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BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT IDEOLOGIES

A DISCUSSION PAPER
CACP PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION STUDY GROUP



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INTRODUCTION

Context

In early 2008, the Canadian High Commission in London prepared a discussion paper on counter-radicalization initiatives in the United Kingdom. The paper summarized the UK policy framework. It placed specific emphasis on the PREVENT strategy, which is aimed at counter-radicalization and the prevention of terrorism, and the context in which that strategy developed.

The High Commission report concluded by recommending that a delegation made up of representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), a geographic cross-section of major Canadian police services, and relevant Canadian government agencies and departments conduct a field visit to observe PREVENT implementation at the working level.

CACP Counter-Radicalization Study Group

On March 17, 2008, RCMP NSCI Assistant Commissioner Mike McDonnell discussed the High Commission report and its recommendations with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) Counter-Terrorism and National Security Committee (CTNSC). Assistant Commissioner McDonnell raised the possibility of a national initiative to address the issue of radicalization leading to violent extremism. The Committee concurred and directed the RCMP Community Outreach Program to take the lead role in a Study Group on counter-radicalization.

The Study Group - which consists of representatives of the Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax Police Services, the Sûreté du Québec, Public Safety Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada and the RCMP - traveled to the United Kingdom in May 2008, where it was hosted by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Over a ten day period, Study Group members met with many of the key agencies engaged in delivery of the UK PREVENT Strategy, including the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the ACPO Community Tension Team, the Security Service, the Metropolitan Police and various representatives of local government and the NGO sector.

This discussion paper is an outcome of the Study Group's mission to the United Kingdom. The paper scopes and defines the problem of radicalization and counter-radicalization; identifies key challenges to building an effective Canadian response to radicalization; and summarizes the UK context and response to radicalization. The ultimate purpose of the paper is to identify key lessons learned from the UK experience that could be used to inform the development of a counter-radicalization framework for Canada under the auspices of CACP.



KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS



1. Radicalization and Canada

- > Radicalization is the process by which individuals are introduced to and accept an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views.
- > Radicalization becomes a threat to national security when individuals espouse or engage in violence as a means of promoting political, ideological or religious extremism.
- > While radicalization occurs in many cultural and ideological contexts, domestic radicalization associated with violent Islamist extremist ideology is currently a particular concern for law enforcement and security agencies.
- > Numerous quantitative and qualitative measures indicate that radicalization in Canada is more entrenched than current investigations show.
- > The ongoing “Toronto 18” and Khawaja trials, coupled with a range of geopolitical factors and influences, emphasize that radicalization is part of the Canadian reality and that it has the potential to culminate in violence.
- > The nature of the radicalization threat in Canada is different than it is in Europe, including the United Kingdom.
- > The task facing Canadian law enforcement, in parallel with other government initiatives, is to help to strengthen communities’ resilience to radicalization through effective support and broadly-based prevention programming.



KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

2. The UK Approach to Radicalization

- > The overarching counter-terrorism strategy of the United Kingdom is known as CONTEST. CONTEST has four main pillars, known as the “four Ps”: PURSUE, PROTECT, PREPARE and PREVENT.
- > Counter-radicalization lies at the heart of the PREVENT pillar, which is aimed at addressing and rooting out radicalization leading to violence. The PREVENT strategy, and its components, are focused exclusively upon UK Muslim communities.
- > The UK counter-radicalization strategy — codified and embodied in PREVENT — is a Whole-of-Government / all agency response to the problem of radicalization leading to violent extremism.
- > While the police are one of the most visible components of the strategy, PREVENT relies heavily on the active involvement of communities. PREVENT delivery involves a whole range of agencies and service providers, from education authorities and local government to community organizations and NGOs.
- > Strong links between local authorities, the police, and the communities they serve provide an environment in which grievances and concerns can be expressed freely and without fear of recrimination.
- > Each one of Britain’s 43 Chief Constables has a statutory obligation to develop and deliver PREVENT programming in his or her jurisdiction. Every police force in the UK is obliged to demonstrate engagement with communities and local authorities through demonstrable links, relationships and programming at the Borough Command Unit level.
- > Staff Commanders and executives must ensure that intelligence and other counter-terrorism information is pushed down to community, patrol and investigative units.
- > Safe Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) fulfill the traditional role of the “local Bobby.” They are often in a position to identify persons at risk of involvement in activities that could lead to violent extremism, to identify and describe community tensions accurately and, often, to intervene before such tensions reach a crisis point.
- > Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Officers (CTIOs) are the critical link between MI5, Special Branch and patrol officers and investigators. CTIOs embed CT awareness at the command unit level, assess neighbourhood level CT intelligence and pass it up to Special Branch, and disseminate and brief on assessed material from the wider intelligence community.
- > The RICH PICTURE strategy is a joint initiative between the police and MI5. It uses all-source intelligence and a variety of intelligence community assets, pushing intelligence community information down to policing, ultimately assisting Commanders, CTIOs and SNTs to understand the neighbourhoods they police.
- > “Gold Groups” — networks of trusted faith and community leaders and other influential persons — can be assembled quickly and kept briefed in the aftermath of a terrorist incident, or a major series of terrorism-related arrests. They are excellent sources of real-time expert advice on crisis management and the very process of keeping them informed can do a great deal to allay suspicions and anxieties within communities.
- > NGOs and community and faith-based organizations are key players in the overall UK approach to counter-radicalization.
- > The single-most critical component of PREVENT is the working relationships established between the police and communities to identify and mitigate grievances and to take specific steps against violent extremism.

KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

3. Lessons and Opportunities

- > The UK approach to counter-radicalization is rooted in the reality of the United Kingdom and its unique security situation. Neither PREVENT, nor any other aspect of the UK's response to terrorism, is transferable wholesale to a Canadian context.
 - > Development of a comprehensive prevention of radicalization strategy for Canada should be based on broad knowledge and understanding of the experiences of other countries and must reflect Canada's unique reality.
 - > Long term organizational commitment, coupled with proper succession planning to ensure continuity of programming, are critical aspects of a nationally-based approach to prevention of radicalization.
 - > Any prevention framework must identify its desired outcomes along with a series of benchmarks measuring progress towards those outcomes.
 - > The UK focus on a specific ethno-cultural community is at odds with Canada's long-standing approach to multiculturalism and community engagement. A lasting radicalization prevention strategy should be applicable to Canadian society as a whole and not to any single religious, ethnic or cultural constituency.
- > Any prevention strategy must be based upon comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of partner communities and of the pressures that at-risk members of those communities face.
 - > The national security community — which includes CSIS and the RCMP, and all-source entities like the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) — has a responsibility to provide intelligence and analysis in support of radicalization prevention and to develop mechanisms to ensure “downward” intelligence flow.
 - > Any meaningful radicalization prevention strategy will be heavily dependent upon the willingness and ability of individual police officers to learn about the communities in which they work and to build credible and lasting relationships within those communities.
 - > One of the key lessons of PREVENT is the importance of a coherent whole-of-government approach that is highly centralized at the policy level, and highly flexible at the implementation level.
 - > Prevention of radicalization is not solely the task of the police, of the security services, or of government. It must also involve health authorities, school boards, social and community services, faith-and ethnic-based groups, and non-governmental organizations.

RADICALIZATION: THE CHALLENGE

What is Radicalization?

The phenomenon of radicalization is a critical subset of the terrorist threat. Radicalization refers to the process by which individuals — usually young people — are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views. While radical thinking is by no means problematic in and of itself, it becomes a threat to national security when individuals espouse or engage in violence or direct action as a means of promoting political, ideological or religious extremism.

Historically, radicalization has spanned not only the entire “left-right” political spectrum, from environmental and animal rights activists to neo-Nazis, but a range of ethnic and religious interests as well. Radicalization can occur due to a multitude of factors and influences. There is no single group that seeks out vulnerable and impressionable young people. Nor is radicalization limited to any single ethnic or interest group.

Often, the passage along the radicalization continuum parallels the process by which vulnerable individuals are drawn into gang activity and other forms of crime. Violent extremists and criminals are driven by different motivators: ideology and profit. Nevertheless, the extremist and the criminal environments offer many of the same things to their members and adherents, including a sense of purpose and belonging and often a large measure of social cachet.



RADICALIZATION: THE CHALLENGE

Radicalization Today

As above, radicalization has occurred throughout history and in many cultural and ideological contexts. In a contemporary context, however, domestic radicalization associated with violent Islamist extremist ideology is a particular concern for law enforcement and security agencies. Since 9/11, virtually all of the planned or actual terrorist attacks in Western Europe and North America have been carried out by young Muslims of various national and cultural origins who were either native-born citizens or long-term residents and who had undergone an identifiable process of radicalization. These include the Theo Van Gogh killing and the “Hofstad Plot” in the Netherlands; the Madrid bombings; and, most notably, the 7/7 bombings and their aftermath, Operation OVERT (the so-called “Heathrow Plot”), and the 2007 firebombing of Glasgow Airport and failed terrorist attacks in Central London.

These cases embody many of the key features of contemporary radicalization that are of particular concern to law enforcement and security agencies. Foremost among these is the speed with which radicalization occurs and the fact that pre-radicalization indicators are often extraordinarily subtle, particularly to a cultural outsider like a police or intelligence officer. It is increasingly clear that trying to anticipate (or address) radicalization through concepts like “alienation” is not useful. Terrorists do not necessarily exist at the margins of society. A number of the 7/7 bombers were apparently successful, while the Glasgow bombers were all highly educated and seemingly well-placed in British society. Again, subtle (and largely immeasurable) political and religious motivations may trump belonging and citizenship.

A number of critical accelerators also play a key role in contemporary radicalization processes. Chief among these is the Internet. Easily and cheaply accessible, difficult to monitor and control, the Internet is a medium tailor-made for the dissemination of extremist messaging. Young people are the most receptive audience for extremist messaging over the Web. Not only has their intellectual framework largely

Glasgow Airport – 2007



been shaped by their interaction with the Internet, but they are often struggling with fundamental questions around faith, the future and their place in the world. The Internet also eliminates the need for a “public” radicalization venue, such as a mosque, a prayer group, a church, or a school, and facilitates small group and “lone wolf” radicalization.

RADICALIZATION IN CANADA

A Real and Continuing Problem...

From a Canadian perspective, the FLQ, the “Squamish Five,” and the Air India bombing embody the kind of extremist violence that can lie at the end of the radicalization process. The extent of radicalization in contemporary Canada is difficult to determine, particularly with regard to radicalization associated with Islamist extremism. Relatively few domestic academic studies address its extent (although ongoing Canadian research by the UK-based DEMOS think tank may help to define the scope of the problem). Law enforcement and security agencies — the most ready source of statistical data — only investigate individuals who are already radicalized to the extent that they are committing or about to commit criminal offences.

Other data sources - both quantitative and qualitative — do shed light on the issue however. CSIS has stated publicly that it is monitoring “several hundred” national security-related subjects of interest (among whom are radicalized individuals), while the UK Security Service (MI5) has noted that it has identified about 2,000 such radicals in the United Kingdom. From this, it is possible to hypothesize that the radicalization problem is bigger than current investigations show. The ongoing “Toronto 18” and Khawaja trials are also good indicators that radicalization is a Canadian reality and that it has the potential to culminate in violent extremism.

Geopolitical factors are also a significant component of the domestic radicalization threat. Canada remains fully engaged in Afghanistan and is a stalwart ally of both the United States and the United Kingdom. Osama Bin Laden and other Islamist ideologues have repeatedly identified Canada as one of the “Crusader nations” that is bent on attacking and destroying Islam.

...But In A Canadian Context

While there is ample evidence demonstrating that radicalization and its outcomes are a reality in Canada, there are mitigating factors at play. These combine to make the nature of the radicalization threat different than it is in Europe, including the United Kingdom. Canada is a pluralist society whose approach to immigration is rooted in multiculturalism. Historically, minorities and new arrivals in Canada are able to integrate readily without giving up core religious or cultural practices and beliefs. Equality of economic opportunity is both a principle and a reality of Canadian life. And Canadian immigration policy has helped to build minority communities that are well-educated and highly functioning by most social and economic measures.

While none of this is a guarantee against the kind of radicalization that can lead to terrorism, it does mean that core migrant communities are well-integrated and committed to a Canadian identity. Therefore, the task facing Canadian law enforcement, in parallel with other government initiatives, is not to counter radical messaging that is entrenched in specific communities. Instead, it is to help to build communities that are resilient to radicalization that could lead to terrorist violence through effective support and prevention programming.



COUNTER-RADICALIZATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS



1. Prevention: Top-Down and Bottom-Up

The PREVENT Approach

The overarching counter-terrorism strategy of the United Kingdom is known as CONTEST. It is driven by national consensus around the realities of the post-9/11 world, and specifically by the implications of recent events like 7/7, OVERT and the Glasgow bombings. CONTEST has four main pillars, known as the “four Ps”: PURSUE, PROTECT, PREPARE and PREVENT. Counter-radicalization lies at the heart of the PREVENT pillar, which is aimed at addressing and rooting out radicalization in the cause of violent extremism. The core objectives of PREVENT, which has been in play for about 18 months, include undermining of extremist ideology and support of mainstream voices; disruption of those who promote violent extremism; support of vulnerable individuals; building community resilience; and addressing genuine grievances; the development of PREVENT-related intelligence, analysis and research; and strategic communications. PREVENT is targeted entirely at the United Kingdom’s Muslim population.

Top-Down

One of the chief strengths of the overall UK counter-radicalization strategy, as codified and embodied in PREVENT, is that it is at its heart a Whole-of-Government / all agency response to the problem of radicalization leading to violent extremism. The broad policy lead is provided by the Home Office (The UK analog for Public Safety Canada). Within the Home Office, the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OCST), with a dedicated staff complement of 400, serves as the single point of coordination. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is also engaged in delivering PREVENT internationally, with a specific mandate to disrupt radical messaging abroad before it can take root in the United Kingdom.

Bottom-Up

While the police are one of the most visible components of the strategy, PREVENT is also “bottom-up” in that it relies heavily on the active involvement of communities. PREVENT delivery involves a whole range of agencies and service providers, from education authorities and local government to community organizations and NGOs. Just as importantly, the implementation of PREVENT is guided by strong links between local authorities, the police, and the communities they serve. Municipal civil servants and local police commanders are responsible for building and maintaining those links, both at the individual level and at the incident planning and response level. This is accomplished by providing an environment — whether on the street,

COUNTER-RADICALIZATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

in informal discussions, or at community meetings – in which grievances and concerns can be expressed freely and without fear of recrimination.

Tiered Intervention

It is important to emphasize that PREVENT, while designed to address one of the most critical security issues of our time, only resorts to “hard” intervention when absolutely necessary. As illustrated by the “intervention pyramid” at Fig. 1, the PREVENT approach is four-tiered. By far the bulk of PREVENT activity takes place in the lower three-quarters of the pyramid and involves a whole range of government, community and NGO programming aimed at creating safe environments and steering vulnerable individuals and constituencies away from radicalization. Police involvement at these levels is primarily in the form of community policing, outreach and consultation, threat and risk assessment and identification of at-risk individuals.

A National Strategy

PREVENT is a cohesive, fully-funded approach to the multi-faceted problem of violent extremism. It is a national strategy, delivered locally, with clear recognition by all participants that it is a long term strategy that must become fully integrated into all aspects of governance in the United Kingdom. Participants have discretion in the manner in which they deliver PREVENT, taking into account local issues and local needs. But the role of each participating agency is clearly delineated in policy and there is centrally managed consistency of goals and objectives. Fundamentally, every participant “gets” PREVENT and their role in delivering it.

2. The Role of Policing

PREVENT is a “Whole Of Government” approach to the contemporary security environment. However, the police — characterized by a number of interlocutors as the most effective community “inreach” measure — play one of the most prominent roles in program delivery. Each one of Britain’s 43 Chief Constables has a statutory obligation to develop and deliver PREVENT programming in his or her jurisdiction.

From a policing perspective, PREVENT strategy development and delivery is the responsibility of the Association of Chief Police Officers (the UK analog of CACP) and its overarching Terrorism and Allied Matters initiative. This includes a Community Tensions Team and various specialist national coordinators that focus on issues ranging from protection of ports and airports to CBRN matters.

The DELPHINUS Program

The role of the UK police in PREVENT is delineated by the DELPHINUS program. DELPHINUS was originally developed by the Metropolitan Police in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings and has now been adopted throughout the United Kingdom. DELPHINUS requires closer police engagement with communities and local authorities specifically to counter violent extremism, through demonstrable links, relationships and programming. It also requires individual police officers and staff to have an increased understanding of counter-terrorism issues. DELPHINUS imposes obligations not only on Borough Commanders to reach out and establish relationships, but also on Staff Commanders and executives to ensure that intelligence and other counter-terrorism information is pushed down to community, patrol and investigative units.

Neighbourhood Policing

The *Police Reform Act* (2002) effectively legislated a Neighbourhood Policing approach for the entire United Kingdom. This approach became the framework underlying the entire PREVENT strategy, and helped to ensure a common approach to a whole range of community issues, including radicalization and violent extremism. Senior level police officers and ACPO employees agree that “we cannot arrest our way out of” the problem of violent extremism. Therefore, the approach to counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism, both at national and local levels, is rooted in communities. It reaffirms the community policing ethos that is the foundation of policing in Britain (and, incidentally, the rest of the Anglo-American world) and recognizes that it is communities that defeat terrorism, not the police.

COUNTER-RADICALIZATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

At the core of Neighbourhood Policing strategy are Safe Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), which are currently being implemented in the Metropolitan Police, and being phased in elsewhere. SNTs work out of neighbourhood premises rather than police stations and consist of a mix of sworn police officers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs). PCSOs have limited police powers, but provide a reassuring uniformed presence. They are often recruited and live locally, so are well-known to neighbourhood residents. Characterized by one member as “policing in slow time,” SNTs fulfill the traditional role of the “local Bobby,” patrolling on foot, talking to people, solving problems and addressing low level crime. While their primary focus is crime, SNTs’ knowledge and feel for community dynamics means that they are often in a position to identify persons at risk of involvement in activities that could lead to violent extremism, to identify and describe community tensions accurately and, often, to intervene before such tensions reach a crisis point.

Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Officers

A critical component of PREVENT is the relationship between the Security Service (MI5), the Special Branches of individual police forces and the Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Officers (CTIOs), who function at the Basic Command Unit (BCU) or neighbourhood level. If MI5 is responsible for identifying and analyzing terrorist conspiracies and Special Branches investigate and prosecute

them, CTIOs serve as the critical link between MI5, Special Branch and patrol officers and investigators. CTIOs embed CT awareness at the BCU level. They assess neighbourhood level CT intelligence and pass it up to Special Branch, and disseminate and brief on assessed material from the wider intelligence community (including JTAC and MI5) within the BCU. They also brief out into the community on CT matters of concern.

RICH PICTURE

CTIOs are also beneficiaries of and net contributors to the RICH PICTURE strategy, which is a joint initiative between the police and MI5. RICH PICTURE has its origins in the immediate aftermath of the 7/7 bombings, when it became clear that in focusing almost exclusively on the external terrorist threat, UK law enforcement and security had failed to pick up on indicators pointing to a localized, internal threat. RICH PICTURE uses all-source intelligence and a variety of intelligence community assets. It focuses intelligence and analytical resources intensively on a particular thematic subject in a particular geographic area — such as “mosques in the Midlands,” or “radical groups in East London” — for a given period of time. RICH PICTURE assists Special Branches and MI5 in identifying specific threats and risks around recruitment and radicalization. And as a repository of “real-time” analysis of community dynamics, it helps CTIOs and SNTs understand the neighbourhoods they police.

COUNTER-RADICALIZATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

3. Policing, Key Partners and Initiatives

Building Networks

While the police are critical components of PREVENT, neither the police nor the strategy itself can function without the active participation and cooperation of key community partners. As PREVENT and the lessons of 7/7 and OVERT take hold, Borough Commanders in the United Kingdom are taking active steps to build extensive networks of trusted faith and community leaders and other influential persons within the neighbourhoods they police.

Sometimes referred to as “Gold Groups,” such networks can be assembled quickly and kept briefed in the aftermath of a terrorist incident, or a major series of terrorism-related arrests. Gold Group-type networks are excellent sources of real-time expert advice on crisis management, especially when police / community relationships are at their most fragile. The very process of keeping them informed can do a great deal to allay suspicions and anxieties and to reassure the community itself.

Community engagement at this level ultimately pays large dividends in terms of larger PREVENT goals, as it is both a visible and credible demonstration of good faith on the part of the police. Gold Group-type networks must be cultivated and established before a crisis happens however. Minority communities will inevitably view any attempt to forge partnerships in the midst of an emergency as little more than an exercise in hypocrisy.

Local Authorities

Police are not the only entities responsible for delivering PREVENT at the neighbourhood level. Messaging and specific programming also comes from local authorities such as Borough Councils, which are in turn responsible for involving key community players such as schools, health authorities, leisure and sports centers and Chambers of Commerce. Under CONTEST, anti-extremist measures and community awareness is a criterion by which Central Government measures the performance of local authorities across the United Kingdom.



COUNTER-RADICALIZATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

4. Policing and Muslim Communities

Community and Faith-based Organizations

The ultimate goal of PREVENT is to address violent extremism of all kinds. Again, however, the UK government and police are clear that their current focus is almost exclusively upon Muslim communities and the threats and risks posed by radicalization and extremism associated with Islamist ideology.

Non-police, non-security partners play a significant role in PREVENT. NGOs and community and faith-based organizations are active in many aspects of counter-radicalization. Some of their approaches are highly innovative. One youth group in East London, for example, bases its intervention program on criminal gang intervention techniques, using former extremists to counter extremist ideology. It also draws extremists into public debate, discrediting them and their message by engaging them on ideological and theological terms.

Notwithstanding the role played by a variety of non-police, non-security partners, the single-most critical component of PREVENT is the working relationships established between the police and Muslim communities to identify and mitigate grievances and to take specific steps against violent extremism. If the first person to know of a terrorist plot is someone in the community, then terrorism does not need community support to flourish, only community silence.

The CHANNEL Project

The CHANNEL Project is based on precedents in UK law around diversion and alternative measures for a range of criminal and anti-social behavior. It has been adapted to a CT milieu for young people at the periphery of violent extremist activity and is aimed specifically at individuals who do not meet the threshold for enforcement action. The CHANNEL Project is one of the key programs by which the police are involving communities in specific preventive measures. It is currently being run in 10 test communities across the United Kingdom.

CHANNEL referrals may come from a variety of sources, including the police, MI5, education and child welfare authorities and even from the community itself. Each case is screened on its own merits, based on existing police and security intelligence, and if intervention is warranted, a case planning panel will work with appropriate service providers to develop an intervention program. Currently, investigation, screening, and case planning happen exclusively within the police milieu, partly as a function of MI5 concerns around information control. Nevertheless, Muslim communities have been extremely responsive to this form of pre-charge diversion and police authorities are hopeful that the CHANNEL Project can transition to community control.

Operation NICOLE

One of the fundamental problems with police / community relationships in a PREVENT context is that the communities themselves often do not believe that there is a problem. Instead, influential voices within the community characterize police counter-terrorism strategies as harassment and provocation. Simply briefing communities and community leaders is not sufficient and may even compound the problem. The real challenge is to find a way of engaging communities while giving them some perspective on the role of the police in security matters, along with the tremendous challenges and stresses they face.

Operation NICOLE is an ACPO National Community Tensions Team initiative that is in the process of being implemented nation-wide as a key component of outreach to Muslim communities. NICOLE allows community members — who are invited to participate based on their degree of influence in the community — to take on the role of a senior police officer investigating a terrorist incident. It is a tabletop exercise that aims to give the police an insight into the community impact of counter terrorist policing, and give community members an insight into the decisions that the police have to make during investigations. Quite apart from its mutually educative function, NICOLE serves as a platform to debate core issues around law, civil rights, and the nature of the response to violent extremism and has met with a great deal of initial success.

BUILDING A CANADIAN RESPONSE: LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the UK approach to counter-terrorism — and counter-radicalization in particular — is extremely comprehensive, it is rooted in the reality of the United Kingdom and its unique security situation. There are a number of key challenges inherent in the UK approach. While some of these are unique to the PREVENT program itself, most are common to counter-terrorism implementation of all kinds. What this means, however, is that neither PREVENT, nor any other aspect of the UK's response to terrorism is transferable wholesale to a Canadian context.

PREVENT contains valuable lessons and opportunities for us. In some of its aspects, it illustrates what NOT to do in building a lasting and a healthy response to the phenomenon of radicalization. And while the United Kingdom has created a strategy that works (at least in some measure) for the United Kingdom, it is by no means the only one. Close allies, including the United States, Australia and New Zealand, are struggling with radicalization issues of their own and are developing innovative and unique approaches, as are France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Any further development of a comprehensive prevention of radicalization strategy for Canada should be based on broad knowledge and understanding of the experiences of other countries. Ultimately, Canada's strategy must be rooted in Canadian reality and reflect the unique nature of Canada's experience with radicalization.

PREVENT is a product of the post-7/7 period in the United Kingdom. This means that a great deal of the associated programming is still at the implementation and pilot stage. Initiatives like CHANNEL and NICOLE are being tested in key “focus areas.” While initial indicators are extremely positive, they have yet to be truly institutionalized and it is impossible to judge their prospects for success nationally. Also, many of these programs are personality driven — managed and championed by specific individuals — so there are real challenges associated with keeping them alive once those individuals have moved on. Long term organizational commitment, coupled with proper succession planning to ensure continuity of programming, are critical aspects of a nationally-based approach to prevention of radicalization.

Metrics are also a major issue. While they involve specific steps and actions, counter-radicalization and terrorism prevention are concepts rather than quantifiable goals. Success, therefore, is extraordinarily difficult to measure. It is impossible to know — especially over the short term — if absence of terrorism is an outcome of successful prevention and counter-measures or simply a coincidence. Any prevention framework must identify its desired outcomes along with a series of benchmarks measuring progress towards those outcomes.

Target communities themselves are likely to be highly suspicious of engagement strategies that are linked to a security agenda. PREVENT is directed explicitly at UK Muslim communities, many of which believe absolutely that they are under constant surveillance by the police and security services. The focused approach of PREVENT may only reinforce this belief. At best, counter-radicalization and prevention programming can seem like hypocrisy and expediency after years of neglect. At worst, it can provide activists and extremists with an opportunity to portray it as



BUILDING A CANADIAN RESPONSE: LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

a means of manipulating and infiltrating communities. While the radicalization issue is certainly more critical in some communities than in others, history demonstrates that ideological and social stimuli are constantly evolving. Therefore, a lasting radicalization prevention strategy should be applicable to Canadian society as a whole and not to any single religious, ethnic or cultural constituency.

Related to this is the issue of community dynamics and leadership. “Gold Groups” and other networks of influential contacts have a tremendously important role to play in terms of both day to day community relations and crisis response and management. It can be difficult to know who, exactly, speaks for or represents communities of concern, however. Some community leaders are gateways, others are gatekeepers who can foil even the most concerted attempts to reach out to the right people. Meanwhile, reaching out to the wrong people — self-styled leaders and spokesmen who have no real credibility — can exacerbate the very tensions that a comprehensive prevention of radicalization strategy is trying to alleviate. It is critical therefore that any prevention strategy is advised by comprehensive understanding of community dynamics and of the pressures that at-risk members of those communities face.

In a UK context, the RICH PICTURE strategy is a key element in building broad and deep understanding of communities, their dynamics and the pressures acting upon them. From a Canadian perspective, it emphasizes the critical role of security intelligence in radicalization prevention strategies. The national security community — which includes CSIS and the RCMP and all-source entities like the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) — has a responsibility to provide intelligence and analysis in support of radicalization prevention and to develop mechanisms to ensure “downward” intelligence flow. This raises a whole range of issues around intelligence sharing, however, ultimately leading to the problem of intelligence / evidence transition. Depending on the safeguards that are developed and put into place by the various players, these concerns could be sufficient to either water down the intelligence flow, if not curtail it all together.

Any meaningful radicalization prevention strategy will be rooted in the basic principles of policing. It will be heavily dependent upon the willingness and ability of individual

police officers to do “policing in slow time,” to learn about the communities in which they work and to build credible and lasting relationships within those communities. In the United Kingdom, many officers who are involved directly in the delivery of various aspects of PREVENT are referred to by their peers as the “pink and fluffies.” While this is intended primarily as an affectionate jab, it illustrates the challenges posed by a contemporary police mindset that is focused — necessarily — on action, interdiction and arrest. A lasting, prevention-based ethos may ultimately require shifts in attitude and culture. In the police, cultural transformation starts in basic training, so long term change could take a generation or more.

If we are to build an effective clearly-articulated prevention of radicalization strategy for Canada, then a number of specific challenges need to be addressed. Jurisdiction and intergovernmental approaches are key issues. Radicalization is not limited to any one part of the country, nor is it defined by federal, provincial or territorial boundaries. The RCMP may be the police agency of jurisdiction for investigation and prosecution of terrorism-related offences. However, municipal and provincial police partners are not only fully engaged in all aspects of counter-terrorism, but also have deep local knowledge of and insights into specific communities and constituencies.

One of the key lessons of PREVENT is the importance of a coherent whole-of-government approach that is highly centralized at the policy level, and highly flexible at the implementation level. Policy centralization allows for clear, well-articulated objectives that can be implemented in different ways across jurisdictions. The role of the Federal Government in this area will be critical. Indeed, government leadership makes the difference between a loosely-linked series of local initiatives and a truly integrated national strategy with clear, shared objectives.

Finally, the UK experience emphasizes that prevention of radicalization is not solely the task of the police, of the security services, or of government. It must also involve health authorities, school boards, social and community services, faith-and ethnic-based groups, and non-governmental organizations. All must contribute equally to the prevention of radicalization, because all have a stake in its outcome.

INTO THE FUTURE

A great deal of research and conceptualization remain to be done before a comprehensive radicalization prevention strategy for Canada can be completed. However, the CACP CTNS Committee may wish to authorize the development of a framework for such a strategy. If so, several options present themselves. Depending on which option is preferable to the NSCTC, an implementation team consisting of members of the Prevention of Radicalization Study Group would then move forward with a full business case, including timelines and projected costs.



Option 1 — Status Quo

- > Under this option, individual police and government agencies continue with existing programming. No effort will be made either to coordinate programming further or to develop new or innovative programming that can be shared across the police / government universe.
- > Given the current situation and the fact that the CACP CTNS Committee and the Study Group have both invested significantly in and are building momentum around a prevention of radicalization strategy, THIS IS NOT THE PREFERRED OPTION.

Option 2 — Joint Police Approach

- > Under this option, the CACP CTNS Committee would coordinate an initiative to identify radicalization prevention best practices within the Canadian police universe and to join up similar or related approaches.
- > This option would include continuing support to a Whole of Government approach to a prevention of radicalization strategy for Canada.
- > A first step would be to identify what we are currently doing well (such as the RCMP / CACP CTIO Program; Citizen's Academy) and build upon them.

Option 3 — A Whole of Government Approach

- > This option would see the commencement of work on a coordinated prevention of radicalization strategy for Canada, advised by other national approaches like the UK PREVENT Strategy.
- > A critical component of this option would be a formal request to the Federal Government (Public Safety Canada) to move forward with a coordinated national policy framework for counter-radicalization in Canada.
- > This would be in line with policy development around radicalization that has already commenced. This is being led by PSC, which hopes to move forward in parallel with any CACP-sponsored initiative.
- > The CACP's operational framework would be part of a whole-of-government framework, with PSC managing the process at the policy level with other government departments and CACP focusing on the police/operational framework.

FIGURE 1. — THE INTERVENTION PYRAMID



