



## Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Countering Islamic Extremism (CIE) Programs Aim to Secularise Muslim Students in the West

*“The Trump administration wants to revamp and rename a U.S. government program designed to counter all violent ideologies so that it focuses solely on Islamist extremism, five people briefed on the matter told Reuters. The program, “Countering Violent Extremism,” or CVE, would be changed to “Countering Islamic Extremism” or “Countering Radical Islamic Extremism,” the sources said, and would no longer target groups such as white supremacists who have also carried out bombings and shootings in the United States.”* (<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN15G5VO>)

The second week into the Trump Presidency has revealed to Muslims living in the West what they have known for years, that the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program has always been a program aimed only towards Muslims and specifically with the aim to secularize Muslim youth living in the West. Trump’s Countering Islamic Extremism (CIE) program clearly states this now. However, the CVE policy strategy during the Obama administration that included the FBI targeting Muslim youth by recruiting parents, teachers, health, social and youth workers aimed to spy on their behalf. The FBI expected that Muslim surveillance cells otherwise known as “Shared Responsibilities Committees” would turn Muslim youth over to authorities in the name of countering extremism and radicalisation.

According to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, the kinds of behaviors they expected to be reported were subtle. “For instance, parents might see sudden personality changes in their children at home—becoming confrontational. Religious leaders might notice unexpected clashes over ideological differences. Teachers might hear a student expressing an interest in traveling to a conflict zone overseas. Or friends might notice a new interest in watching or sharing violent material.”

Government policy makers during the Obama administration, Intelligence and policing authorities were at the time of the opinion hoping that American Muslim communities will be more cooperative at establishing a network of Muslim spies than their UK counterparts. It is an established fact that the implementation of Prevent in the UK failed miserably with only 8.6% of reports originating from within the Muslim community. The vast bulk of reports have been from non-Muslim professionals working amongst the Muslim youth. Examples of this apparent cooperation with authorities and the Muslim community can be observed in Dearborn, Michigan.

According to news reports (<http://www.politico.eu/article/how-the-fbi-got-in-bed-with-americas-muslims/>) the police department for example makes regular visits to Dearborn’s 38 schools and its many mosques. The Chief of Police, Ron Haddad, sponsored a program called “Stepping Up,” which included an annual awards ceremony for residents reporting crime. At least twice in the past several years, fearing influence from ISIL or online propaganda on their children, Haddad says, Muslim fathers have turned in their own sons. In another case, it was students at a largely Muslim-majority high school calling about a troubled peer.

The FBI also developed a website designed to provide awareness about the dangers of violent extremist predators on the internet, that included input from community leaders, educators and students. This website is called, “Don’t Be A Puppet”, was aimed to be used by teachers and students to help the FBI prevent the violent extremism of youth.

The profiling of Muslim youth by teachers and law enforcement fostered a distrust between students and authority figures, who served as de facto informants. The example of 14 year old Ahmed Mohamed who brought a homemade clock to school, or a teacher in Texas calling a 7th grader a “terrorist” as he laughed watching ‘Bend It Like Beckham’ are two of many examples. In Australia the current Turnbull government during 2015-16 continued like previous governments to target Muslim youth in schools. Minister Micheal Keenan the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter Terrorism together with the Minister for Education and Training, announced in February 2016 the New Schools Initiative. The new schools’ initiative aims to place teachers as a source of intelligence gathering of Muslim youth in the name of preventing youth from

radicalisation. According to the government, this is “done in three key support measures: providing awareness training for relevant school staff on understanding radicalisation to violent extremism, appropriate support and referral pathways”.

The Radicalisation Awareness Kit aims to provide teachers with this awareness of the so-called tell tale signs of radicalisation that they are expected to report to the police every month. Some of these signs are increased religious devoutness, a significant change in appearance, “statements of moral superiority”, or searching for answers about faith and identity “in an inappropriate way”. Reportable incidents also include “graffiti in the school relating to extremist or terrorist organisations”; “threatening other students in regard to religious practices”; “writing or sharing violent or threatening racial comments” or “concerns raised to a school about an ex-student’s activities whose siblings still attend the school”.

Teachers are instructed, “If you become aware of an issue under any of these circumstances you must report to the school safety and response hotline,” the guidelines read. “A copy of all incidents will be provided to NSW police at least monthly.” A separate sheet given to teachers makes clear that “local, community and world issues can and should be a part of normal discussions in schools and everyone has the right to explore and debate ideas in a tolerant and respectful manner”. But it notes, “if support for extremist behaviour is exhibited during these discussions you should advise your principal”.

Case studies are being used as part of this training to observe would-be “tell tale signs” of radicalisation, with the usual ridiculous tropes high on the list of watch-out signals. One case study that was presented to executive staff is of a 15 year old Muslim school girl who ‘admits’ to her teacher that she was shown ‘violent’ online videos from Syria and that she wanted to travel to Syria and learn to ‘fight’ in order to ‘help her brothers and sisters being murdered’. Other signs that executive teachers and staff at schools are being “trained” in regards to include: missing basketball practice; not appearing to socialise with her small group of close friends as previously; spending more time alone.

These sorts of embarrassing case studies are, needless to say, ludicrously simplistic and reductionist in how they depict ‘radicalisation’, and will only help proliferate the most damaging stereotypes about young Muslims, leading no doubt to suspicion at schools. That ‘missing basketball training’ could ever become a sign of radicalisation shows the extent to which a government-assisted, media-hyped hysteria has been fashioned in the consciousness of people in Australia. The lack of willingness to acknowledge that events overseas often concern Muslims – both young and old – is another feature of these misplaced “training” regimens. If, as is feared, young Muslims started being singled out for being “radicalised” on such grounds, the sense of resentment is only likely to increase, not decrease.

The school playground has therefore by extension been included in the battleground for the government’s fight against radicalisation, targeting our most vulnerable and innocent our children. Mariam is a year 5 student who had been caught in this crossfire and this is her story. “During lunch time, I ran up to my old kindergarten teacher and I said “Miss, look at my gun (playfully). I put my carrot on top of my apple to make it look like a toy gun. The teacher walked closer to me, stood over me and said, “How dare you!” She was yelling and screaming her head off and she said again, “How dare you do that? If I were to call the police right now, you will get into big trouble and what you’ve just done is an act of terrorism!” She said that she was going to tell my year 5 class teacher and then the Deputy Principle and then tell my mum and tell her what I’ve done. I told her that I was just playing around and I didn’t know what I did wrong. The teacher said, “That’s very rude of you. Sit down and eat your lunch now.” After lunch, she told my class teacher, who called me to the side of the class after everyone had left for home time. She said to me, “What you did at lunch time, you can’t do that. It’s an act of terrorism. But don’t worry, you’re not in trouble.” she said. Schools should be a place where children’s learning capabilities are enhanced in a safe and nurturing environment. Muslims have been part of the public education system for decades and have produced many individuals who have gone onto achieve their goals through education and in their professional careers. We must resist any attempt to vilify our children and policies that may be used to this end.

The targeting of Muslim Students in schools across Britain by the Prevent Strategy included the ‘surveillance big brother software’. This software is part of the British government’s notorious

counter-extremism PREVENT strategy which has played a prominent role in the criminalisation, marginalisation and discrimination of Muslims in the UK. The far reaching tentacles of this strategy have already infiltrated into the country's classrooms with teachers now having a statutory duty to monitor children for so-called signs of 'extremism' and to report them to the police. However, identifying 'signs of extremism' in the language of the British government has become synonymous with looking out for signs of 'Islamization'. In 2016, Al-Jazeera also reported on schoolchildren in the UK who face being questioned by police and referred to 'Channel' for expressing support for Palestine. It cited the case of a 15 year old school boy who was questioned and accused of holding 'terrorist-like' views by a police officer for taking leaflets into school promoting a boycott of 'Israel'. He was told that 'Free Palestine' badges were extremist and that he could not discuss the conflict at school with friends. Alex Kenny of the National Union of Teachers stated that teachers were advised by PREVENT officers to even keep an eye on any child who *'goes on a demonstration against the bombing of Gaza'*.

The main objective that secular democratic governments like the US, UK, Australian and other European governments have in policing and criminalising Muslim youth through their network of community spies is to force them to adopt and practice a personal, secularised Islam as a personal faith, equal with other faiths and subordinate them to the prevalent secular democratic system. In turn, the aim is to integrate the youth by involving them in mainstream politics, sports, and culture, diverting them away from key Islamic creedal concepts, and actions such as enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, adopting the concept of one global Ummah and working for its interests, Khilafah (Caliphate), jihad, accounting rulers, and presenting the Islamic way of life as a radical alternative to the current order.

Therefore, the battle to integrate Muslim youth into America's secular liberal society has failed through any form of intellectual conviction relying only upon coercion and compulsion. It is clear that in the same way Western governments colonised our Muslim lands and tried to erase the concept of Islamic governance and Muslim unity under the Khilafah from the consciousness of Muslims in the region, they are employing the same strategy upon the Muslim children within their own lands – to colonise their minds and sever them from their rich Islamic culture and history. **Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary from 1919 – 1924 once said, “We must put an end to anything which brings about any Islamic unity between the sons of the Muslims. As we have already succeeded in finishing off the Caliphate, so we must ensure that there will never arise again unity for the Muslims, whether it be intellectual or cultural unity.”**

Current governments in the West, UK as with previous ones, are clearly pursuing the same strategy vocalised by Curzon, even if that means transforming their own teachers and students into informants, stigmatizing young Muslim children and making their own schools an extended arm of their intelligence services to spy on youngsters. Western nations now bear the marks of totalitarian, surveillance states where mind control, even over the young, and draconian anti-terror laws are popular tools being employed by their governments to silence political dissent and crush belief in ideas which differ with the dominant state ideology or narrative. All this is in order to prevent the rise of the Khilafah which would threaten their colonial grip over the politics and economics of the Muslim world. This is yet more proof that under democracy, 'freedom of thought and belief' only extends to those who think within the confines of the narrow secular box and under the Trump administration this will become all the more apparent, explicit and evident for Muslims across the world to see.

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