

Prevention of Radicalisation

Robin Marsh
June 28, 2017



Prevention of Radicalisation 'Prevention of Radicalisation' has been a recurrent theme of Universal Peace Federation UK programmes in recent years. During this event, kindly hosted by Baroness Verma in the House of Lords, Dr Emmanuel Dupuy offered a french perspective and included some of the recommendations of the French Senate Delegation report on 'The Local Authorities and the Prevention of Radicalisation' (published April 11, 2017). Humphrey Hawksley, Keith Best, Sheikh Dr Hojjat Ramzy and Dr Afzal Ashraf raised a range of perspectives and provoked contributions from the audience.

Radicalisation Discussion Wednesday, June 28th, House of Lords Prevention of Radicalisation Kindly Hosted by Baroness Sandip Verma

Humphrey Hawksley

Early in his career he met a Tamil who was intelligent enough to have gone to Oxbridge but who got caught up in Sri Lanka politics and ended up producing a violent terrorist group. He's now trapped in Canada, labelled as a terrorist. He cannot travel for this reason. His life and actions have nothing to do with Islam. His organisation invented the suicide vest.

The terror in Europe was much worse during the Northern Ireland 'troubles' than they are now. The Islamic threat is not as serious as it is made out to be. Before the Paris bombings, the worst act of terror was by Anders Breivik in Norway but he wasn't considered to be a terrorist but deranged.

Multiculturalism in some parts of the UK has developed into ghettos. A survey of Muslims a year ago found that only 34% would contact the police and 4% sympathise with the terrorists. Only 50 have joined Isis from India whereas from Europe the number has been much higher. The radicalised Europeans are young and would only have been three years old in 2001.

We are currently taking people that are mentally unstable and attaching them to a greater cause, which gives them a platform. It is not really about Islam. It's about people finding their place in the world. They join gangs, etc., they find what they are lacking in their lives. We shouldn't be talking about radicalisation in these cases. The issue now is Islam. In the past it was the left-wing ideology. Some young people are looking for something which goes against society.

Mr. Humphrey Hawksley is an author, commentator and longstanding foreign correspondent. His work as a BBC foreign correspondent has taken him all over the world. He was expelled from Sri Lanka, opened the BBC's television bureau in China, arrested in Serbia and initiated a global campaign against enslaved children in the chocolate industry. The campaign continues today.

Keith Best emphasised the importance of localism to deal with some aspects of the prevention of radicalisation.

I am fed up that whenever we have so-called terrorist outrages or the Grenfield Tower event, etc., the media saturation that follows. At a meeting at the US embassy, we were asked what concerned us most about the U.S. We tend to be more worried about their domestic policies than their foreign policies, because crime has actually been diminishing overall in the U.S., but the mass killings have increased and these attract media attention. Mr Best's young hairdresser launched into a violent diatribe against Teresa May, saying she was evil and he wondered why? He has known her for a long time. She has flaws like the rest of us but she is not evil. The hairdresser had got this opinion from social media. If you don't get a collective view, if your sole source of news is your mobile phone and that source is vitriolic, that will rub off on you.

Recently, he listened to an impassioned plea for local government to do more. In fact, we now have the most centralised state: it used to be France. This prevents finding solutions to local problems. There have been attempts but the money hasn't followed.



Localism matters. The issues of radicalisation, disenchantment, etc., need to be dealt with at the local level. We shouldn't just dismiss the disaffection people feel, as expressed in the referendum. The foreign born population in Britain has increased dramatically. That is the reality we have to deal with and it is very different from that when I was young.

In foreign countries, the British tend to group together and create a British expatriate community. This shows how easy it is to slip into a self-imposed ghetto. The spin-off of this is that you never get to know your neighbours. A key finding of the community cohesion report was the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities. However, we have been sleepwalking into a situation in which segregation has become the norm.

We need to accept and even relish the differences we find in our communities. The Casey review found that the trend of diversification will continue and grow. It pointed out the degree of segregation. This segregation inhibits people from understanding others and building this in from school age.

In Britain, we have a good success rate in integration compared to other European countries. However, we need to provide additional funding to localised projects to tackle this problem. This can best be achieved by local government. The national government had its chance and failed.

Baroness Verma commented that we can see where we need to be working.

Keith Best is a qualified barrister and former Member of Parliament from 1979-87. He is the Chair of the international NGO based in New York, the World Federalist Movement, and Secretary and Trustee of the Parliamentary Outreach Trust. He was the former Chair of Electoral Reform International Services, Chair of Parliamentarians' Global Action and a member of the Inter Parliamentary Union. As Chief Executive of the Immigration Advisory Service he opened offices in Bangladesh, Nigeria and Pakistan and as Chief Executive of Freedom from Torture he provided services for those fleeing conflict zones around the world as well as using data to produce persuasive reports on the incidence of torture in different countries. He is a Director of Universal Peace Federation UK.

Dr. Emmanuel Dupuy

France is in the process of shifting from a centralised to a decentralised state, but there is much left to do. The second issue is that the narrative of de-radicalisation or counter-terrorism needs to be changed. It needs to be linked to foreign policy.

A recent survey in France found that 75% of the population is ready to lose its rights to guarantee security following these recent attacks. France is the most targeted country. People realise that a state of no risk is not possible.

We have to ask ourselves why do these young people commit these violent acts?



What is the new reality? The DGSI in France pinpointed 7 key points to understand this radicalisation.

- 1) France is targeted by Daesh as the first country to attack, because of its military engagement.
- 2) There is a new type of terror which uses very low technology and low cost, e.g. knife and vehicle attacks.
- 3) Fighting against terrorism on a territorial basis. Mosul is almost liberated. This doesn't stop Daesh from acting though in other areas.
- 4) There has been a stagnation of foreign fighters.
- 5) The linkage between young people and radicalisation – we should stand up against this problem.
- 6) Inter-community hatred needs to be tackled.
- 7) We have to realise that our neighbours are also targeted.

We cannot respond only militarily. A social response is required and this is where local governments come in.

Senator Jean-Marie Bockel's report, which can be found in English, lists 21 points in all, taking into account best practices. There are towns in France where Imams, etc., have come up with working solutions. We also need partnerships between local authorities and other actors.

For once let's anticipate the next hot spots. There may be other types of terrorism in the near future in response to Western interventionism for example.

The Mayors or Governors need to know who is living in their territory, who is in the "Fichier S" of dangerous people. In most cases, the Mayors do not have access to this information! Thus, they don't know that they have people living in their territory. This must be changed.

We have to enable people to become citizens.

In conclusion, in the report about the prevention of delinquency, (terrorism being extreme violence), we have to look at what works elsewhere, for example in Morocco. For example, we can attack their sources of finance and this can be very effective. Many terrorist cells have been destroyed in Morocco. President Macron is taking the same line.

Secondly, at the local level, local police may need to be armed.

We also have to fight against Jihad 2.0. The flux of online information must be tackled. Cyber terrorist attacks will be the next type of attack. The mobile phone operators need to be able to be monitored.

Are we following the right path? For example, are we doing the right thing to give intelligence to the Saudi's about Yemen.

The attack against Charlie Hebdo was not by Daesch but by Al Qaeda, so we need to have a global approach, looking at all of the terrorist groups.

Mr Emmanuel Dupuy is currently President of l'Institut Prospective et Sécurité en Europe. Furthermore, he works as journalist, consultant (Cabinet d'Ingénierie Stratégique pour la Sécurité), teacher in geopolitics (Institut d'Etudes des Relations Internationales) and researcher in geopolitical issues for various institutions linked to the French defence policy. One of his key interests is geopolitics of the Mediterranean region.



Sheikh Ramzy

What is the definition of radicalisation? How can we remove it?

To do this, we need to find the cause? What can make a normal person kill mercilessly, even himself? What sort of madness is that? What causes this aggression and what is the purpose behind it? What do they want to achieve? If we can find that, we can solve the problem. At the moment, the problem is Islam.

It is a set of ideas stemming from the Holy book, right or wrong. They have their belief.

There are many reasons, including money, insults, being under extreme aggression, revenge and many other reasons cause people to become extreme.

We had a very good report from Senator Bockel in France. In France, they have massive funding and are doing many excellent things.

If you think of radicalisation as a set of fires, you try to cover each of them. But we have to ask how can we put the fire out.

In France, 25,000 people are followed as potential terrorists according to Dr Emmanuel Dupuy. What should we do with them? These people, they have families. We can't just put them all in prison. In Britain, we say "innocent until proven guilty". You can tag them but you can't take their freedom away. We must reduce the aggression that causes the radicalisation.

Islam, like other religions, has some scholars who radicalise the people. The scriptures are interpreted wrongly.

I am an activist in a good way and I've met a number of people who have been radicalised. They say, "shall we go to Syria or not?" 'To answer, I have to cite verses from the Holy Book.' He tells them, if you

want to go, go with these charities to help. However, other Imams tell the people to go. Internet has a lot to do with the problem. One young middle class person went to Syria, even though he was a modest person and he created great difficulties for his family, because his parents sent him a little money, they were accused of being terrorists. They are good Christians. They only sent the child money because he was hungry, not for terrorism.

We can use the Koran to de-radicalise the people. Thank you to Humphrey Hawksley for saying that Islam is good. We should not demonise Islam. We need to educate people that Islam is a beautiful, moderate religion. Let's be united in the word of God and bring peace to the world.

Sheikh Dr Hojjat Ramzy is the founder and director of Oxford Islamic Information Centre. He works with Thames Valley Police as Islamic chaplain and adviser for number of years and assists the police in integration and Islamic issues. He is the director of Tel-mama (Measuring anti Hate crime) in Thames valley assisting City and County Council and Thames Valley Police to reduce the Hate Crime in Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. He works as Chaplain and is on the advisory board of the directorate in Oxford Brookes University's student welfare. He is a national member of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and the former chair of education of MCB. He is a Director of Universal Peace Federation UK.

Dr Afzal Ashraf:

Dr Ashraf gave a slightly wider perspective. He started to look at extremism in 1998 from an academic perspective. What is 'normal' for people changes according to geography. Churchill retaliated violently against the bombing of London. The USA retaliated with atomic weapons at the end of WWII. Extremists then accuse the USA, for example, for having committed heinous acts to justify their own actions.

Over 50 years ago, I contributed to counter-narratives in the Middle East, but these programs have not been successful, because you cannot persuade an extremist. We should try, but it's difficult. Extremism comes from ideologies. These ideologies however do not in themselves radicalise people. The Bolshevik revolution occurred in 1917, but it didn't occur when Marx wrote his treatise. It occurred because of the success of the revolution.

A nation was radicalised in the 1930s by a combination of an ideology and a charismatic leader, but also due to their success. Al Qaeda's ideology came from something that existed 100 years earlier. There is very little that is new. Most of us didn't hear about Al Qaeda until 9/11 but they were known before in anti-terrorist circles. The War on Terror had one great success, in that the leaders had a very short life expectancy. And this failure to deliver on their part led to their decline. It took 75 years to show that the myth of communism was a failure. We have to do that with the present problem.

Bin Laden was asked to fight a Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan by the Americans at the behest of the Saudis. Once Al Qaeda showed itself to be a threat to the West, the US could have done something but they didn't. They were allowed to go away while the U.S. focused on regime change. Communism and fascism haven't gone away. But the perpetrators do it because they want to take revenge for a particular grievance and these grievances are very largely political.

We don't get pictures from Yemen, yet we do get high definition pictures from Aleppo. Why is this? There is always a reason.

Finally, geopolitically, the situation now is like that just before WWII. We now have a system which is no longer fit for purpose. We need to think very carefully about what Western liberal democracy is all about. We should remember that the Greeks dismissed democracy, because mischievous, unscrupulous leaders can lead people astray.

Dr Afzal Ashraf is a Visiting Fellow of the Centre for Conflict, Security and Terrorism (CST) of the University of Nottingham. Afzal Ashraf is a Consultant Fellow at RUSI, following a diverse career spanning defence, national security, diplomacy, rule of law and delivery of training and education. After a start in combat aircraft research and development in UK industry, he was commissioned as an Engineer officer in the Royal Air Force (RAF), retiring three decades later as a Group Captain. He is an Adviser to Universal Peace Federation UK on radicalisation issues.