

## Preventing Radicalization Is Discussed in House of Lords

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London, United Kingdom -- The House of Lords was the setting for an important and timely discussion, organized by UPF-UK, on preventing radicalization.

The event, held on June 28, 2017, was kindly hosted by the Rt. Hon. Baroness Sandip Verma in Committee Room 4 of the House of Lords.

Emmanuel Dupuy, a journalist, consultant, teacher in geopolitics and researcher in geopolitical issues, offered a French perspective. He included in his talk some of the recommendations of the French Senate Delegation report on "The Local Authorities and the Prevention of Radicalization" (published on April 11, 2017).

Humphrey Hawksley, Keith Best, Sheikh Dr. Hojjat Ramzy and Dr. Afzal Ashraf were the other distinguished speakers who raised a range of perspectives and provoked contributions from the audience.

Humphrey Hawksley, a foreign correspondent with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said the recent terrorist acts in Europe are not nearly as bad as those experienced during the Northern Ireland "troubles" of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Islamic threat is not as serious as it is made out to be, he said. Before the Paris bombings of November 2015, the worst act of terror in Europe was committed in July 2011 by Anders Breivik in Norway. However, he wasn't considered to be a terrorist but rather to be deranged.

Multiculturalism in some parts of the United Kingdom has developed into ghettos, Mr. Hawksley said. A survey of Muslims a year ago found that only 34 percent would contact the police and that 4 percent sympathize with the terrorists.

Only 50 persons from India have joined ISIS, whereas from Europe the number has been much higher. The radicalized Europeans are young and, on the average, would have been only 3 years old at the time of the 9/11 terror attacks of 2001. We are currently taking people who 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, Mr. Hawksley said. They join gangs and find what they are lacking in their lives. We shouldn't be talking about radicalization in these cases, he said. The issue now is Islam. In the past it was the left-wing ideology. Some young people are looking for something that goes against society, he said.

Keith Best, a former member of Parliament, emphasized that the issues of radicalization, disenchantment, etc., need to be dealt with at the local level. We shouldn't just dismiss the disaffection people feel, as expressed in the Brexit 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 the situation in the past.

A key finding of the Casey Review of 2016 concerning community cohesion was the depth of polarization of our towns and cities, Mr. Best said. 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, he said.

The Casey Review found that the trend of diversification will continue and grow. It pointed out the degree of segregation, which inhibits people from understanding others and building this in from school age. The United Kingdom has a good success rate in integration, compared to other European countries, Mr. Best said. However, we need to provide additional funding to localized projects to tackle this problem. This can best be achieved by local government. The national government had its chance and failed, he said.

Emmanuel Dupuy, the president of l'Institut Prospective et Sécurité en Europe, said that his native France is in the process of shifting from a centralized to a decentralized state. Also, a survey following the most recent terror attacks in France found that 75 percent of the population are ready to lose their rights to guarantee security.

The General Directorate for Internal Security (France's intelligence agency) pinpointed seven key points to understanding the phenomenon of radicalization among young people:

- France is targeted by ISIS as the first country to attack, because of its military engagement.
- There is a new type of very low-technology, low-cost terrorism which uses knives and vehicles.
- The fighting against terrorism needs to be done on a territorial basis.
- There has been a drop-off in the number of foreign fighters.
- The linkage between young people and radicalization needs to be understood.
- Intercommunity hatred needs to be tackled.
- We have to realize that our neighbors are also being targeted.

We cannot respond only militarily, Mr. Dupuy said. A social response is required, and this is where local governments come in. The report of French Senator Jean-Marie Bockel, which can be found in English, lists 21 points in all, taking into account best practices. For example, there are towns in France which 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, Mr. Dupuy said. There may be other types of terrorism in the near future in response to Western interventionism, for example.

Sheikh Dr. Hojjat Ramzy, the founder and director of the Oxford Islamic Information Center, stressed the need to find the cause of radicalization. If we can accomplish that, he said, we can solve the problem.

There are many reasons why people become extremists, Sheikh Ramzy said -- including money, insults, being under extreme aggression, and revenge. If we think of radicalization as a set of fires, it is as though we are trying to cover each of them; however, we have to ask how we can put the fire out.

He referred to Mr. Dupuy's statement that in France, 25,000 people are being followed as potential terrorists. We can't just put them all in prison, he said. We must reduce the aggression that causes radicalization. Islam, like other religions, has some scholars who radicalize the people. The scriptures are interpreted wrongly. We can use the Koran to de-radicalize the people.

Sheikh Ramzy said he was grateful to Humphrey Hawksley for saying that Islam is a good religion. We should not demonize Islam, he said. 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, he said.

Dr. Afzal Ashraf, a Visiting Fellow of the Center for Conflict, Security and Terrorism of the University of Nottingham, explained that although extremism comes from ideologies, it is not these ideologies themselves that radicalize people. For example, the Bolshevik Revolution that occurred in 1917 didn't begin when Karl Marx wrote his treatise. It occurred because of the success of the revolution. Also, it took 75 years to show that the myth of communism was a failure.

We have to do that with the present problem, Dr. Ashraf said. 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. Dr. Ashraf asked why we don't get pictures from Yemen, yet we do get high-definition pictures from Aleppo in Syria? There is always a reason for this, he said.

Geopolitically, the situation now is like that just before World War II, Dr. Ashraf said. We now have a system which is no longer fit for purpose. We need to consider very carefully what Western liberal democracy is all about. We should remember that the Greeks dismissed democracy, because mischievous, unscrupulous leaders can lead people astray.

*This is a shortened version of the report published by Robin Marsh on [www.uk.upf.org](http://www.uk.upf.org) which has been edited by Alan Sillitoe, who was also the original note taker.*