gangs or troubled groups, engaging in radical literature, and posting violent extremist views online. Interagency collaboration and intelligence sharing is essential to deter troubled individuals, prevent violence, and thwart potential terrorist plots. Authorities should also develop enhanced training and responsibilities for border police and improve immigration checks.

#### **Consider using and releasing intelligence information as evidence in criminal cases:**

- To the extent possible, governments could consider reassessing policy and legislation on using and releasing intelligence information as evidence in criminal cases. Open, establish, and enhance channels of communication between law enforcement, security services, and military during times of civic unrest or crisis.

#### **Develop mechanisms to feed sanitized intelligence information into civil society:**

- Information sharing must be encouraged via all institutions. Governments must develop robust mechanisms to ensure sanitized intelligence is shared with civil society, as appropriate. This must include re-assessing security access information. Moreover, to ensure intelligence sharing is effective and beneficial to both parties, the police must actively and frequently engaged communities. Governments could also allocate social workers to communities for long-term assignments, allowing time for social workers and communities to build trust and confidence in the system. It imperative to provide communities with access to social and government representatives.



**Advocate for imaginative use of Interpol databases and notices:**

- A secure 24/7 global police network specializing in intelligence and communication is key to prevent FTF. Successful intelligence databases depend on up-to-date available international data. Interpol's effective system of notices is used to issue global travel alerts on persons linked to or ongoing criminal investigation. Border points are critical locations to help detect, restrict, and prevent the travel of suspected individuals. Governments must develop connectivity to Interpol databases such that border police and law enforcement officials have access to information on wanted persons.

**Improve cooperation with Interpol, including use of databases and notices to contribute to risk-based assessments (e.g., acquiring/analyzing information on probationers considered high risk):**

- The collection, analysis, and sharing of travel information should be increased. More robust use of tools and services provided by Interpol and international organizations is essential to reducing the threat of violent extremism. Governments must introduce and exploit interagency intelligence task forces, which have the necessary security clearances to contribute to improving risk-based assessments. Equipping institutions with adequate information and training is necessary for national security. Authorities need to actively update databases and share high risk profiles.

**Promote NATO Allies and Partners exchange of information on illicit trade in weapons (e.g., MANPADs and related weapons systems) and smuggling routes; consider international cooperation on threat-based targeting of smuggling networks:**

- A cooperative, inclusive international network specifically related to illicit weapons trading/smuggling routes must be established. Available data illustrates the need for tighter security controls on small arms/light weapons and military-grade munitions to ensure these systems are not released to criminal groups or violent extremists. Governments should increase defense sector procurement accountability and transparency.

**C. Connect the Dots**

**Develop risk assessments of individuals who pose a threat to society:**

- Early intervention is vital to protect and prevent people from the risk they face. Frameworks must be developed to identify who is at risk, assess the nature and extent of risk, and develop the most appropriate support plans. Within this dimension, engagement, intent, and capability of individuals must be assessed separately to determine the level of threat posed to society. Moreover, channels of communication between local authorities, education and health sectors, social services, and local communities must be open to ensure necessary cross-border assessments.

**Combine structures that recognize need for help and provide help for vulnerable individuals:**

- Vulnerable individuals from any religious or ethnic background must receive support before they may be exploited by those that would want to engage them in extremist or illegal activity. Social services, schools, and local police authorities must communicate to identify vulnerable individuals. Community outreach, mentoring schemes, sports, music, and drama programs are effective tools to provide alternatives for vulnerable individuals.



**Consider revising and updating policies on returnees who have not engaged in illegal activity:**

- Returnees who have not engaged in illegal activity need to be immediately assessed and debriefed. If they do not pose a risk to society, then the focus must be on reintegration and mentorship. It is vital that appropriate support infrastructures are in place. Communication between government agencies and local communities is necessary for successful reintegration.

**Programmatic Development Areas**

***A. Recurring and Consistent Engagement Initiatives at and between National/Local Levels***

**Create a "Parent Network" to improve communications between parent and child:**

- Governments and communities should educate parents in social networking and informal communication methods of youth that correspond with their children's proficiency. Effective communication skills can improve relations and promote greater trust. Courses could be offered either online or offline to help train parents to detect issues and problems.

**Work with NGO leaders to bolster awareness; train NGO volunteers to institute resilience:**

- Governments should introduce strategic volunteer programs to promote community resilience, which is vital to a community's safety and strength. Training and programs should cover: community engagement schemes, neighborhood watch programs, culturally relevant education involvement, and enhanced partnerships with local businesses and governments.

**Empower local community leaders and religious organizations:**

- Community leaders play a central role in building and maintaining societal cohesion and resilience. Special attention should be paid to empowering these local leaders, their organizations, and staffs to equip them with the resources needed to aid at-risk youth and prevent acts of violent extremism.

**Develop integration and assimilation programs for asylum seekers and migrants:**

- Language, education, and vocational programs must be established to assist integration. These programs must be undertaken by local and national authorities and NGOs. The adoption and amalgamation of rule of law, good governance, democracy, and human/civil rights processes must also be systematically introduced.

**Promote mentoring on individual level and foster positive values via peer groups:**

- The combination of individual ownership and a sense of collective belonging are key to preventing and deterring acts of violent extremism. Programs should be established that facilitate one-on-one mentoring by strong, positive role models and peer groups to promote and foster positive values.

***B. Public/Private Sector Partnership – Collaborative Programs and Platforms***

**Develop "Help Lines" to provide resources for those concerned with at-risk youth and those susceptible to radicalization:**

- A mobile and/or online "Help Line" should be established that provides a free, confidential forum for those who need to anonymously alert a reliable, trusted source with information regarding at-



risk youth and individuals. It is also critically important to develop parent support networks and single parent and family outreach.

**Provide security and risk awareness training to all employees of major cultural venues;**

- Training content must be determined by governments. For example, governments should harden soft targets by training ushers/box office workers to recognize distressed or unusual behaviors. Basic security risk assessment training is vital to all employees. Management must have additional training to promote security throughout an organization or private entity. Posters and pamphlets should be distributed; training should include seminars or access to online-video training sessions.

**Implement "After Care" practices and discuss collective trauma and vulnerability in schools:**

- Given the problems posed by returning FTFs and their potential "blowback," there is a strong need for "After Care" programs to be developed that provide educational resources for individuals coping with post-traumatic stress issues.

**Encourage private sector investment in disadvantaged neighborhoods (internship programs, apprenticeship programs, mentorship programs):**

- Governments should encourage private sector investment in disadvantaged neighborhoods to facilitate after-school programs for at-risk youth. These programs may include internships or apprenticeships for youth at local businesses to teach them career skills, vocations, and responsibility, while providing them with a sense of purpose and desire to continue working hard in school. Mentorship programs matching at-risk youth with community leaders also positively influence youth. These programs can also apply to at-risk adults and those without jobs.

**Initiate regular government engagement with and development of Multicultural Youth Advisory Council to promote societal cohesion:**

- The majority of individuals becoming radicalized and joining extremist groups are young adults. It is thus essential that youth are incorporated and fully vested in becoming a part of the solution. Multicultural Youth Advisory Councils could provide relatable mentors for at-risk youth.

**Implement a CVE Sister City Program with partner countries (exchange best practice, collaborate on diaspora engagement, and connect communities of interest):**

- A robust CVE Sister City Program enables cities to import and export best practices and exchange knowledge on the dynamic violent extremist landscape. CVE Communities of Interest may draw on the expertise, successes, and lessons learned from various programs that touch on CVE elements. The idea is to create a network where all stakeholders in CVE programs have the ability to access up-to-date information from partner cities, thereby building vital relationships of both tactical and strategic value. This effort should focus on connecting local governments directly, rather than being another connection for national level authorities.

**Develop and mandate comprehensive cultural sensitivity training for public servants:**

- Developing and mandating comprehensive cultural sensitivity training for public servants is a way to bridge cultural gaps and ensure public servants are in the best position to meet the needs of the people they serve and with whom they interact on a daily basis. Positions that may receive



enhanced training include police officers, teachers, and social workers. For example, cultural sensitivity training for police officers prepares them for community-based policing, and training for teachers prepares them to engage with students and parents. Annual "refreshment" training should follow initial comprehensive cultural sensitivity training. Governments may also consider completing training by administering an examination that participants must pass.

**Implement systematic and comprehensive extracurricular programming for youth:**

- Extracurricular programming for youth assists in keeping their focus on positive activities and away from potential radicalizing influences. Programming should start in pre-teen years and continue through secondary school, incorporating fun activities related to CVE messaging and effective counter-narratives. Activities could take place after school and on the weekends. Youth should have a significant amount of say on the type of extracurricular activities in which they will take part. Voting is one way to avert projecting an unwanted activity on youth.

**Develop "safe spaces" initiatives that allow communities to address issues of concern, including radicalization and mental health; promote engagement, counseling, and vocations:**

- Safe Spaces allow communities to address issues of concern without the fear of any type of reprisal from the government. Radicalization and mental healthcare are difficult to discuss in most communities. Safe Spaces initiatives begin to break the stigma associated with these issues and initiate dialogue between government representatives and community members. Encouraging honest discussions while respecting all parties is crucial to successful dialogue. Safe Spaces may also act as areas where community members can bring grievances to the attention of government representatives and promote alternative, constructive paths for at-risk youth.

**Establish internet-based counseling helpline (web-chat) for at-risk youth:**

- An internet-based counseling helpline (web-chat) provides at-risk youth with easily accessible assistance if they are feeling conflicted and need help dealing with radicalization. The helpline should not connect to law enforcement in any way and may be best suited under a Ministry of Social/Family Services. Financial support from the business community could fund the establishment of a helpline, and the government could select an NGO to run the service, further ensuring that the helpline is a service for those in need and not an intelligence collection platform. Parents, friends, and at-risk individuals should be encouraged to use the helpline.

**Support responsible media reporting and promote positive Islamic-based stories:**

- It is imperative that media outlets work together with local communities to promote positive inter-faith activities and accomplishments. Media occupies a pivotal position in society, and its ubiquitous presence signifies the potential it has to promote harmony among different groups. The ability of the media to present issues in a stereotypical or demeaning fashion or by emphasizing their difference can be destructive. Governments and NGOs should work together and engage media representatives to promote a positive image of Islam.





## Speakers and Presentations Summaries

Dr. Raphael Perl, Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfPC) Executive Director, welcomed participants on behalf of the PfPC and noted that the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) action-oriented response recommendations derived from the TTX will be used well beyond the conclusion of the exercise. Dr. Perl reminded participants that collaboration makes a real difference in the international effort to combat terrorism. Mr. Richard Prosen, Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) Co-Chair from the U.S. Department of State, noted that conference participants will have the chance to apply their expertise in a unique, interactive tabletop exercise. He spoke on the current challenges associated with violent extremism and emphasized that despite numerous tactical successes, terrorist networks continue to spread and the current scope and scale of FTFs are unprecedented. Mr. Prosen suggested that countering violent extremism (CVE) initiatives should be promoted and nations should hold each other accountable in administering FTF policies and legal frameworks. Dr. Peter Forster, The Pennsylvania State University and CTWG Co-Chair, set the stage for the conference with some probing questions on radicalization, violent extremism, and recent incidents of terrorism.

Dr. Alex Schmid, Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative in Vienna, delivered the conference's keynote address dedicated to deconstructing the foreign fighter phenomenon from the European perspective. Dr. Schmid provided a comprehensive view into the evolving challenges of how to classify "foreign fighter," citing statistical inefficiencies and normative problems within the United Nations Security Council definition as contributing to the lack of a classification consensus. Dr. Schmid outlined the "push" and "pull" factors that have proven to induce radicalized individuals to travel to conflict zones to become foreign fighters. Addressing the issue of returning foreign fighters, Schmid argued that there is a need to use disillusioned FTF accounts in the counter-narrative. Dr. Schmid concluded by claiming that the solution lies at the macro level, tasking the international community with action.

Dr. Sajjan Gohel, Asia-Pacific Foundation, insisted understanding ISIL/Da'esh's pan-Islamic ideology is imperative to the counter-narrative. To discredit ISIL/Da'esh we must reveal its flaws; its anti-Islamic narrative has developed by misconceiving texts of inspiration from Ibn Tamiyyah, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, and Anwar al-Awlaki. Dr. Gohel presented various extremist attack case-studies in which the perpetrator had been found in possession with Islamic ideological literature. By exploiting online channels to recruit, share and conspire, ISIL/Da'esh has successfully connected global extremist volunteers. Dr. Gohel argued this is creating a blowback cycle and presenting one of the most serious threats to transnational security. Dr. Gohel concluded with two takeaway points, by using the Qur'an we should tackle the ideological narrative, and the victims of ISIL/Da'esh need to be understood to create the counter-narrative.

Mr. Shaarik Zafar, U.S. Department of State's Special Representative to Muslim Communities, underscored the importance of being "for" something and not just against violent extremism. This could be accomplished by changing what it means to be a hero (e.g., highlighting the important work of aid workers). Mr. Zafar stressed the importance of building resiliency within communities and the continued need to ensure civil rights and equal opportunities are afforded to all. With respect to countering terrorist narratives, he argued for a range of messages including myth busting, familial appeals, religious arguments, and humor/satire. Mr. Zafar concluded by noting that the international



community needs to focus on implementing responses to violent extremism and move beyond discussing strategy.

Mr. George Selim, White House Director for CVE Policy, and Mr. Daniel Bartlett, White House Director for Identity Management and Biometrics, addressed the conference participants via video teleconference link from Washington, D.C. Mr. Selim spoke on CVE strategy and discussed the need for a CVE national strategy to tie local CVE strategies together. He stressed local strategies are vital for CVE in order for communities to know what their responsibilities are at the local level. Mr. Selim commended the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and argued that governments can help to build the capacity of NGOs to prevent and intervene against violent extremism. Moving forward, the focus will continue to be on CVE as it is crucial for the defeat of ISIL/Da'esh. Mr. Bartlett maintained that tools needed to be in place to disrupt FTF flows, including information sharing, domestic laws, and border control mechanisms. He commented that there are current discussions on developing a network of disillusioned FTFs to assist in preventing the next generation from traveling as well as current discussions on the development of off-ramps without consequence for potential FTFs.

Mr. Brian Jenkins, Senior Advisor to the President, RAND, addressed the conference participants via video teleconference from Santa Monica, California. He spoke on the "threat posed by the homegrown terrorists and Foreign Fighters," arguing that Western nations face multiple layers of threat. Mr. Jenkins claimed that Foreign Fighters drive domestic threat perceptions, citing that the number of recruits to jihadist fronts continues to exceed previous flows. Evaluating the history of U.S. jihadists traveling to jihadist fronts, Mr. Jenkins asserted that the more recent wave of Foreign Fighters is more dangerous than the previous one. However, he emphasized the importance of not over inflating the threat, arguing that a high volume of tweets from jihadist accounts may just reflect noise as opposed to evidencing activity leading to actual plots. Mr. Jenkins concluded by outlining current challenges to authorities, including the issue of the volume of activity overwhelming surveillance capacity.