College and University Peacebuilding Approaches to Violent Extremism and Youth Recruitment

October 6th – 8th, 2016, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

AGENDA

(Last updated July 29, 2016)

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Day 1: Overview of Root Causes and the Current Issues in the Field

How terrorism in this context is defined as well as the root causes, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, social ostracism/lack of community connections, will be reviewed. In addition, the role that local and global policies play in exacerbating or reducing these challenges will be considered.

Some of the themes that will be considered include:

- How do groups radicalize members?
- What similarities are there between radicalization and gangs?
- Which youth are particularly vulnerable to violent extremism?
- What is the gendered component to radicalization?
- What similarities are there between hate groups?
- What are the international responses to these issues?
- What are the domestic responses to these issues?

Thursday, October 6 (8:45 a.m. – 3:55 p.m)

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.  Registration
8:45 – 9:00 a.m. Welcome, Ms. Brette Steele, Deputy Director of the CVE Task Force, Department of Homeland Security

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. What is Violent Extremism? A Global and U.S. Perspective, Heidi Beirich, Ph.D., Director, Intelligence Project, The Southern Poverty Law Center and Saeed A. Khan, Professor, Near East & Asian Studies, Wayne State University

10 - 10:15 a.m. Break

10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Session 1: 1 hour workshops (Select one)

Troublemakers versus Peacebuilders, The Evolving Role of Youth in Preventing Violent Extremism, Saji Prelis, Director of Children and Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground
This discussion will include topics including, why young people join armed groups and common misconceptions, followed by how international policy has evolved in viewing and engaging youth. He will then discuss five pillars of engagement and investment: 1) Prevention, 2) Disengagement, 3) Improving State Responses, 4) Amplifying New Narratives, and 5) Partnerships. Lastly, he will consider what role U.S. youth can play in addressing these challenges.

Media Coverage of Violent Extremism, Julie Shedd, Ph.D., Associate Dean, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution George Mason University

11:35 – 12:35 a.m. Session 2: 1 hour workshops (Select one)

CVE Strategies in the US, UK and the EU: An Overview of Comparisons, Contrasts & Contexts, Saeed A. Khan, Ph.D. Professor, Near East & Asian Studies, Wayne State University
CVE strategies vary from country to country. Yet, there is an understandable and, at times, reflexive, tendency to apply seemingly successful policies in a new context without fully studying and appreciating variations in socio-economic, cultural, ideological, political and demographic realities that may render such application imprecise and/or ineffective somewhere else. This presentation will highlight the similarities and differences in strategies deployed to counter violent extremism by the US, the UK and the EU governments, respectively. As the quest for effective CVE strategies continues, efforts are made to explore best practices and successful policy implementations across a broad span of countries. At the same time, however, it is critical for the success of these programs to assess the sociological variations that exist in these three contexts to optimize and deploy CVE efforts.

Upholding Religion or Promoting Terrorism?, Josephine Stommel, Student, Elizabethtown College
Extremist groups often use religion to justify violence, leading to intractable conflicts that greatly impact education. The violence such groups initiate violates the inherently peaceful principles religions uphold. In Northern Ireland, the conflict between Protestants and Catholics during the Troubles disrupted citizens’ education and quality of life. Since the Good Friday Agreement, violence has flared, and is evident in the social divide among generations. Discussing how groups in Northern Ireland have deviated from the religious traditions they claim to uphold, she will share how educators and parents are combating the legacy of violence with peace education. Building on the early work of Professor Tony Gallagher and other researchers, she will explore the principle of inclusion and how peace education may be further developed in the university setting.

12:35 – 1:35 p.m. Lunch (provided)

1:35 – 2:35 p.m. Plenary - Can Peacebuilding Approaches Address Violent Extremism? Qamar-ul Huda, Ph.D., Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Secretary John Kerry’s Office of Religion and Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State
2:45 – 4:15 p.m.  Plenary - Lessons Learned from Mental Health and Education, Identifying Best Practices for Addressing Violent Extremism, Stevan Weine M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine

CVE grew out of the recognition that counterterrorism approaches were not adequate for preventing radicalization to violence and that community-based approaches were needed. Many community members are resistant to CVE due to past targeting, stigmatization, and stereotyping of Muslim American communities. Our experience in participatory research, a technique used in public health, suggests that part of the difficulty has been that community-based prevention and intervention of violent extremism does not adequately fit under a criminal justice framework, and CVE programming has been too narrowly tailored to violent extremism, when other issues are of equal or greater concern to communities. Furthermore, CVE initiatives have not yet adequately engaged mental health professionals and educators. This project involved a review of education and mental health literature by a multidisciplinary team inclusive of education and mental health professionals. Overall we demonstrated that the fields of mental health and education, including both community-based practitioners and lessons learned from those fields, are uniquely poised to contribute to effective prevention and intervention activities in relation to violent extremism. Three key findings were: 1) communities need to have a say in how to prioritize and organize actions intended to make them strong; 2) strategies for addressing the threat of violent extremism need to be organized and led by community-based multidisciplinary teams who draw upon mental health, public health, religious, education, and law enforcement frameworks and remedies; and 3) efforts to address violent extremism should adopt a comprehensive approach to promoting community safety which includes ideologically inspired violent extremism as one of many forms of violence that afflict communities. We also identified how mental health and education professionals could become involved either through being informed, being team members, or being leaders in addressing violent extremism.

5:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. - Opening Reception

5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. - Is Deradicalization Even Possible? From Anger and Hatred to Compassion and Forgiveness, Tony McAleer, President, Executive Director, Life After Hate

How does a young person become a neo-nazi? Is there a way back to humanity from such extreme hatred? Sharing his personal story, experience, and research, Tony will share how he was drawn into the dark world of violence and extremism, how he was able to disengage and deradicalize, and lessons we can learn as a society and as individuals.

6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. - Q and A

Day 2: What Works? Prevention Strategies

During this day participants will consider what “works” in preventing and addressing hate crimes and terrorism in the U.S., from social media campaigns to community engagement efforts to local and global policies and programs.

Some of the themes that will be considered include:

- What are the processes involved in prevention?
- What is the role of the College and Community in preventing extremism and the rise of hate groups?
- The role of social media
- What colleges and universities can do to help students be more resistant to the violent ideologies

Friday, October 7 (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)
8:00 – 8:30 a.m.  Registration
8:30 – 9:45 a.m.  Morning Keynote - Radicalization and the Radical Right: Lessons from the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Research, Heidi Beirich, Ph.D., Director, Intelligence Project, The Southern Poverty Law Center

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.  Break

10 – 11:30 a.m.  Plenary: Government Efforts to Prevent Violent Extremism
Each representative will discuss their agency’s policies, programs, and tools to prevent and build resilience to violent extremism in the US.

- Erin Wilson, Senior Officer, National Counterterrorism Center
- Michael E. Rolince, Senior Advisor, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Countering Violent Extremism Section
- Abdirizak Farah, Senior Policy Advisor, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office, Department of Homeland Security
- Moderator: Brette Steele, Deputy Director of the CVE Task Force, Department of Homeland Security

11:30 – 12:30 p.m.  Lunch

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.  Session 2: 1.5-hour workshops (Select one)

Civil Resistance to Counter Violent Non-State Actors: Realistic Possibilities and Lessons from Organized People - Maciej Bartkowski, Senior Director Education and Outreach and Hardy Merriman, President, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

Can ordinary people organize nonviolently to challenge violent non-state actors? This workshop will look into various nonviolent strategies used by civilians in Iraq, Syria, Liberia, Bosnia, Colombia, and elsewhere to push back against violent armed groups. In a number of places, mobilized local communities and civilians were able to address their own organizational weaknesses and exploit vulnerabilities of armed actors to carve autonomy, establish safer living spaces and reduce deadly violence. By drawing on specific examples and exploring other ways for civilians to contain and challenge violent armed groups, this workshop will aim to outline civil resistance methods, their potential applicability to counter violent extremism, as well as costs and risks of nonviolent organizing vis-à-vis armed strategies in a terror-torn environment. As a baseline, this workshop will also introduce participants to the field of civil resistance, explain its main tenants, historical record and discuss attributes of nonviolent movements that make them successful.

Community Awareness Brief: Violent Extremism, Erin Wilson, National Counterterrorism Center; Abdirizak Farah, Senior Policy Advisor, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office, Department of Homeland Security

Arab Peace Corps vs Daesh? Sustainable Solution to Countering Youth Radicalization, Sami Jamil Jadallah, Founder/Director at The Arab Peace Corps, Founder, Director, The Arab Peace Corps and J.M. Ascienzo, Government Relations Officer, National Peace Corps Association

This presentation will demonstrate the benefits and impact of the new initiative of the New Arab Foundation, the Arab Peace Corps, which is designed to shift the narrative on and about young people in the Arab world. Following the model of and in partnership with the US Peace Corps, the Arab Peace Corps is designed to address the prevalent and complex geopolitical challenges that have plagued the Arab world for decades and have had devastating effects on the young people. Significant segments of the Arab populations are disenfranchised, jobless and frustrated with the lack of basic services, economic opportunities, and government transparency and accountability which leads to negative, self-perpetuating cycle of ever-expanding numbers of young men and women who are without a quality education or jobs which further leads to hopelessness, despair, and vulnerability to recruitment by extremist groups. The Arab Peace Corps programs redirect this
youthful energy into positive, self-reinforcing contributions to the greater good through each person’s achievement of sense of belonging to the greater community and an increased sense of self-worth, thus eliminating the vulnerabilities exploited by violent extremist organizations.


The P2P: Challenging Extremism (P2P) initiative provides an opportunity for university students around the world to create and activate their own social and digital media campaigns to challenge hate speech and extremist ideology, propaganda and recruitment messaging. It seeks to be part of a solution by empowering the same people extremist groups are most actively trying to recruit – young people, and was developed to halt the digital momentum and contest the online space effectively being manipulated by ISIL and other extremist groups. Tony’s P2P presentation will be divided into two parts: the first will be an overview of the P2P academic partnership model so the audience will understand how we bring P2P to life on universities campuses and in syllabi, then, there will be a review of a variety of student developed P2P campaigns to bring to life what tech-savvy university students around the world are doing to push back on hate and extremism on their campuses, communities, countries and globally. There will be a special presentation made by an award winning or honorary mention P2P university team (TBA). This P2P team will highlight how their social or digital media initiative, product or tool P2P campaign was created and used to effectively challenge extremism.

3:45 – 4:00 p.m.  Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.  *The Role of Religious Communities in Countering Violent Extremism*, Qamar-ul Huda, Ph.D., Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Secretary John Kerry’s Office of Religion and Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**Day 3: What Role Can Colleges and Universities Play in Addressing and Reducing the Challenges in Our Communities**

Some of the themes that will be considered include:
- What mechanisms are there for rehabilitation/exiting?
- What strategies are optimal for response by colleges and universities when these incidents occur in their communities?

Saturday, October 8 (9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.  Registration

8:45 – 10:15 a.m.  Morning Keynote – *Personal Stories from the Field: The Role of Youth in Preventing Violent Extremism in their Local and Global Communities*
- Achaleke Christian Leke, Youth, Peace and Counter Violent Extremism Activist, United Network of Young Peacebuilders, Cameroon Youth Ambassador to the Commonwealth
- Saba Ismail, Co-Founder, AWARE Girls
- Facilitator: Saji Prelis, Director of Children and Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground

10:35 - 12:05 a.m.  Session 3: 1.5-hour workshops (Select one)
*The Role and Responsibility of Global Citizenship Education in Preventing Violence, Extremism and Radicalization of Young People*, Dr. Aleksandra Nasic, School for International Training, Graduate Institute of World Learning; Visiting Faculty, Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), US Special Operations Command
This session demonstrates how global citizenship education must be placed at the core of conflict and violence prevention and peacebuilding programs. It argues that global citizenship education is more than the conceptual democratic narrative often attached to it, and it suggests that a paradigm shift among educators and educational institutions must occur to acknowledge the critical value that global citizenship education brings directly to the prevention of violence, extremism and radicalization of young people in and outside the United States. The author demonstrates how an identity can be transformed when students are engaged in intercultural and other global citizenship educational opportunities, and how once cultural sensitivity is achieved, the potential for radicalization is minimized. This session aims to increase understanding of how identity transformation can be achieved through employing the pedagogies of global citizenship educational programs and create positive (inter)personal changes among the youth and build lasting and sustainable peace among societies.

**Peacebuilding Approaches to Violent Extremism - Case Studies from Pakistan**, Saba Ismail, Co-Founder, AWARE Girls
This workshop will review peacebuilding approaches to violent extremism through case studies from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. Ismail will share her grass roots approach, keeping youth in the center, while creating positive role models for youth. She will share how she works to strengthen the ability of the community to use conflict resolution approaches. This will be followed by an exercise where participants will be provided with violent extremism case studies and each group will be provided with a peacebuilding model and a CVE strategy to apply. While developing the strategy and model each group will identify the objective, identify the stakeholders and institutions with whom they will partner, the strategy and its impact.

**Teaching Civil Resistance: How Changing the Discourse around Struggle (by showing powerful, viable alternatives to violence) Can Have an Impact**, Maciej Bartkowski, Senior Director Education and Outreach and Hardy Merriman, President, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict
The field of civil resistance provides numerous examples--and a body of theory and empirical research--of how ordinary people in societies around the world can nonviolently struggle for and win their rights, freedom, and justice. Whether we look at the US Civil Rights Movement; anti-corruption campaigns happening in places such as Kenya, India, or Guatemala; or struggles against dictatorship such as the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa or the 2011 overthrow of the Ben Ali government in Tunisia, we see that strategic, organized, and disciplined nonviolent movements wield real power and can coerce change against intractable and violent adversaries. When successful, these movements both reduce conditions of marginalization, corruption and unaccountable governance that can drive people towards violent extremism; and they also provide a model for a different and more effective form of struggle (and power) than violence. Therefore, teaching about civil resistance, its history, and how it is relevant today (a recent study shows that there are more nonviolent movements happening today than at any point over the last century) is an important aspect of reducing deadly violence in the world. The workshop will share groundbreaking research, cases, and best practices in teaching about civil resistance to diverse audiences, both nationally and internationally.

12:05 – 1:05 p.m.  Lunch (provided)

1:05 – 4:30 p.m.  Working Group: Colleges and University teams consider the application of the content to their curriculum, programming and/or policies and procedures.

EXHIBITS – Local, State, Federal and International Organizations will have an opportunity to share their resources and information throughout the three day conference.