



IPI SPEAKER SERIES

Countering Extremism and Radicalization in a Multicultural World

Featuring
Ed Husain

Author of *The Islamist: Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw and why I left*

Moderator
Warren Hoge

Vice President and Director for External Relations at IPI

Warren Hoge: All right. Could I get people's attention? Can you hear me OK in the back? Can you hear me in the back? Good.

Good evening. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's Vice President for External Relations, and I'm delighted to welcome you here tonight to meet Ed Husain, author of the best-selling book *The Islamist: Why I became an Islamic Fundamentalist, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left*. He is also cofounder and co-director of the Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremist think-tank in London that seeks to "challenge extremism" and "promote pluralism."

Having just read and greatly admired his book, I'm eager to let Ed take over the floor, but beforehand, let me take a moment to tell you about IPI's work in this area. We have produced a number of publications and hosted discussions which we believe reflect the complexity of the debate about terrorism, radicalization or violent extremism today. Among the publications in our counter-terrorism portfolio are reports on the relationship between politics, governance, and terrorism in Bangladesh, regional cooperation to counter-terrorism in South Asia, and a report in IPI's Blue Paper series on the UN's institutional architecture to address this challenge. On the subject of de-radicalization and attempts in several countries to persuade violent extremists to follow a more nonviolent path, IPI has held a number of discussions examining the lessons learned from various states' experiences, some with

violent right-wing groups, as in Northern Europe, some with leftist guerillas, and some with Islamist extremists. In March, we co-hosted with the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and the Arab Thought Forum, a two-day conference in Amman that brought together many Muslim-majority states to share these experiences, and I'm pleased to say that just today we have published a meeting note from that session. It is available in the racks outside. Tomorrow we are collaborating again with the Norwegians on a closed-door, round-table discussion in this room promoting de-radicalization and the role of the UN.

Now, Ed, I read your book this past weekend and found it very compelling and deeply disturbing about the continuing lure to young Muslims of home-grown extremism. This morning, I read, as I'm sure some of you did, with a new understanding, the news about the guilty plea of 30-year-old Faisal Shahzad from Bridgeport, Connecticut, the man who tried to bomb Times Square last month. After his plea, and I'm sure you read this, he told the judge that he considered himself a "Muslim soldier," and he added that he hoped attacks like his on America would multiply "100 times over."

Ed, your book is a chilling description of the ease with which extremist groups can prey on adolescent angst and the longing so many people have for a group of friends and a community to call their own. It paints a picture of a gradual yet steady journey towards extremism and an exclusionist mentality.

Ed Husain is actually Mohammed Husain. The name he uses comes from the last two letters of his given name, and if I remember right from the book, Ed, you found you could not use your given name in Syria, because there the Prophet's name cannot be uttered. And so you became Ed Husain.

His story is a gripping one, because the author, Ed, is a remarkably thoughtful and self-examining man. He's from a middle-class British background with dedicated Muslim immigrant parents of deep personal spirituality who, from the book, he appears to have adored, and who appear to have adored him. He is also a very accomplished writer.

Now normally when we have book authors here, we sell books outside. They're hardback, new publications. Ed's book was published in 2007, so we're not doing that tonight. But let me urge you to get a copy, and I checked today: \$12 on Amazon. It's a paperback copy, and it's really worth it. It's a very readable book.

Ed told me beforehand he heard that Americans were self-promoting, and I said, "Where did you ever hear that?"

As the title promises, Ed takes you along his journey of radicalization, describing his own programmatic indoctrination and rise to campus leadership in London, his commitment, and his friends, one of whom became a suicide bomber in Israel at age 21, others who went on *jihad* missions never to return. And then he describes the murder of a Christian youth by Muslims, the reactions by people around him to the events of 9/11, and to the subsequent bombings in London, and how all of that began to his return passage, leading him to the personal Islam of moderation he practices today. Because of the story it tells and the people it implicates, his book is a controversial piece, one that has brought him ferocious denunciations from his one-time friends. It has stirred passionate debate about many of the fundamental questions of our time on identity, on citizenship, on community, on education, and on globalization. *The Islamist* provides valuable insights on how to address the challenges it highlights through greater knowledge.

Ed gained a deeper understanding of the ideologies that motivate such violence and extremism, and in the process, he saved himself. More importantly, he has used that experience to try to counter radicalization through his London-based, Quilliam Foundation. Named after a 19th century English convert to Islam, William Abdullah Quilliam, the founder of Britain's first mosque and Islamic center, the Foundation provides research, analysis, and advocacy to promote greater pluralism among Muslim communities, and a deeper understanding of them among others. As part of its program, Quilliam also provides outreach and training for those who require a greater understanding of the complexities of Islam and Muslim communities today. The paths to violent extremism are many and varied. Likewise, the responses must be flexible, creative, and tailored to the context. Quilliam seems to exemplify this. Ed, I already feel privileged to have made your acquaintance, and I'm really pleased to extend that privilege to our audience tonight. The floor is yours.

Ed Husain:

Thank you. Thank you, Warren, for such a warm, kind, and comprehensive introduction. Thank you also to Naureen and Meiko for organizing much of this, and a very special thank you to all of you here for making time on a weekday evening to come and listen to me. I won't speak for too long. I just want to identify several factors that lead people to becoming extremists, radicals, fundamentalists, fanatics, whatever you want to call them. If we

can put labels to a side for a moment and just deal with what leads people to walk that pathway. And often the mentioning of names and terms upsets people, and then nothing seems to ever get heard, because I've called someone X name or Y name. So, let's put labels to a side and address four issues that lead people, especially within the European context, with a greater focus on the British context, to becoming someone who may one day want to kill him- or herself and kill other people with him.

The first factor in all of this, and it's not just my own personal experience, but the experience of almost everybody who's walked the pathway from being "a radical" to then wanting to become or, indeed, becoming a suicide bomber, is the question of identity. And I think in a country like America, where people are more or less self-assured in their sense of identity, it's difficult to comprehend what it means in a country like England, old, rooted, ancient, historical, complex -- what it means to have a complete lack of belonging, a complete lack of a sense of community. I think my generation, children of immigrants growing up in Britain, were, and to some sense, still are, in a very under-handed way, outsiders, and that sense of being outsiders at school, being outsiders at work, being forever seen as somehow exotic, somehow interesting, somehow different, leads people to want, despite being born and raised in England, to have a sense of belonging, to want to have a network which is ours, to want to have ideals, aims that we can recognize and realize in our lifetime.

Now for my generation in the 1990s, what brought those questions of identity and belonging home was Bosnia, seeing two hours away from London that white, blonde, blue-eyed Muslims were being killed despite being in Bosnia for 400 years on mere account of their being Muslim, allowed extremist groups in London to go around saying, "Bosnia today, Britain tomorrow." There was no response on our part as to, well, if that kind of ethnic massacre did occur in Britain, what would happen? And, you know, the British government at that time more or less being remote from Bosnia, not wanting to get involved, didn't help matters. So, there was that developing in the 1990s.

But even to this day, there are issue of identity where, if you walk into the major cities of England, Bradford, Kieghley, Walsall, Manchester, Glasgow, indeed, London, you will see entire communities ghetto-ized, separate, not having much in the way of communication with wider society. I'll give you an example. Take East London Mosque, a major mosque, probably Europe's largest mosque. We may even call it a mega-mosque. Within the complex

of that mosque and its immediate surroundings, we have prayer facilities for 10,000 people. We have a bank called the Islamic Bank of Britain. We have an old people's home. We have a mini-cab service. We have a hospital nearby. We have a funeral service. We have restaurants. We have a children's crèche, or a nursery facility. We have a secondary school. Now all of this surrounded by, you know, almost entirely Muslim-majority area. There is no need for a three-, four-year-old, up to the age of 16 or 17 to interact with anybody else, to interact with this horrendous group of people called *kuffar*, nonbelievers, a derogatory term. That is the milieu in which the issues of identity and belonging arise. And that's just one example of one part of London, and similar initiatives are popping up now in Oldham and Glasgow.

That's issue number one, the issue of identity. And during the Q&A, you may want to ask me more questions on this, but the issue of identity is still very much alive. British Muslims still don't have their belonging. And I'm not merely just sitting here and blaming wider middle-class, liberal, political-class-type people. A lot of the blame lies also with "Muslim communities," who still go -- I hate this word -- go back "home" to Pakistan, go back "home" to Bangladesh, go back "home" to India to get married and bring spouses back into England, rather than marry people within the United Kingdom, whether it's from a Pakistani, Bengali, or Asian background, or from white, black, Muslim, non-Muslim background. That's still an issue, where we are still, you know, in this mindset of we can't marry people in Britain. We have to go "back home," not believing England to be home, but going to other countries and importing partners and recreating this cycle of identity conflict, identity chaos. So, that's issue number one, and almost everyone who's been on that pathway towards violence has, especially in Europe, maybe less so in Arab and Muslim-majority countries, has had that conflict with identity as to "who am I, what am I, where do I belong?"

The final point in this is, take Mohammad Sidique Khan, the first suicide bomber for the London Underground on the seventh of July, 2005 attacks. If you listen to his suicide video, one of the most powerful statements he made, I thought, was saying that you -- England, English people -- are at war with my people, Iraq, Afghanistan. What happened? This is Mohammad Sidique Khan, born and raised in Yorkshire, speaking with a thick Yorkshire accent, telling people in England, on a suicide video, knowing full well that he was going to die, "You are at war with my people, and I am a soldier." Interesting, too, that Shahzad was saying that he was a soldier. So, that issue of identity is a live issue, and it's still there.

The second issue after having exploited this sense of not belonging, not being fully British, fully Pakistani, fully Muslim, not belonging anywhere, this sense of being half-breeds, we had this issue, the second issue being the ideology. So, you have people out there who are already confused. Amidst this confusion on university campuses across Britain, in mosques across Britain, in websites up and down homes, you know, not just in Europe, but in the Middle East, you have an ideology, or, to make it less complicated, a narrative being pushed out, that history is something like this: that in 1924, well, actually, before 1924, there was this great Muslim empire. This was the great Caliphate, and this was a story that was sold to me. It's sold to hundreds of people – in fact, tens of thousands of people – that there was this great Muslim empire, and Muslims were all united, and they were a superpower. Now anyone who knows history will know that there are several flaws in that narrative, but putting it to one side, there was this belief that Muslims were one great superpower. Muslims were all united, and Muslims were constantly expanding that empire, and Muslims were feared. Muslims were a global power for the previous 1,300 or 1,400 years between the Prophet Mohammed passing away, and in 1924, when the Ottoman Empire, for all intents and purposes, was destroyed. So, were the Austro-Hungarians, and so were other empires, but somehow this empire, the Ottoman Empire, had special value in Muslim eyes.

Since that point, a new history has developed in which somehow Britain and France, but especially Britain, are responsible for creating the entire conflict in the Middle East. The creation of Israel is central to this, that somehow Israel and the Balfour Declaration were part of a global Freemasonic, Zionist conspiracy to put what they call a “cancer in the heart of the Muslim world,” which is for all intents and purposes, the Arab world. This enemy, this Israel, is a false entity in the Middle East. Somehow it needs to be destroyed. Unless it is destroyed, all the Arab countries in the area are not powerful, and Arab leaders are mere stooges for America or Britain or France. In addition to this false narrative of history and all blame being on Israel, some of it perhaps legitimate, some of it illegitimate, but all blame being on Israel, all the ills of the Middle East and Muslim-majority countries are somehow always being thrown back to the West. The narrative goes deeper to say that every single Muslim individual, everyone has what we call a *fard al-ayn*, or an individual religious responsibility to either set up an Islamic state much like the global Caliphate before 1924, or take part in warfare or jihad to bring about that state, to correct the perceived injustices. That's part of the narrative. That's part of the ideology that's put out there.

Without, again, getting too complicated, two things bring about that ideology. One, is what happened in Egypt in the 1950s in the prisons of Egypt. People like Sayyid Qutb and others were persecuted to no end. Their response was to come up with what's called Islamism, which is a politicization of Islam, and the second is the ideology of the state creed that was pumped out in Saudi Arabia for many years known as *Wahhabism*. Again, during the Q&A, I'm happy to go into greater detail. Those in the audience who have a soft spot for *Wahhabism*, I ask you two questions. Unless you can explain *al-walaa' wal-baraa'*, which is enmity for non-Muslims, hatred toward non-Muslims, and loyalty only to Muslims, and what's called *tawhid al hakimiyah*, we cannot avoid the fact that somehow that creed of *Wahhabism* did contribute towards creating al-Qaeda, jihadist violence. Almost every jihadist has a *wahhabi akida*. That's just a fact. But again, happy to go into sort of details during the Q&A. So, that's the second point, first point being identity, second point being ideology that draws people in.

A different narrative, a different way of looking at the world, a different history that everyone's against us, that the Freemasonic, Zionist conspiracy to control and subvert Muslims. Somehow it's my responsibility as an individual Muslim to reverse that, and unless I reverse that, I am sinful, and my sin will lead to being burnt in hellfire. It's all linked to religion, and it's all linked to the current political malaise that many Muslims and others find themselves in, in the modern world. So, that's the second point.

The third point, based on a changed world-view, based on having issues around identity crises, is the exploitation of grievances. So, if I, Joe Muslim, in Bradford, or, say, London, can't get a job, it's because I'm Muslim. If I'm not successful in education, it's because I'm Muslim and there's a conspiracy to keep me back. If there are difficulties, economic difficulties in, say, Pakistan, or in Syria, it's because it's a Muslim-majority country, and somehow there's a conspiracy to make sure that Muslims are held down. Almost everything becomes a grievance that's linked to the narrative that I mentioned previously and the ideology that's out there, which offers the solution to these grievances. So, if Muslims are weak, it's because as they see it, that ideology, i.e., Islamism, is not a political system.

I want to make one last point on this point about grievances, and that is the ultimate grievance: If you believe in the grievances, and if you say, "OK. We'll deal with the grievance in terms of destroying Israel, because Israel's the only problem." If you say, "We'll deal

with the grievance of 52 Muslim countries all now need to have their rulers removed and some sort of Caliphate-centralized system of government imposed. If you believe in these grievances, if you then wish to address grievance after grievance, the ultimate grievance is this, and that is the absence of their state, the absence of their *khilafah*, the absence of their what they call *iqmat al-dine*, or the establishment of Islam. Now what they'd lie about is their interpretation of Islam. They will go around saying that we need to have an Islamic state. What they mean is that we need to have a state that implements, enforces as law, state law, our interpretation of *Shariah*. And that's the kind of grievance that ultimately, you can't respond to, because we've seen it in Iran and Sudan and Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. Whose Islam are you going to put into state force? And the moment you do that, the amount of violations in human rights that occur is in and of itself problematic, and the good news is that most Muslims don't want that state. If they did, they would've voted for it in Pakistan or in Bangladesh or in Indonesia, where repeatedly the parties, the democratic arm of this movement, has lost election after election, you know, because people in those countries simply do not want to see that kind of theocratic, pseudo-fascist state being implemented in the name of religion.

And the final point, the fourth point, you know, is that the issue of identity is out there, the issue of the narrative is out there, and the issue of grievance is out there. Well, what do you do about it? And this is where the internet, this is where networks come into place, and that's where the power of networks in recruiting people, whether it's the soft fronting Islamic societies that have in their prayer rooms people who then divert people towards extremism and later violent extremism, or whether it's on websites, where you go onto an "Islamic website" and then you are diverted two clicks away to an al-Qaeda website, or whether it's just meeting someone at a mosque who befriends you, individuals and networks are key.

And that's the fourth reason why people then turn towards extremism, towards violence, having gone through all of this, having listened to the mood music of the narrative that September 11 was an insider job done by the American government against its own people. You doubt it? Go and listen to Zach Naik, Dr. Zach Naik. Who is Dr. Zach Naik? One of the most popular preachers in India today. The British government recently banned him from coming into the UK this week. Dr. Zach Naik's statements on 9/11 are mind-boggling stuff, but this is a man whose channel, Peace TV, who's funded by, not the government, but by individuals in Saudi Arabia, who's pumping out this kind of mood music, that this is all a huge

conspiracy, to which suicide bombers dance. And those are the individuals, those are the networks that are out there that recruit people. So, to summarize, then, four things that need somehow to be counted in order to ensure that more and more young people are not responding to the issues of Gaza, of Dhaka, of Pakistan, of the Xin-Jiang province, of issues in Uzbekistan, in Pakistan at the moment of Kashmir, by saying, "Oh, it's all a big conspiracy," that I'm only Muslim and nothing else, identity, these are my grievances, and they need addressing. The way we do that is through this ideology, this movement, and the way to get involved is through the individuals and the networks that are for all intents and purposes on our doorsteps. You can't stop people from being on your doorsteps in the current multicultural globalized world. So, with those thoughts, I will sort of end here, and thank you all for listening so patiently. Thank you.

Hoge: I'm going to ask two or three questions, have a conversation, and then shortly we'll be inviting questions from the floor. The first thing, I'm struck by your saying that Dr. Zach Naik, is that his name?

Husain: Dr. Zach Naik.

Hoge: Dr. Zach Naik was banned from Britain, because I lived in Britain from '96 to 2004. I was talking with Ed beforehand wondering if some of the mosques I used to go to to check up on radicals were mosques that he frequented. They turned out not to have been, but you know where they are. But the reason I mention all that is in the book, you quite directly fault the British for being so tolerant. I mean, the time I was there, and the time you were there, people like Abu Muhamsa, Abu Katada, Omar Bakri, these were violent, preaching, hate-filled preachers, and under the totally admirable, you know, British tolerance for free speech and free assembly, they were permitted to stay there. They were not deported if indeed there was a place they could have been deported to. So, I'm surprised to hear news that Britain has banned somebody from coming in. I wanted to ask you, just ahead of time. You feel rather strongly that the British are sort of complicit in the radicalization of Muslim youth because they permit these guys to function freely without any kind of control. Is that fair, and is that changing?

Husain: It's fair. It's fair. It's fair from the 1990s, when you were there, Warren, and it's fair from the time that, you know, my generation was radicalized, because, look, Bosnia was a genuine grievance. There was injustice happening. People were right to be angry, whether they were Muslims or not. That was a massacre that

should've been stopped. Interjections should've been made. There's nothing wrong with being angry about injustices in the world. I think that's noble. But when we were angry about that, what was our response supposed to be? Nobody taught us in school or when we wanted to have political engagement that if you have a grievance, if you have an issue with the way the world works, you take it through lobbying, you take it through protest meetings, you take it through Parliament, you meet your local MP, and over Gaza, recently we learned that it's possible to go and meet the foreign secretary. It's actually possible to have meetings with Foreign Office officials and then relay that back through our networks into communities. So, the point I'm making is that nobody explained to us how you worked the political process when you had a genuine grievance. In the absence of that knowledge, the radicals that you mentioned were quite content to be out on the streets and say, "Brother, you have an issue. This is what needs to happen. The ideology is missing. The state is missing. Muslim's need military defense. If we can't have military defense, we should resort to the language the *kafir* understands." In other words, the language of violence. When that message was being promulgated, that's when, you're right, the British intelligence service, and I'm sorry, I've got no reason to pander to any of those outfits, that they were more or less content that as long as the individuals you mentioned were targeting Jordan, targeting Saudi Arabia, targeting Syria, it didn't really matter because they weren't targeting Britain. But then something happened. They produced people who targeted Britain, and I think only after 7/7 that the intelligence services woke up and then related arms in government woke up. So, yes, Britain was exceptionally tolerant of the intolerant, and that's where the problem lies, that you do not tolerate intolerance. You challenge it. And I'm not advocating state bans of government, but there should be -- you know, when, for example, you know, I'll give you a quick example to sort of open the floor, and then, Warren, ask more questions if you want, but on our university campus, despite having a mosque, you know, two mosques in fact within a four-minute walking distance from our university campus, when some of us said we don't want to pray in those mosques, because they were mainstream Sunni/Sufi mosques. We wanted to have our own Salafi mosques on the campus itself, rather than the college management say, "Tough luck. There's a mosque. You go and pray." They turn around and said, "Sure. We'll facilitate it. What more do you want? You know books from Saudi Arabia. We'll order them for you." Anything we wanted, they were the facilitation for it, rather than saying, "Well, you know, hold on. What's wrong with the mosques that you have?" So, I think what

you hit on was absolutely right, that there was a sense of corporation or desire.

I think there's a lot of imperial guilt in Britain, there still is, that we went around, sort of creating empires, and now we should bend over backwards to make sure the children of empire aren't in some way subjugated, but maybe from my father's generation that was bright, but I think for my generation, that's patronizing. You know, we're children of that soil. We're born and raised there. Don't patronize me and talk to me about how I need to be looked after and provided for separately. Don't tell me that my co-religionists in Bradford or in Manchester who happen to be female don't speak English despite living in England for 25 years, and you say Mr. White Liberal that it's OK, we'll provide them with translation classes. It's not OK, because what happens is then they can't work. It's not OK, because once they're subjected to domestic violence by the husbands, which is increasing, they don't have the psychological or the linguistic confidence to reach out to what they see as the white police officer, and the non-Muslim police officer. Those are the issues that we're facing, and yet, the liberal elite somehow think, it's OK. They're happy with not learning English and staying at home. We're not.

Hoge: Muslim immigration in America. You note in the book that it's different than in Europe, more middle-class, not people dominated by a sense of revenge, the former subjects of former colonial powers seeking reparation. Could you talk a bit more about Muslim immigration in America and how does someone like a Faisal Shahzad happen?

Husain: I really think people like Faisal Shahzad and Hasan Nidal, who opened fire in Ft. Hood, are more the exception than the norm here in America, and that's for several reasons. In stark contrast to, say, Britain, and by extension, Europe. Britain likes to think that we're not part of Europe, but I think from where you're sitting you see us as Europe. So, let's just say for argument's sake, Britain is part of Europe. And then America is something different. Then several points come to mind immediately. One is that here in the United States, you do God a lot more openly, which allows for people who have a religious bent of mind to actually express themselves in public. In other words, there's nothing wrong with talking about praying. There's nothing wrong with talking about believing in God. There's nothing wrong with talking about having a sense of religious identity. Your president always talks about, "God bless America." When Tony Blair for once mentioned God, he was

immediately told, "Do not do that again. We don't do God." Alastair Campbell said --

Hoge: Alastair Campbell said, "We don't do God?"

Husain: That's what his phrase was. We don't do God. That does not culturally allow for people to breathe, especially those of us who come from a religious background. I think that's distinction number one between Europe and America that you allow for religious communities to actually flourish within a national framework here. Distinction number two has to be the fact that you have a very clear -- sorry I should stop saying, "you," because it's not an American audience. America has a very clear sense of -- well at least from where we're standing in Britain -- OK. A much clearer sense of national identity, you know, something to belong to, something to aspire to, the American dream. That's not something that we have in Britain. We more or less let people come in and do nothing or whatever it is they want. They're left alone. That's distinction number two. Distinction number three, I think, is your immigration stock was radically different. In other words, you -- again I'm saying, "you." America picked the best of the best from Muslim-majority countries, crème de la crème that came here, and therefore your immigration demographic is different. Point number four, in comparison to European Muslims is that American Muslims actually have home-grown theological talent. People like Hazam Yusuf Hanson, Dr. Omar Abdullah, Shamon Jackson, people are converts. People have compromised and found a way between being American, between being Muslim, that's not at odds. In Britain, we're still struggling with finding that kind of, you know, comfort zone between faith and the secular public space. So, those, I think, are immediate distinctions that make it hugely different between Muslims in America and European Muslims.

Hoge: Ed, the role of the media and how the media is used by radical Muslims, does the media understand it? Does it combat it? Does it promote it?

Husain: See, again, part of the narrative, the extremist narrative, is that the media is entirely to blame. The media's controlled by Jews. The media's controlled by Freemasons. It's a deliberate attack on Islam. There's a great conspiracy to undermine Islam. That's part of the narrative. Now sometimes sadly there are elements of the media that actually confirm that narrative. But I think -- I mean I can only talk about the British media, and what we've seen in recent years is a desire to actually want to counter the Adjam Choudhary, want to counter the al-Qaeda sympathizers. That said,

two factors, I think, lead to the media not playing, you know, enough of a role. One is the high turnover in staff, in other words, producers, editors, are always moving on. Therefore those that, you know, organizations like mine, Quilliam, build a relationship with, aren't there in two, three years time, so they've moved on. So, it's difficult to plant stories. And two, there are very few Muslim voices out there that the media can actually go to and get a decent quote to counter the bad guys. And that's part of the problem, that for a whole host of reasons, you know, intelligent, thoughtful Muslims aren't in the public domain trying to undermine the bad stuff coming out from the dark side.

Hoge: And finally, Ed, overcome your British sense of reluctance to promote yourself and tell us about Quilliam, and how do you do it? How do you go about de-radicalizing -- if that's the right verb to use -- people?

Husain: Our work is more counter-radicalization rather than de-radicalization. Quilliam is a think-tank, is a thought body that leads the debate in Britain around the issues that I've highlighted. I want to say that Quilliam is not out there to convert people. We chose the name Quilliam because he was a 19th century English solicitor to illustrate the point that Islam and Muslims did not start with immigration in the 1960s, that there is a pre-sixties presence of Islam and Muslims in Britain that was by and large harmonious. So, that was then the decision to name it Quilliam because I'm conscious that this would be on the blogs, on the internet, and then you'll have people on the bordering, far-right elements saying, you know, Quilliam is out there to convert. We're not out there to convert. We're out there to combat extremism, but I think more importantly to articulate a way of being Muslim that puts Westerners, who are also Muslims, at home in our surroundings, rather than constantly at odds with it. So, those are two aims. One, to counter extremist ideologies in the public space, i.e., the media, government circles, civil society, think-tanks, but also to help articulate a way of being Muslim that's at home in and with our surroundings rather than at odds with it, confronting it, being separate from it, and trying to constantly change it to suit a minority, rather than a minority adjusting to a harmonious surrounding in Europe.

We do that through several means. One, there's the work my co director Maajid Nawas and I do. A lot of it is networking through Muslim thought leaders. A lot of it is meeting government officials and opposition officials to brief them to make sure that the tone set by the state, which is central to this debate, is one that's adequate.

A lot of work that we do is also meeting people at various think-tanks, civil society bodies, to ensure that they don't by mistake empower the wrong side, just because there's a tendency to want to look for Muslim voices, that they don't go to the wrong voices. We also have a unit that's dedicated to research and publication, so if you look at our website, we've researched and published on mosques, on prisons -- prison radicalization in Britain is a huge issue -- on countering arguments from the British National Party, on unemployment issues surrounding women -- sort of an eclectic range of publications that just aren't on the shelf. We actively make sure that we then meet with government officials to make sure that much of what we say is put into sort of policy measures, and the government is central to this. I'm not being a Socialist by talking about the government repeatedly, because the tone set by the government, the people it embraces, empowers those people to those that are around them. We also have a unit that's dedicated to training work, which is, I think, unlikely in most think-tanks. But given what we're doing, and it's a thought leadership body, we go out, and we train people, whether they're civil servants, or public servants you call them, or whether they're university people, or whether they're Imams in mosques. We have people who were once part of extremist groups who have now left them who go out and explain why Islam and Muslims per se are not the problem, but two ideological influences that are the problem, and how to counter the arguments. And finally, we also have a unit that's dedicated to working in Pakistan, which is a huge issue. Interestingly, when I got off the plane today at JFK airport, I was taken to a room, and I was interrogated, and the first question the guy asked me was, "Have you been to Pakistan?" Yeah. I've been to Pakistan, and I like the country, but he wasn't -- I stayed there only for two nights last year, and yet 50 minutes of questioning as to what I did in Pakistan for those two nights. You know. So, a lot of our work concentrates on Pakistan for a whole host of reasons, some of which, you know, you alluded to with Faisal Shahzzad.

So, those are the work -- the work strands. I don't want to go into details. Do look at our website. But what Quilliam has been very successful in is articulating an alternative public space in which it's possible to be fully Muslim and to be fully British without any contradictions in the two, and then in the same time carrying government people, carrying media people in the center left, the center right, carrying opposition politicians, carrying major think-tanks and civil society bodies with us. But where we failed is trying to carry more, you know, Muslim thought leaders with us. And that's our major challenge, to try to carry more Muslims. I think the space we open, in many ways we're 15, 20 years ahead for the

British Muslim community, and that's part of where we're struggling at the moment, is to carry more Muslims with us.

Hoge: Thank you very much. Let me go to the back here. Ellie, if you can -- oh, you've got the microphone. Good.

Ellie Hearne: My name is Ellie Hearne. I work here at IPI. Thank you, Ed, for a great presentation and for telling us about your good work. My question actually relates quite a bit to what Warren was asking you about, which is about the British national identity, and something you touched on, apparently, you know, compared to the US, where there's a much stronger kind of movement, I guess. Well movement's probably a dated term for this, but to foster a sense of Americanism among immigrants. Do you think something like that would be beneficial in the UK? I know it was talked about a few years ago in the context, not just of "home-grown Islamic terrorism," but also in the context of Scottish nationalism and Irish nationalism, which, obviously, the UK has had or could worry about problems from in the future. I just wonder if you had any thoughts on that. Thank you.

Husain: Yeah. That's the number of the matter. For me, that's the issue. If people, in particular young Muslims, felt that they belonged to Britain, felt that it was their country, felt that they could serve in the Army, the British Army, and have no moral qualms, felt that the police force was their police force, felt that they could have a sense of ambition, that they, too, could become prime minister one day, they would not turn against their own country. They would not want to kill their own people, but at the moment they are not being seen as their own people. There is a clear demarcation between the white people, the non-Muslims out there, and the surroundings of the kind of picture I drew for you around the East London mosque, where everything is self-sufficient for one community that doesn't need to interact with wider society. Without doubt, there is a need for national identity, but the struggle for us is, what is that identity? We're at a good point now in our political trajectory. We have a conservative/Liberal-Democratic alliance, and if anyone can define what it means to be British, presumably people like David Cameron can, but so far we haven't really heard much, and you know, how do you define something as nebulous and as elusive as British identity? That's complex. That's deep. That's rooted. It's 10-6 to 6 onwards, you know. And how do you explain that to people who have -- it's difficult, and you know, with Europe there, are we Europeans? Are we Brits? With Scotland, Ireland, and Wales trying to break away, well, they're not interested in trying to be British. They want to be Scottish. You go to -- interestingly,

Muslims in Scotland have a much, much stronger sense of belonging and identity with Scotland, and they're proudly Scottish Muslims wearing kilts and everything else -- no, seriously, they are -- as opposed to -- I mean, I'd never describe myself as an English Muslim. I wouldn't. I don't see myself as English. That tells you a lot. Despite being born and raised in England, I don't see myself as English. I put my bottom dollar on the fact that you will not find many Muslims in England who describe themselves as English Muslims, unless they're white and they're converts and they have a certain ideological axe to grind, people just, again, Englishness? What is Englishness? You tell me. I don't know what it is. I don't think many people can define it. Part of the issue is you can't define it, and you can't -- I know it's pessimistic. You can't invite people to embrace something that A, you can't define, and B, you're ashamed of yourself, and C, on Friday nights with the culture of binge drinking and vomiting, you know, who -- we're in a mess, you know?

Hoge: We'll take two questions here because we've got a lot of hands. Patrick first, and then this gentleman second. OK? And if you could identify yourself, even though I know who you are.

Patrick Hayford: Thank you very much. My name is Patrick Hayford. I work for the UN on African issues. I want to thank you for your clarity, your eloquence, and your sincerity. You've said a lot in a few words. Now first of all, is there a difference between the Labor Party approach and the conservatives when it comes to dealing with this problem, and do you expect any change of approach in the new government in dealing with this issue? That's number one. Number two, why is the identity -- in a way you've answered it, but why is the identity crisis so deep in England in particular? And thirdly, Africa. I come from Africa. I come from Ghana. Islam has deep roots in Africa, as you know. And it's largely been peaceful. But there are a few alarming signs in certain pockets of Africa of extreme radicalization. As an expert on the subject, what would you recommend? Just before I end, let me say that for many of us, those of us approaching senior citizenship, we, in my family, we have both Muslims and Christians. And we're back. When it was Christmas, the Muslim cousins would celebrate with us. When it was Eid, we would celebrate with them. It was peaceful. Now there are a few alarming trends, but it's all instigated by certain people for purely political reasons. So, what would be your recommendation? What do you think can be done to nip this thing in the bud before it becomes a real problem in Africa? But thank you very much for saying so much in so few words.

Hoge: Patrick will be the last person I give permission to to ask four questions when I call on them. So, answer those four, and then we'll go to this gentleman here for a second question.

Husain: I'll try to be as quick as possible, and let's do it in reverse order. In terms of Africa, you're absolutely right, and if we can use Somalia as a case study, and in terms of recommendations, I'm not in a position to actually say much, because I don't know a great deal about Africa, but in very general terms, observing what's happening in Somalia, and observing how Somalia was historically, it was -- those of you who know Africa, especially Somalia, it had a Qadri, Sufi tradition -- very mainstream, very tolerant, very accepting, very broad, very pluralistic. But over the last, you know, 15 years, what we saw -- and again, forgive me for being blunt, an influence from certain Gulf states, you know, certain Gulf creeds, workers from Somalia went and worked in Gulf countries, came back with a certain outlook that was confrontational, rigid. As late as two years ago, they were blowing up tombs that had been shrines of great people, great saints of the past. They were blowing those up. These tombs had been there for 800 years and 900 years. That sense of intolerance, of violence, distrust, this belief that *shirk*, or this thing that association with God needs to be eliminated, that mindset, that obsession with *tawhid*, the oneness of God, these are newly revived old ideas that the Prophet Mohammed, for us he's sacred, and he said to us, "I do not worry for my community. I am Muslim. I don't worry about *shirk*," the belief in more than one God. And yet, Gulf states are obsessed with that, and graduates from University of Medina going into those countries, taking over mosques, and pushing people against their mainstream shafii, Sufi, Qadri traditions for the last, you know, 1,000 years, to say, "Embrace our new kind of, you know, sexy, well-funded, well-developed, globally networked Arab, authentic," the dress code is different. The network is different. The Arabic is different. The textbooks are different. It's attractive. We succumbed to that in the 1990s in Britain. And that's being pushed out in many African countries. You know, Africa's a poor continent. If you're a graduate from Medina University, you're getting a stipend. You're getting annual hadj, and to go into Mecca, into Medina paid for with prestige, it honors Muslims. So, there is all that in the background. And, you know, again learning from Somalia, the response came from the indigenous what they call [*inaudible*] that responded, and it seems, so far, to control -- the issue of the *shabbab* is under control. But you know, that's just broad thinking on Africa. In other words, empower your native, homegrown tradition of dance, of love, of joy, of music. You know, the Africans are renowned among Muslims globally for having that culture of music and love, and even

Ibn Battuta, the great traveler, went to Africa, and he saw, you know, women who were dancing, and women who were, you know, topless and things. That was the Arab, sort of African tradition. Arab travelers were walking by and saying, you know, even Ibn Battuta, "Oh, great. Traveling, how dare you sit here and enjoy dancing and music and women in this condition with these Africans? Shouldn't you be telling them it's *haram* and forbid it and stop it and ban it?" And he said, you know, "You're Arabs. That's your condition over there. You're oversexed. Africans, they're relaxed." If you doubt me -- I don't mean this as an insult -- read any of Ibn Battuta's works, and that's what he said. I mean, there's something to be said, I think, about sociological, psychological, social condition between two peoples. But anyhow, I don't want to digress. Why is identity so difficult in England? I think I alluded to some of that, but you know, I think it's to England's credit that England is an old country, a rooted country, and it's a country that's self-searching. And I think it's trying to find its place in the modern world. We're balanced between America and Europe. We're not sure where we stand. And, you know, I also think it's to England's credit to try to accommodate people without being overtly racist and repeat the mistakes of the past, but in doing so, bending over backwards and making mistakes. But this issue of identities, it's a deep issue, and I don't have a clear-cut answer other than some of the things I said earlier. Turning to governments, change of approach between this government and the last approach, certainly. So, far, what we've seen over the last six weeks with this government, it's been a lot more hawkish. I don't think I'm speaking out of turn here if I say that there's tension now between government ministers and civil servants who serve the previous administration in Britain, because government ministers on this issue are mostly from the center right, from the conservative party, and there's a stronger push for identity. I think there's a stronger push in this government in terms of change of approach for addressing, preventing extremism, and not preventing violent extremism, so the huge strategic shift. So, there is that clear, observable difference. Example of that is Zach Naik being banned from coming into England. I mean, that's unheard of. The previous government wasn't really too keen on banning. And between Labor and conservatives, this administration is dominated by conservatives, with some liberal Democrats in the coalition. And I've got to confess and say I'm a member of the Labor Party, you know, and look, broadly Labor got this right. After 7/7, Labor's response was broadly in the right place. It did put in place preventing extremism, a violent extremism program. It did set up the office for security and counter-terrorism. It did empower, you know, some wrong people, but it also empowered lots of right

people. I think Labor's sentiments were right, but there was an internal struggle between people on the far left in the Labor party and those who are on the center left. And you know, the conservatives are, in the current administration, I think you'll see where they are in months and years to come.

Hoge: OK. We have a lot of hands. This gentleman here. I'm going to do like three. This gentleman, and then this woman, and then you there. We'll take three questions at once.

General Muniruzzaman: Thank you for your presentation.

Hoge: And if you could make them short, because a lot of people want to ask questions.

General Muniruzzaman: Yeah. I enjoyed your presentation. I haven't read your book. I am General Muniruzzaman. I come from the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies in Dhaka. Although I haven't read your book, I enjoyed your presentation. But I understand that your presentation is purely confined to Great Britain, and not to the wider Islamic world as you can understand that. So, my comments and questions will be purely confined to the British society as it is. My institute did a one-year study and a survey of the Bangladeshi Diaspora living in London. In addition to what you said, I also found that there was a huge amount of rejection by the host society in accepting the Diaspora that lives in London, and this I'm saying on empirical evidence, because we did a study not only in Britain, but also in the [PH] roots for one year, and this was funded by the British government, so we were on empirical terms here. And I also found that there is a huge amount of sense of guilt on the Bangladeshi Diaspora in particular that lives in Britain, because they felt that many of their social habits and their economic lifelines were not based on purely Islamic ideals. For example, the restaurants that the Bangladeshi owners ran served alcohol, so the wives felt that the money that they raised their children on were on *haram* money, so they have a sense of guilt to correct, and therefore do something right, by which they could correct the sins. I also find that there was a huge sense of symbolism that was exploited by most of these people, and the symbolisms were everywhere in Europe, starting from the banning of the Mennonites in Switzerland, which was a very peaceful society, to the banning of the hijab in France, to anything that could be exploited. And then we also find that the study of communication of the groups that were exploiting these people were far, far superior than the

government's capacity to communicate. The Chairman mentioned that the British society and the government was complacent, but we found that they're complacent because there's tremendous sense of denial on the part of the government and the society, because they felt that we will patronize you as long as you don't want to become one of us, because they were kept at arm's length, and they felt that they'd been born and lived in the society, but they were never allowed to integrate and assimilate. So, on those issues, the sense of denial by the society and the government also added to the sense of rejection that they felt from the society, and therefore a sense to migrate to somewhere else and a different ideology becomes very strong. My understanding from your presentation and from the study that we did for one year is that the problem persists in a massive manner in the British society, but there is a complete, or a great deal of lack of understanding, and a complete sense of denial in many of the issues.

Hoge: Thank you. If you could just pass the microphone to this woman here.

Sorosh Roshan: Sorosh Roshan, American doctor, originally from Iran. I thank the IPI for hosting this presentation. I'm a Muslim, and presentation such as this, it will give knowledge and understanding to the society. As a Muslim, many of us have been discriminated or labeled without having done anything to deserve it. So this presentation is very helpful. I thank you for it. My question is, in the understanding of Islam, suicide is a sin. How these people who are trained to become suicide bomber deal with the issue of the religion? Also in the religion of Islam, the position of women have always been elevated by the writings of the scholars and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. The countries who do not respect the human rights of women, and they call themselves Islamic countries, how do they explain that? Thank you.

Hoge: Right. Meiko? In the third row. And then we'll answer all three.

Shamina de Gonzaga: Hi. My name is Shamina de Gonzaga, and my question was precisely on women. I'm wondering if you have many women in your foundation, and what you perceive as the role of young women in particular in your community. And also if you could comment a bit on the response you're getting, because Warren mentioned some very hostile responses to your work. I'm wondering where you feel you're making inroads. Thank you.

Hoge: Let's just take those. Yeah.

Husain: Two or three. Yeah. With General Muniruzzaman's question on Bangladesh, look, my heritage is also Bangladeshi. My parents -- my father's from East Pakistan. My mother's from India. The country's now known as Bangladesh. But it goes back to what I was trying to say about identity. I don't see myself as part of the Diaspora. I really don't, and I think that's where most of us should try to be. Nor, rightly or wrongly, do I see England as being a host society, you know. And I think where Europe, Germany, especially the Scandinavian countries, that's where they are. They do see it in the terms that you highlighted there, as host countries. I was born and raised in England. I am the host. And I think lots of people that are caught in that mindset of, you know, as I said while I was speaking, going to Bangladesh to find wives or to Pakistan to find wives or to India to find wives, or husbands for that matter, sort of complicate matters even more. You rightly criticize wider society and their shortcomings, but I mean, I would also be critical of what I see around, you know, the Bengali community or the Muslim community.

When I went to Syria in 2003. I went to live in the Middle East, work in the Middle East. I was in Syria for two years. I was in Saudi Arabia for nearly a year after that, to learn Arabic, to familiarize myself with our holy texts. When I came back, the community that I'd been with previously had changed in three years. When I left to Syria, I left my relatives, especially first generation people, watching the BBC or Channel 4. This was in 2003. I came back in 2006, and they were watching Channel S, Bangla TV, and other satellite channels. What happened was now the young kids -- at least my generation grew up watching the BBC, listening to BBC radio. Kids now are growing up watching [PH] Urdu or Bengali or Hindi television channels in their homes, connected to events in those countries, rather than connecting to events around them in the UK. So, that's one criticism. Second criticism is the marriage issue. Third criticism is that there is also a lack of desire to actually want to integrate. I've got to be honest. There is actually a desire to say, you know, we want more mosques. We want, you know, to keep ourselves away as much as possible from the mainstream. There is that desire to want to sort of, you know, not want to integrate. So, there are those sort of general concerns.

Other issues come to mind. Among women, British women from Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, unemployment rates are much higher -- much higher. The average rate of unemployment is 60%.

The national average is 14%. So, there's a huge discrepancy because of cultural factors and other issues. So, those are just some broad comments. But I also want to sort of not be too harsh on Britain, because Britain, with all our problems, we're farther ahead than Europe. We're much better than France, than Germany, than Scandinavian countries, than Austria, and all of these issues, because the Germans, they're still busy talking about third-generation Germans as Turks. You know, grandfathers came to Germany, but they're still seen as Turks. Scandinavians are still busy talking about immigrants, despite these being children born and raised in their countries, you know? You don't see them on the television screens with brown skin or from a Muslim -- on our television screens; you will see friends like Michelle Husain and others. In our Parliament, you will see Parliamentarians who come from a, you know, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian heritage. Sayeeda Warsi, she's a friend. She's in the Cabinet at the moment. Yes, she's a lord, as opposed to being elected, but you know, it remains. She is a member of the British Cabinet. So, Britain has made progress, I think, despite many of our issues that we have yet to address.

On women's issues and you know, Islamic countries, look, where to begin? It's a real issue, but I've just come back from Turkey, and I take heart from the fact that -- I mean, if there's someone from Turkish background here, you may contradict me, but from what I saw in Istanbul, and what I saw in Konya, where I was with, you know, Maulana Rumi's shrine in Konya, I am a father of two daughters, and I've traveled much of what you refer to as, you know, the Muslim world. And there aren't many places where I can take my two daughters. One's three years old, and one's three months old. There aren't many places I can take Camilla and Hannah to and say, you know, "Take spiritual guidance from this city or this scholar or this mosque." I'm sorry. There aren't. Because wherever I go, they are now imposed. They've got to either cover their hair, or they've got to wear a *jilbab*, or wear a *nikab*, or play second fiddle to someone else. Whereas in Turkey, I feel that I can actually take them to Istanbul or to Konya, and they won't have to make those decisions about their appearances before they walk into Shams Tabrezi's mosque or before they walk into Sadruddin Qunawi's tomb, or before they go into Maulana Rumi's shrine. They can actually be themselves, and I saw women in their hoards coming into these places, you know, without having to sort of make adjustments to their physical appearance. Many did because they freely wanted to. But that said, I don't know the legal system, and I don't know why they don't have many female taxi drivers, but many of them are cultural issues, and I assume they'll

take time, and I can't sit here and pretend all is well. That said, I lived in Syria for two years. Syria and Lebanon seemed much more progressive on women's rights than did many of my female friends in, sadly to say, Saudi Arabia. So, with that said, the king has made initiatives and has sort of tried to push these issues through, but is facing issues, and sadly I can't give a definitive answer on women's issues in Muslim-majority countries. For my organization, we have five women who work out of a total staff of 12, so we're not doing too badly.

And suicide bombing, that's absolutely vital as to why is it that people can kill themselves and kill other people despite suicide being explicitly forbidden, haram, in Koranic references? I've got to say it's because they don't see it as suicide bombers. They don't see themselves as being killed, and one of the things that we do at Quilliam, one of the projects that I didn't mention -- we do work on the internet -- is try to inject doubt into what they have, suicide bombers, they see themselves as -- they call it *amaliah estishhadiah*. In other words, martyrdom operations, that they are shaheed. And until recently, even now maybe, Al-Jazeera was reporting these people as *Shaheeds* and being an *amaliah estishhadiah*, in other words, martyrdom. And if you've got Al-Jazeera pumping it out to hundreds of millions of Arabs across the world that these people are martyrs and not murderers, even after 9/11, I must say that there were very few American Muslim organizations who actually came out and said that the 19 people were murderers. It was Sheikh Imam Yusuf Hanson from California who said they were 19 murderers, that the people who died were the martyrs. It took clarity from a man like him to come and say that. 7/7 has happened. Very few Muslim organizations in Britain would say they were murderers. Channel -- it's called Islam Channel, Sky 813, regularly to this day reports, you know, suicide bombers as human bombs -- will take out the pinch. Will not say the suicide bombers. Why? Because they think that these people are possibly *shaheeds*. Who are we to judge what they're doing -- as in, this is God's decision. And more importantly, there is that popular thing about we must support our brothers who are fighting injustice, and they are *shuhada*. They are martyrs. And there is that cultural issue. What we try to do is inject doubt and say, "You're *yaqeen*. This feeling that you are certain about killing other people and killing yourself and going to *djenna*, or paradise, is wrong. That you are not a martyr, but you are a murderer," and there are scriptural grounds on which you can inject that doubt. And I think whether they believe you or not, once the doubting is injected, you can't then become a suicide bomber, because to do that, you need complete conviction that God is rewarding you,

you're going to a better afterlife, and when you die, your family will be looked after by the wider community because you're a *shaheed*. If those three things are taken away, the social status is taken away, hopefully we minimize it. But I must say to people on this, those who work in the CT area in this audience, that's not where the debate is at the moment. We are not talking about issues such as injecting doubt into the minds of suicide bombers, undermining suicide bombers as *shuhada*, as martyrs and calling them as murderers. That's not where the debate is. Even my government that's leading on some of this stuff is nowhere near saying, "You guys are murderers, not martyrs," because they're afraid that this might upset other constituencies. So, that's probably some of your CT practitioners in the audience to think about. OK. I've responded to three questions.

Hoge: There was finally a question about people against you. Didn't --

Husain: Yeah. I think, you know, I should say from the outset that part of the problem that I observed and my co director Maajid Nawas observed when we came back from a blissful period in Saudi Arabia and in Syria, and he was in Egypt, was we were able to be detached from the British Muslim or the European Muslim scene. So, we were away from it. When we came back after 7/7, the very people that we had associated with in the 1990s were now parading on the BBC and on CNN as commentators. So, when suicide bombings occurred in Iraq in Baghdad, we had people from Hizb ut-Tahrir on BBC explaining why suicide bombings occur, you know. And we were puzzled as to what happened here, three or four years away from Britain, and the bad guys become the good guys, and media outlets giving them. So, we went out deliberately to take them off the media platform and -- not because we didn't like them. It was more because of ordinary Muslims in Bradford and Manchester were thinking, if we want to get into the political realm, if we want to be media spokespeople, we need to become the radicals, because the radicals are the ones who are on Downing Street. The radicals are the ones who are in government. The radicals are the ones who are on our television screens. I don't want my children growing up thinking if I want to have a media impact, I need to go and become a nut job. So, it was with that view that we sort of went after them in a very harsh way, exposing their backgrounds, identifying their groups, exposing what they did in the past, and getting them off the airwaves. As a result, we paid a heavy price, because they then went around into mosques, went around into community centers, saying, "Quilliam, Maajid, Ed Husain, these guys are government stooges. These guys are Zionist chess pieces. These guys..." and so we had it all. We had

neo-con sellouts. So, it was very difficult to then actually play with that blowback, because everywhere we went, people were saying, "Oh, you've sold out." What have we done to sell out? "Oh, you've attacked your fellow Muslim brothers. You don't believe in Muslim unity." So, the argument is that Muslim unity is more important than national unity, that pandering to your own fellow Muslims is more important than ensuring that other non-Muslims, humans, don't get killed. By that time, the argument had moved so far ahead that our detractors had done enough damage in mosques for people to actually listen to what it is we were trying to say. That was two, two-and-a-half years ago.

Over the last seven to eight months, we're now seeing a change, because at the outset they said, "Oh, they'll be around for two months, three months. Give them six months. They'll be out." We weren't out. Thank God. "Give them a year. They'll be finished." You know, again, thank God we weren't out after a year. Now three years, two-and-a-half years have gone by. They've seen the impact we've had in the media, in wider society, and the influence, without sounding too arrogant, that we've had on some policy areas in government, that they now want to engage with us, especially ordinary Muslims who don't have an axe to grind. So, Minhaj-ul-quran is an example. I can name others, but I don't want to compromise them by naming them in public. But there are others who have come and want to work with us to see if they can get that level of access, that level of acceptance. But you know, it's a tussle of war, a tug of war, and I'll finish this answer by saying this, that our best moderates, our best partners, when Israel attacked Gaza last January -- no, the January prior to that -- and those in the audience who want to believe that Hamas triggered it off with its rockets, you know, fine. Whichever account you want to believe, the point I'm trying to make is once Israel goes nuts in the Middle East, it impacts our work, because our best moderates suddenly turned around and said -- and these are people we took to see David Miliband. You know, we pulled that off. Twenty of the top guys, we sat down with Miliband before he came here. We were at that level. But we wanted to do two things: one, sign a document, which we published in *The Guardian* and *The Times* saying that, you know, British Muslims should not turn to radicalism or to terror, that a two-state solution, etc., etc. So, they all signed up for it. They're all up for that. But the same moderates, when it came to the two weeks after signing something to say nothing justifies anti-Semitic attacks on Muslims, on Jewish neighbors and friends in the UK, many of the same moderates refused to sign that document, because they said, "We can't carry a crowd with us. Israel is attacking mosques in Gaza; therefore, it's justified to attack

synagogues in London.” So, that kind of argument. So, when Israel and events in the Middle East, you know, when the temperature’s raised, our work in Britain, and I think other people’s work becomes difficult. So, the point I’m trying to make is these things are always in flux. Today we’re in a good position. Who knows what happens. We’re hostage to events. You know, things might change.

Hoge: I’ll take three more. A woman here, a gentleman here, and William over there. Again, there are lots of people who want to ask questions, so try to keep them short if you possibly can.

Natasha Yacoub: Thank you. That was great. Really interesting to hear an alternative voice. My name’s Natasha. I’m from UNHCR here in New York. I think -- my question relates to the presentation itself and the criteria that you listed, the four criteria, so the identity issues and so on. And I suppose a lot of those are true for many Muslims within the UK, but they don’t turn to -- they don’t become radical. So, I mean, to what extent do you think that radicalization is increasing or decreasing now as opposed to five years ago, for example? And yeah. I still, I mean, I just wonder to what extent -- is it prevalent? Is it still as prevalent? Because it’s very much a stereotype that’s for sure, but I also know a lot of Muslims for whom all of those criteria apply who are not radical. So, is it -- so, for example, is it still as prevalent as it was five years ago, or is it decreasing? If so, why?

Hoge: Thank you. Just pass the microphone in front to this gentleman here.

Alberto Turlon: Thank you. Good evening. My name is Alberto Turlon from the W. You raised the point of the fraternities of the Sufi, and I wanted you to talk more about it. First of all, I wanted to ask you if their role is important today in shaping, in guiding the Muslim communities in Europe, or in Great Britain, and if they could be useful in bridging the gap or in bridging the gap and shaping a new identity for Muslim communities in Europe, or at least if they could be important in weakening the radicalism tendencies. Thank you.

Hoge: OK. And you.

William Verdon: Thank you. William Verdon. Thank you, sir. The immigration experience is always a disenfranchising one. When my grandparents came from Italy, they went to Little Italy, and there are pockets around the city. The Germans in Yorkville, Chinatown, and so forth and so on. There were always pockets that welcomed

them, and within a decade, they felt assimilated in America. And yet that doesn't occur with what you were saying. So, I was curious as to your impressions on that. Thank you.

Husain: I'll take the last one first. People came to America because America, in cliché terms, offered a new dream, offered something to aspire to. You know, the American Dream, moving on, doing well, acquiring money -- all of those things. And I think by and large, they're still alive, and you know, I met with a friend from Boston yesterday. She's Chinese, and her husband's sort of what you call white Anglo-Saxon Protestant here. I don't want to use that word. I don't know if that's -- is that offensive?

Hoge: No.

Husain: It's not? OK. Fine.

Hoge: I'm one, for instance.

Husain: I still feel reluctant to use it. I don't know why. But -- so she's a first-generation immigrant, and yet her 11-year-old daughter, who's of Chinese plus American extract, her dream is to become the next president of the United States of America. Now whether it happens or not, young kids have that level of ambition. Now you can criticize it and say, "Well, it's just misplaced," and, "Oh, not many of them will make it," but at least they have that level of ambition, and with all the kerfuffle, Barack Obama happened. Colin Powell happened. Condoleezza Rice happened. Whatever people's qualms are, those are facts. That's not where ambitions for young people are in Britain, because there isn't a dream to buy into. There isn't an aspiration to have. And when I compare my young friends here in America, when I see them, whether they're teenagers or in their twenties, when I compare them with British teenagers and British people in their twenties, somehow it seems that our wings have been clipped, that we're taught, you know, don't be too ambitious. Don't be too in your face. You know, calm down. There is that sort of, you know, the old stiff upper lip the British reserve. All of those things combined, the class structure, and the post code, the dress code, your accent, your theater tastes. All of those things combined, I think, just, you know, we're content, I think, just to be part of things rather than wanting to dominate things, having dominated things for so long. So, you know, with the World Cup, England's part of it, but it's not doing particularly well. You know, tennis, we're part of it, but we're quite happy just to be there. So, there is that. I don't think I can say more than just, America is still a young nation, very aggressive, very boisterous,

prepared to put its soldiers where its ideals are. I don't think we're there yet. We seek compromise. The whole entities of the foreign office is to avoid war and to find compromise. That's not the State Department ethic. I'm not suggesting warfare, by the way. I'm just saying, that's cultural differences. But anyhow, the point that America still is a young -- it feels like a teenager as a country. You know, Britain feels like it's retired.

Hoge:

Can I just interrupt with just a small answer? When I was in Britain, David Blunkett was the Home Secretary, and there was a campaign to persuade minority communities to feel British, to be proud of being British, to make them want to be British, and I as an American living there thought to myself, what a strange concept, because everybody who comes here, they can't wait to become American. I mean, they can't wait to raise their hand and become American. It's a very different instinct. And I was struck in Ed's book -- you'll remember Ed, when -- I think it was the first time you came to America, the first thing you wrote that struck you was flags everywhere. And you saw that as a sort of symbol of, you know, some of us see it as an exaggerated symbol of putting forth an American idea that some of us wish we would be a bit calmer about. But still that was -- it's such a different attitude. I think minority communities in this society who want to be included, and actually I think one can say with some pride, have a chance to be included, have a chance to become president, and minority communities in Britain who have to be persuaded to want to be British. Sorry. Go ahead. Other questions. Yeah.

Husain:

That's OK. No. To build on your point, after 9/11, most mosques across America started flying the American flag to identify themselves as Americans, as patriots, as people at common cause with the rest of the country, and mosques were not inherently to blame for what happened on September 11. After 7/7, not a single mosque would fly the Union Jack. That's not to blame the Slims, because flying the Union Jack isn't something we do readily at mosques, or, for that matter, in most churches, I think. It's just that reticence to sort of assert. And to be fair to Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson, before they sort of put the Union Jack in the background at Labor Party meetings, the Union Jack was dominated by the far-right British Nationalist party, and it was Peter Mandelson, you know, the dark prince of spin doctoring, that brought it back to the mainstream. And very quickly, so other people can ask questions, Sufi tendencies, and, you know, yes, for me, one of the main reasons why I was able to come back from extremism was the fact that I had Sufi parents. It was the fact that I had Sufi upbringing. It was the fact that I had Sufi-Muslim scholars

that I could refer to, it was the fact that in the Middle East, in almost every country except the Gulf, there was a strong Sufi Muslim presence, whether it's tombs or mosques or celebrating the birthday of the prophet or allowing the music, or letting people be. You know, whether it's the whirling dervishes in Turkey, whether it's Ibn Arabi's tomb in Damascus, there was a Sufi spirit, and there's 1,000 year tradition of this in the Muslim majority countries, and no doubting that. But when the state starts to adopt Sufism, I'm afraid it corrupts it. It's a very pure spirit out there. Let it fly. Let it do its work. But I think the Sufi movement, Sufi leaders, should be alerted to the fact that we have an extremism terrorism problem. People like Doctor Tahir-ul-Qadri recently spoke out against it. And you're right. Sufi-influenced Muslim scholars in the West are making a positive contribution. Doctor Sheikh Abdl Hakim Murad in Cambridge, I'll mention Sheikh Hamza here, and others, are at the forefront of developing a Western Muslim identity. Don't forget, I mean, Sufi Western Muslims were in Spain for 700 years. Now there is that whole tradition that we often ignore in Andaluc a, from 711 to, was it, 1492, or maybe a little earlier. You know, Ibn Hazam, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Arabi, and the list goes on. Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi. They all came from Spain. So, there is that old tradition to be drawn on. Natasha's point about radicalization being -- is it still prevalent? Again, sometimes events trigger it off, and when events -- you know, God forbid that Iran be attacked. You know, let's just hope that Iran does the right thing, much like Libya did, without having to -- you had asked me a question on that one.

Hoge: Very good.

Husain: But so, when that happens, it fluctuates. Extremism fluctuates. How do we know that? Because blogs, key websites, activists, text messages are suddenly on the increase, as brothers and sisters, we need to do something. In 1995, 1996, even in 2001, I'm not sure the security services were monitoring 3,000 people. Right now, the security services in Britain are monitoring 3,000 young people who can at any given time either support terrorism or become terrorists. And that's a worrying number. That's just a fact. 3,000 people. That's problem one. Problem two is unlike the 1990s, websites up and down, you know, it's a global issue. You're two or three clicks away from problem websites. Problem number three is university campuses -- huge problem. Huge problem. Liberal academics, most of them from my political affiliation, Labor Party, will not touch this stuff, because how dare you, you know, compromise academic freedom? It's good for students to dissent. What's wrong with a bit of radicalism? So, that's where we are with

university campuses. And Abdul Abdulmutallab, the guy who came into Christmas Day --

Hoge: Detroit. Detroit.

Husain: Detroit. He -- UCL, University College of London student. You know, I've met with his Vice Chancellor since, and there is an intelligent, sophisticated, argued reluctance to want to get engaged. And a fourth area of problems is, you know, some mosques, not all mosques, but the problem is still there. I can't say whether there is an increase or decrease, but my hunch is that the mood music is certainly louder. My hunch is that numbers are still, you know, at 3,000 level, it's worrying. But that's assuming that the intelligence community understands what's going on. Again, after 7/7 and 9/11, if you have faith in our security services, you know. Yeah.

Hoge: I think we have time for three more. Two in the back. Josh, then the gentleman in front of you, and over here, this woman here.

Joshua Smilovitz: Ed, Warren, thank you for a very fascinating discussion. I'm curious. You began your presentation talking about people being led on a certain path. From your own personal experience, what was a particular tipping point for you which changed your path and your development? Did you have a particular epiphany, or was there a moment of realization?

Husain: In reverting back, you mean?

Joshua Smilovitz: Yes.

Husain: Ah, good question.

Hoge: OK. Just right there.

Sam Luft: My name is Sam Luft. In your comments, I'm actually surprised that there's one thing you keep not referring to, and, again, I haven't read the book. But my own experience, I'm originally from Canada. I remember 15 years ago being at a meeting where street gangs had taken over a community, and the four factors that were outlined were identical to the four factors that you had mentioned for radicalization, and the solution at that time was really to take back the streets. The pressure was put on the parents, the business leaders, the community, the religious leaders. Of course we didn't deal with suicide bombing, but we dealt with petty crimes,

murders, hold-ups. Why do you not, why does the Muslim community never seem to say, "We want our parents. We want our business leaders. We want our religious leaders. We want our community to step in"? Take the mosques. I mean, you mentioned there's 3,000 young people who are potential terrorists. I'm assuming there's maybe anywhere from 5,000 to 6,000 parents who have given birth to these children. Where are the parents? Where are the religious leaders? If that part of the organization or the group does not get involved, with all due respect, Ed, and I'm not saying your work is not excellent, but I think you will not make much progress. Because at the end of the day, the way we had to take back the streets in Toronto, I believe, and I'm not -- the Muslim community has to take its children, its mosques, and its radicalized young people back, because you can't do it, nobody else can.

Hoge: A final question.

Noema Chaplin: OK. First of all, thank you, International Peace Institute to organize this important event. My name is Noema Chaplin, and I represent the United State's service to the United Nations, and in your presentation you mention that domestic violence increased. As you know, it's going on campaign to empower the women, and Millennium Development goals number three, empower the women. My question is, do women have access to justice, to get benefits of the rule of law? Do women have access to education, finance, land, and enjoy to be a part, equitable part of society? Thank you.

Husain: All right.

Hoge: Take those three?

Husain: Yeah. I mean the first two questions are linked, and if I answer the first one, I think the gentleman from Toronto that asked that question, You'll see parts of the answer to your good question. The reason why I left extremism -- by the way, when you're in these groups, you never see yourself as extreme. You're not seeing, I'm an extremist. You see yourself as completely normal, but you see yourself as having an agenda, a purpose, a cause. But when I left, you know, for want of a better expression, the movement, several things happened. One, on my college campus, I saw as a result of my advocacy, as a result of others on campus believing in a Muslim-centric identity -- that's the only thing that mattered, your being Muslim, a very Sab-Cottam-influenced idea -- nothing else. You know, your gender, your nationality, your -- nothing. It's just, you were Muslim. Once we'd fanned that particular attitude that you're only Muslim, we saw people on campus separating

themselves from Christians and others. We saw people talking about jihad openly. We saw others coming onto campus and saying, "Brother, if there's a problem, call me. Here's my card." When there was a problem, a student did call a jihadist, and that guy did come on campus, and the guy over a game of [PH] Snooker that Muslim/Christian rivalry came into play. I saw, you know, with my own eyes, someone was killed. Abu-Nabi, God rest his soul, he was killed as a result of the kind of atmosphere that was created on the campus. The moment I saw, I mean, it was easy, I guess, for my type of person to talk about solutions for Bosnia, solutions for Kashmir, solutions for Palestine, but when you see blood on the very footpath that you've been walking to and back from college on a daily basis, you're forced to retreat and ask what's been going on. So, that was the first point, seeing violence, as in, my God. Where is this all leading? That was the first trigger. Surrounding all of that, the second trigger was for the four and a half, five years I was involved in extremist organizations, my own parents were constantly at loggerheads with me. So, you know the question you asked about parents. It was my father that would constantly hammer the point that what's wrong with my kind of Islam compared to his Islam, spiritual, rooted, ancient, personal, Godly. What's wrong with it? Well my answer was it wasn't political, you know. So, my mother, you know, also very sort of pious, again in the background hammering away as to for how much longer are you going to be with these movements? So, two issues. You know, the act of the murder, my parents being in the background. Third issue, interestingly, was I was taking Arabic classes at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and I met -- this is really interesting -- for the first time in my life, someone who was white, female, liberal, atheist, American from Chicago. And you know, we got into really, you know, sort of intelligent platonic relationship, where we were exchanging e-mails on a daily basis. She was working at Arthur Anderson, and I was working in local government, and I would constantly feel the pain of the Palestinians and write to her, and then she would respond and say, "Yes, I acknowledge that, but what about the pain of the innocent Israeli kids that are being killed?" So, what she did was actually held up a mirror to me of someone who wasn't British, someone who was an outsider for all intents and purposes. So, my friendship with Steph really helped me actually rethink some of my political attitudes. And the fourth thing that happened was I fell in love, not, you know -- my wife, Faye, we met at college, and I suddenly had a new direction and purpose in life. And here, I think women have a crucial role, you know, that it actually helps. So, those four things triggered my departure.

Hoge: I must say from reading the book, I felt very close to your parents. I mean, you described them with enormous feeling. I hope both of them are alive, or at least were alive when you came back.

Husain: Yeah. Thank God they are. Yeah. I'm very happy.

Hoge: OK. I also want to say how glad I am that you were liberated today from the interrogators at Kennedy Airport, because it's been great having you here, and I applaud you for your life, for the things you represent right now, for the work you're doing, and particularly for having come here to tell us all about it. Thank you.