



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN FOR EMPOWERING  
LOCAL PARTNERS TO PREVENT  
VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN  
THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 2011







# Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States

As a government, we are working to prevent all types of extremism that leads to violence, regardless of who inspires it. At the same time, countering al-Qa'ida's violent ideology is one part of our comprehensive strategy to defeat al-Qa'ida. Over the past 2½ years, more key al-Qa'ida leaders—including Usama bin Laden—have been eliminated in rapid succession than at any time since the September 11 attacks. We have strengthened homeland security and improved information sharing. Thanks to coordinated intelligence and law enforcement, numerous terrorist plots have been thwarted, saving many American lives.

—President Barack Obama, August 2011

Law enforcement and government officials for decades have understood the critical importance of building relationships, based on trust, with the communities they serve. Partnerships are vital to address a range of challenges and must have as their foundation a genuine commitment on the part of law enforcement and government to address community needs and concerns, including protecting rights and public safety. In our efforts to counter violent extremism, we will rely on existing partnerships that communities have forged with Federal, State, and local government agencies. This reliance, however, must not change the nature or purpose of existing relationships. In many instances, our partnerships and related activities were not created for national security purposes but nonetheless have an indirect impact on countering violent extremism (CVE).

At the same time, this Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) also includes activities, some of them relatively new, that are designed specifically to counter violent extremism. Where this is the case, we have made it clear. It is important that both types of activities be supported and coordinated appropriately at the local level.

## Background

The President in August 2011 signed the *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners), which outlines our community-based approach and the Federal Government's role in empowering local stakeholders to build resilience against violent extremism.<sup>1</sup> It recognizes that, as the National Security Strategy from May 2010 highlights, "our best defenses against this threat are well informed and equipped families, local communities, and institutions." To support our overarching goal of preventing violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the

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1. The National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners defines violent extremists as "individuals who support or commit ideologically motivated violence to further political goals."

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United States to commit acts of violence, the Federal Government is focused on three core areas of activity: (1) enhancing engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals.

The SIP details how we are implementing the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners. It explains our core objectives and sub-objectives; describes how activities by departments and agencies are aligned with these; lists planned activities that address gaps and expand efforts; and assigns Federal Government leads and partners for various actions. The SIP provides a blueprint for how we will build community resilience against violent extremism.<sup>2</sup> It does not address our overseas CVE efforts, other than ensuring we coordinate domestic and international activities.

Although the SIP will be applied to prevent all forms of violent extremism, we will prioritize preventing violent extremism and terrorism that is inspired by al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents, which the 2010 National Security Strategy, the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, and the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners identify as the preeminent security threats to our country. This is, however, a matter of emphasis and prioritization, and does not entail ignoring other forms of violent extremism. As the July 2011 terrorist attack in Norway underscored, free societies face threats from a range of violent extremists.

As the activities described in the SIP are executed, there will be major and long-lasting impacts:

- There will be platforms throughout the country for including communities that may be targeted by violent extremists for recruitment and radicalization into ongoing Federal, State, and local engagement efforts;
- The Federal Government will support that engagement through a task force of senior officials from across the government;
- Community-led efforts to build resilience to violent extremism will be supported;
- Analysis will increase in depth and relevance, and will be shared with those assessed to need it, including Governor-appointed Homeland Security Advisors, Major Cities Chiefs, Mayors' Offices, and local partners;
- Training for Federal, State, tribal, and local government and law enforcement officials on community resilience, CVE, and cultural competence will improve, and that training will meet rigorous professional standards; and
- Local partners, including government officials and community leaders, will better understand the threat of violent extremism and how they can work together to prevent it.

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2. The concept of "resilience" has applied to a range of areas such as emergency preparedness and critical infrastructure protection (e.g., the ability of financial markets, power suppliers, and telecommunications companies to withstand an attack or disaster and resume operations rapidly.) The National Security Strategy emphasized the importance of including individuals and communities in our approach to enhancing resilience. Both the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners and the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism expanded this concept to CVE, the latter explicitly stating, "We are working to bring to bear many of these capabilities to build resilience within our communities here at home against al-Qa'ida inspired radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization to violence."

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The SIP outlines ongoing, as well as planned, activities to counter violent extremism, which will be accomplished through existing funding and by prioritizing within the resources available to relevant departments and agencies. Some of these activities are specific to CVE, while others address broader non-security policy objectives but may have an indirect effect on countering radicalization to violence. Because our efforts are threaded across a range of different missions, such as training, outreach, and international exchanges, the execution of the SIP will be impacted by funding for both security and non-security related activities.

### **Process for Developing the SIP**

The Obama Administration continues to prioritize and stress the critical importance of CVE in the Homeland. Given the complexities of addressing this threat and the uniqueness of the operating environment in the United States, the Administration recognizes the potential to do more harm than good if our Nation's approach and actions are not dutifully considered and deliberated. Throughout this process, careful consideration was given to the rule of law and constitutional principles, particularly those that address civil rights and civil liberties. With those principles in mind, we noted that departments and agencies with domestically focused mandates have an array of tools and capabilities that can be leveraged to prevent violent extremism, though some have limited experience in the national security arena. This necessitated a deliberative and carefully calibrated approach with an extensive evaluative period to fully address their potential roles and participation, which for some entailed thinking outside their traditional mandates and areas of work.

After assessing how individuals are radicalized and recruited to violence in the United States, the Administration established an accelerated process, led by the National Security Staff (NSS), to develop the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners and the SIP. An Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on countering and preventing violent extremism in the United States was established—with Assistant and Deputy Assistant Secretary-level representatives from across government—to consider roles and responsibilities, potential activities, guiding principles, and how best to coordinate and synchronize our efforts. The IPC, with support from specialist sub-IPCs, drafted our first national strategy on preventing violent extremism in the United States, which was approved by Deputies from the various departments and agencies and signed by the President.

- The following departments and agencies were involved in the deliberations and approval process: the Departments of State (State), the Treasury, Defense (DOD), Justice (DOJ), Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education (EDU), Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security (DHS), as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

To develop the SIP, the NSS tasked NCTC with coordinating the first comprehensive baseline of activities across the United States Government related to countering and preventing violent extremism in the United States, which constitutes the ongoing activities outlined in the SIP. This included CVE-specific initiatives, as well as activities that were not developed for CVE purposes, but nonetheless may indirectly contribute to the overall goals of the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners. These activities were aligned with objectives and sub-objectives—based on the strategy and approved by the IPC—to

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assess our overall effort and identify gaps. The IPC then considered ongoing and potential actions to address these gaps, which form the basis of planned activities outlined in the SIP. The SIP was approved by Deputies from the various departments and agencies in November 2011.

### **Compliance with the Rule of Law**

A fundamental precept of the SIP is that the Federal Government's actions must be consistent with the Constitution and in compliance with U.S. laws and regulations. Departments and agencies are responsible for identifying and complying with legal restrictions governing their activities and respective authorities. Compliance with the rule of law, particularly ensuring protection of First Amendment rights, is central to our National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners and the execution of the SIP.

### **Crosscutting and Supportive Activities**

There are fundamental activities that are critical to our success and cut across the objectives of the SIP. These include: (1) whole-of-government coordination; (2) leveraging existing public safety, violence prevention, and community resilience programming; (3) coordination of domestic and international CVE efforts, consistent with legal limits; and (4) addressing technology and virtual space. In many instances, these crosscutting and supportive activities describe the ongoing activities of departments and agencies in fulfilling their broader missions. As they implement new initiatives and programs in support of the SIP, departments and agencies will ensure these enabling activities appropriately guide their efforts.

#### **1. Whole-of-Government Coordination**

Leveraging the wide range of tools, capabilities, and resources of the United States Government in a coordinated manner is essential for success. Traditional national security or law enforcement agencies such as DHS, DOJ, and the FBI will execute many of the programs and activities outlined in the SIP. However, as the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners states, we must also use a broader set of good governance programs, "including those that promote immigrant integration and civic engagement, protect civil rights, and provide social services, which may also help prevent radicalization that leads to violence." To this end, agencies such as EDU and HHS, which have substantial expertise in engaging communities and delivering services, also play a role.

This does not mean the missions and priorities of these partners will change or that their efforts will become narrowly focused on national security. Their inclusion stems from our recognition that radicalization to violence depends on a variety of factors, which in some instances may be most effectively addressed by departments and agencies that historically have not been responsible for national security or law enforcement. These non-security partners, including specific components within DOJ and DHS, have an array of tools that can contribute to this effort by providing indirect but meaningful impact on CVE, including after school programs, networks of community-based organizations that provide assistance to new immigrants, and violence prevention programs. We will coordinate activities, where appropriate, to support the CVE effort while ensuring we do not change the core missions and functions of these departments and agencies.



## **2. Leveraging Existing Public Safety, Violence Prevention, and Resilience Programming**

While preventing violent extremism is an issue of national importance, it is one of many safety and security challenges facing our Nation. As we enter an era of increased fiscal constraints, we must ensure our approach is tailored to take advantage of current programs and leverages existing resources. Our efforts therefore will be supported, where appropriate, by emphasizing opportunities to address CVE within available resources related to public safety, violence prevention, and building resilience.

## **3. Coordination of Domestic and International Efforts**

While always ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations, we must ensure a high level of coordination between our domestic and international efforts to address violent extremism. Although both the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners and the SIP specifically address preventing violent extremism in the United States, the delineation between domestic and international is becoming increasingly less rigid. Violent extremists operating abroad have direct access to Americans via the Internet, and overseas events have fueled violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in the United States. The converse is also true: events occurring in the United States have empowered the propaganda of violent extremists operating overseas. While making certain that they stay within their respective authorities, departments and agencies must ensure coordination between our domestic and international CVE efforts. Given its mandate to support both domestic and international planning, NCTC will help facilitate this part of the CVE effort so that our Homeland and overseas activities are appropriately synchronized, consistent with all applicable laws and regulations. While individual departments and agencies will regularly engage foreign partners, all international engagement will continue to be coordinated through State.

## **4. Addressing Technology and Virtual Space**

The Internet, social networking, and other technology tools and innovations present both challenges and opportunities. The Internet has facilitated violent extremist recruitment and radicalization and, in some instances, attack planning, requiring that we consider programs and initiatives that are mindful of the online nature of the threat. At the same time, the Federal Government can leverage and support the use of new technologies to engage communities, build and mobilize networks against violent extremism, and undercut terrorist narratives. All of our activities should consider how technology impacts radicalization to violence and the ways we can use it to expand and improve our whole-of-government effort. As noted in sub-objective 3.3, we will develop a separate strategy focused on CVE online.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The SIP assigns Leads and Partners in each of the Future Activities and Efforts listed under respective sub-objectives. Leads and Partners have primary responsibility for coordinating, integrating, and synchronizing activities to achieve SIP sub-objectives and the overall goal of the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners.

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Expectation of Leads and Partners are as follows:

**Lead:** A department or agency responsible for convening pertinent partners to identify, address, and report on steps that are being taken, or should be taken, to ensure activities are effectively executed. The Lead is accountable for, among other things:

- Fostering communication among Partners to ensure all parties understand how to complete the activity;
- Identifying, in collaboration with assigned Partners, the actions and resources needed to effectively execute the activity;
- Identifying issues that impede progress; and
- Informing all departments and agencies about the status of progress by the Lead and other sub-objective Partners, including impediments, modifications, or alterations to the plan for implementation.

**Partner:** A department or agency responsible for collaborating with a Lead and other Partners to accomplish an activity. Partner(s) are accountable for:

- Accomplishing actions under their department or agency's purview in a manner that contributes to the effective execution of an activity;
- Providing status reports and assessments of progress on actions pertinent to the activity; and
- Identifying resource needs that impede progress on their department or agency's activities.

### Assessing Progress

It is important to recognize that the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners represents the first time the United States Government has outlined an approach to address ideologically inspired violent extremism in the Homeland. While the objectives and sub-objectives listed in the SIP represent the collective wisdom and insight of the United States Government about what areas of action have the greatest potential to prevent violent extremism, we will learn more about our effectiveness as we assess our efforts over time, and we will adjust our activities accordingly.

Given the short history of our coordinated, whole-of-government approach to CVE, we will first develop key benchmarks to guide our initial assessment. Where possible, we will also work to develop indicators of impact to supplement these performance measures, which will tell us whether our activities are having the intended effects with respect to an objective or sub-objective. As we implement our activities, future evaluations will shift away from benchmark performance measures towards impact assessments. Departments and agencies will be responsible for assessing their specific activities in pursuit of SIP objectives, in coordination with an Assessment Working Group. We will develop a process for identifying gaps, areas of limited progress, resource needs, and any additional factors resulting from new information on the dynamics of radicalization to violence. Our progress will be evaluated and reported annually to the President.



## Objectives, Sub-Objectives, and Activities

The SIP's objectives mirror the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners' areas of priority action: (1) enhancing Federal engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals. Each of these is supported by sub-objectives, which constitute measurable lines of effort with which our specific programs and initiatives are aligned. A key purpose of the SIP is to describe the range of actions we are taking to improve or expand these efforts.

### 1. Enhancing Federal Engagement with and Support to Local Communities that May be Targeted by Violent Extremists

Communication and meaningful engagement with the American public is an essential part of the Federal Government's work, and it is critical for developing local partnerships to counter violent extremism. Just as we engage and raise awareness to prevent gang violence, sexual offenses, school shootings, and other acts of violence, so too must we ensure that our communities are empowered to recognize threats of violent extremism and understand the range of government and nongovernment resources that can help keep their families, friends, and neighbors safe. As noted in the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners:

Engagement is essential for supporting community-based efforts to prevent violent extremism because it allows government and communities to share information, concerns, and potential solutions. Our aims in engaging with communities to discuss violent extremism are to: (1) share sound, meaningful, and timely information about the threat of violent extremism with a wide range of community groups and organizations, particularly those involved in public safety issues; (2) respond to community concerns about government policies and actions; and (3) better understand how we can effectively support community-based solutions.

At the same time, we must ensure that our efforts to prevent violent extremism do not narrow our relationships with communities to any single issue, including national security. This necessitates continuing to engage on the full range of community interests and concerns, but it also requires, where feasible, that we incorporate communities that are being targeted by violent extremists into broader forums with other communities when addressing non-CVE issues. While we will engage with some communities specifically on CVE issues because of particular needs, care should be taken to avoid giving the false impression that engagement on non-security issues is taking place exclusively because of CVE concerns. To ensure transparency, our engagement with communities that are being targeted by violent extremists will follow two tracks:

- We will specifically engage these communities on the threat of violent extremism to raise awareness, build partnerships, and promote empowerment. This requires specific conversations and activities related to security issues.
- Where we engage on other topics, we will work to include them in broader forums with other communities when appropriate.

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*1.1 Improve the depth, breadth, and frequency of Federal Government engagement with and among communities on the wide range of issues they care about, including concerns about civil rights, counterterrorism security measures, international events, and foreign policy issues.*

Violent extremist narratives espouse a rigid division between “us” and “them” that argues for exclusion from the broader society and a hostile relationship with government and other communities. Activities that reinforce our shared sense of belonging and productive interactions between government and the people undercut this narrative and emphasize through our actions that we are all part of the social fabric of America. As President Obama emphasized, when discussing Muslim Americans in the context of al-Qa’ida’s attempts to divide us, “we don’t differentiate between them and us. It’s just us.”

### ***Current Activities and Efforts***

Departments and agencies have been conducting engagement activities based on their unique mandates. To better synchronize this work, U.S. Attorneys, who historically have engaged with communities in their districts, have begun leading Federal engagement efforts. This includes our efforts to engage with communities to (1) discuss issues such as civil rights, counterterrorism security measures, international events, foreign policy, and other community concerns; (2) raise awareness about the threat of violent extremism; and (3) facilitate partnerships to prevent radicalization to violence. The types of communities involved in engagement differ depending on the locations. United States Attorneys, in consultation with local and Federal partners, are best positioned to make local determinations about which communities they should engage. Appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, U.S. Attorneys are the senior law enforcement and executive branch officials in their districts, and are therefore well-placed to help shape and drive community engagement in the field.

In December 2010, 32 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices began expanding their engagement with communities to raise awareness about how the United States Government can protect all Americans from discrimination, hate crimes, and other threats; to listen to concerns; and to seek input about government policies and programs. In some instances, these efforts also included initiatives to educate the public about the threat of violent extremist recruitment, which is one of many components of a broader community outreach program.

- During this initial pilot, these U.S. Attorneys significantly expanded outreach and engagement on a range of issues of interest to communities; built new relationships where needed; and communicated the United States Government’s approach to CVE.
- Departments and agencies, including State, the Treasury, EDU, HHS, and DHS provided information, speakers, and other resources for U.S. Attorneys’ community engagement activities, frequently partnering with DOJ on specific programs and events.

A National Task Force, led by DOJ and DHS, was established in November 2010 to help coordinate community engagement at the national level. It includes all departments and agencies involved in relevant community engagement efforts and focuses on compiling local, national, and international best practices and disseminating these out to the field, especially to U.S. Attorneys’ Offices. The Task Force is also responsible for connecting field-based Federal components to the full range of United States Government officials involved in community engagement to maximize partnerships,

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coordination, and resource-sharing. The following are some examples of engagement efforts that are, or will be, coordinated with the Task Force:

- The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) this year doubled its outreach to communities and expanded its quarterly engagement roundtables to 14 cities throughout the country. During Fiscal Year 2011, CRCL also conducted 72 community engagement events, some of which included CVE-related topics.
- State engaged on U.S. foreign policy with a range of interested domestic communities. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs alone conducted 80 outreach events over the past year.
- DOJ has produced a number of brochures and other materials on civil rights protections and steps individuals can take to prevent or respond to discrimination, and has disseminated these to various communities, including those being targeted by violent extremists. DOJ has translated these materials into a number of languages, including Arabic, Somali, Urdu, Farsi, and Hindi.
- DOJ, in coordination with DHS, expanded the Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) Initiative, which focuses on developing relationships among local law enforcement departments, fusion centers, and the communities they serve to educate communities on: (1) the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI); (2) how civil rights and liberties are protected; and (3) how to report incidents in order to help keep our communities safe. DOJ continues to support the BCOT Initiative.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

The primary focus for the next year will be: (1) expanding the scope of engagement; (2) building new partnerships between communities and local law enforcement, local government officials, and civil society; (3) incorporating communities that are being targeted by violent extremist radicalization into broader forums with other communities to engage on a range of non-security issues; and (4) increasing our engagement specifically on CVE. Additional activities going forward include the following:

- DOJ will incorporate more U.S. Attorneys' Offices as engagement leads in the field, building on the initial U.S. Attorney-led effort. (Lead: DOJ; Partners: All)
- The National Task Force will: (1) disseminate regular reports on best practices in community engagement to local government officials, law enforcement, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and fusion centers; (2) work with departments and agencies to increase their support to U.S. Attorney-led engagement efforts in the field; and (3) closely coordinate Federal engagement efforts with communities targeted by violent extremist radicalization. (Leads: DOJ and DHS; Partners: All)
- In consultation with Federal and local partners, the National Task Force and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices will facilitate, where appropriate, the inclusion of communities that may be targeted by violent extremist radicalization into broader engagement forums and programs that involve other communities. (Leads: DOJ and DHS; Partners: All)
- U.S. Attorneys will coordinate closely with local government officials, law enforcement, communities, and civil society to enhance outreach events and initiatives. (Lead: DOJ; Partners: All)

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- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, CRCL plans on expanding its quarterly community engagement roundtables to a total of 16. CRCL is also in the process of implementing a campus youth community engagement plan, through which it will engage with young adults on the topic of violent extremism. (Lead: DHS)
- Depending on local circumstances, and in consultation with the FBI and other agencies as appropriate, U.S. Attorneys will coordinate any expanded engagement specific to CVE with communities that may be targeted by violent extremist radicalization. (Lead: DOJ; Partners: DHS, NCTC, and FBI)
- An FBI CVE Coordination Office will be established and, as part of its activities, will coordinate with the National Task Force on CVE-specific education and awareness modules. These modules will be developed and implemented, in part, by leveraging some of the FBI's existing programs and initiatives. (Lead: FBI; Partners: DOJ and DHS)
- DHS will oversee an online portal to support engagement by government officials and law enforcement with communities targeted by violent extremist radicalization, which will be used to share relevant information and build a community of interest. The portal will be accessible to government officials and law enforcement involved in overseas and domestic CVE and community engagement efforts to share best practices. (Lead: DHS; Partners: State, and NCTC)
- DOJ will expand the efforts of the BCOT initiative to help facilitate trust between law enforcement and community leaders. This dialogue could include local issues, as well as CVE. (Lead: DOJ; Partner: DHS)
- The United States Government will build a digital engagement capacity in order to expand, deepen, and intensify our engagement efforts. Where possible, virtual engagement will build on real world engagement activities and programs. (Lead: DHS; Partners: All)

*1.2 Foster community-led partnerships and preventative programming to build resilience against violent extremist radicalization by expanding community-based solutions; leveraging existing models of community problem-solving and public safety; enhancing Federal Government collaboration with local governments and law enforcement to improve community engagement and build stronger partnerships; and providing communities with information and training, access to resources and grants, and connections with the philanthropic and private sectors.*

The Federal Government can foster nuanced and locally rooted counter-radicalization programs and initiatives by serving as a facilitator, convener, and source of information to support local networks and partnerships at the grassroots level. Importantly, because the dynamics of radicalization to violence frequently vary from location to location, we recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach will be ineffective.

### ***Current Activities and Efforts***

The Federal Government has held a series of consultative meetings with communities, local government and law enforcement, civil society organizations, foundations, and the private sector to better understand how it can facilitate partnerships and collaboration. This leverages a key strength identified



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in the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners: “The Federal Government, with its connections to diverse networks across the country, has a unique ability to draw together the constellation of previously unconnected efforts and programs to form a more cohesive enterprise against violent extremism.” Examples of this include the following:

- DHS Secretary Napolitano tasked her Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) to develop recommendations on how the Department can best support law enforcement and communities in their efforts to counter violent extremism. An HSAC CVE Working Group convened multiple meetings with local law enforcement, local elected officials, community leaders (including faith-based leaders), and academics. The working group released its recommendations in August 2010, highlighting the importance of: (1) research and analysis of violent extremism; (2) engagement with communities and leveraging existing partnerships to develop information-driven, community-based solutions to violent extremism and violent crime; and (3) community oriented policing practices that focus on building partnerships between law enforcement and communities.
- DHS and NCTC began raising awareness about violent extremism among private sector actors and foundations and connected them with community civic activists interested in developing programs to counter violent extremism. DHS is now working with a foundation to pilot resiliency workshops across the country that address all hazards, including violent extremism.

We also began exploring how to incorporate CVE as an element of programs that address broader public safety, violence prevention, and resilience issues. This has the advantage of leveraging preexisting initiatives and incorporates CVE in frameworks (such as safeguarding children) used by potential local partners who may otherwise not know how they fit into such efforts. For example, although many teachers, healthcare workers, and social service providers may not view themselves as potentially contributing to CVE efforts, they do recognize their responsibilities in preventing violence in general. CVE can be understood as a small component of this broader violence prevention effort. Departments and agencies will review existing public safety, violence prevention, and resilience programs to identify ones that can be expanded to include CVE as one among a number of potential lines of effort.

- As an example, the Federal Government helped support a community-led initiative to incorporate CVE into a broader program about Internet safety. The program addressed protecting children from online exploitation, building community resilience, and protecting youth from Internet radicalization to violence.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

Planned activities to expand support to local partners include the following:

- The Federal Government will help broker agreements on partnerships to counter violent extremism between communities and local government and law enforcement to help institutionalize this locally focused approach. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS and DOJ will work to increase support for local, community-led programs and initiatives to counter violent extremism, predominantly by identifying opportunities within existing appropriations for incorporating CVE as an eligible area of work for public safety, violence prevention, and community resilience grants. (Leads: DHS and DOJ)

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- DHS is working to increase funding available to integrate CVE into existing community-oriented policing efforts through FY12 grants. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS is establishing an HSAC Faith-Based Community Information Sharing Working Group to determine how the Department can: (1) better share information with faith communities; and (2) support the development of faith-based community information sharing networks. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS is developing its Hometown Security webpage to include resources such as training guidance, workshop reports, and information on CVE for both the general public and law enforcement. (Lead: DHS)
- The Treasury will expand its community outreach regarding terrorism financing issues. (Lead: Treasury; Partners: State, DOJ, DHS, FBI, and the U.S. Agency for International Development)<sup>3</sup>
- Depending on local circumstances and in consultation with the FBI, U.S. Attorneys will coordinate, as appropriate, any efforts to expand connections and partnerships at the local level for CVE, supported by the National Task Force where needed. (Lead: DOJ; Partners: All)
- Departments and agencies will expand engagement with the business community by educating companies about the threat of violent extremism and by connecting them to community civic activists focused on developing CVE programs and initiatives. (Lead: DHS; Partner: NCTC)

### **2. Building Government and Law Enforcement Expertise for Preventing Violent Extremism**

It is critical that the Federal Government and its local government and law enforcement partners understand what the threat of violent extremism is, and what it is not. This helps ensure that we focus our resources where they are most effective and that we understand how we can best empower and partner with communities. Building expertise necessitates continued research about the dynamics of radicalization to violence and what has worked to prevent violent extremism; sharing this information as widely as possible; and then leveraging it to train government officials and law enforcement.

#### *2.1 Improve our understanding of violent extremism through increased research, analysis, and partnerships with foreign governments, academia, and nongovernmental organizations.*

The Federal Government has built a robust analytic program to understand violent extremism that includes analysis; research conducted by academia, think tanks, and industry; and exchanges with international allies to identify best practices. While we have increased our understanding of how individuals are radicalized to violence, we must continue to identify gaps, monitor changes in the dynamics of violent extremism, and remain vigilant by challenging our assumptions and continuing our research and analysis.

#### ***Current Activities and Efforts***

The United States Government's research capacity on this issue has greatly expanded. DHS and NCTC both have analytic groups exclusively focused on violent extremist radicalization; the Interagency Intelligence Subcommittee on Radicalization helps coordinate and improve CVE intelligence analysis; and we work with foreign governments, academia, and nongovernmental organizations to inform and

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3. The U.S. Agency for International Development's role will be limited to sharing relevant information.



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supplement our analysis and understanding. In addition to a large volume of intelligence products on CVE, examples of activities include:

- DHS Science & Technology (S&T) sponsored research on violent extremism in the United States, which it has shared with DHS components and other departments and agencies. Over 20 reports have been produced since 2009 and 5 more will be produced by the end of 2011. DHS is also developing an integrated open source database to help inform CVE programs.
- DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) collaborated with the FBI, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and NCTC to assess the capacity of state correctional institutions to detect and share information regarding individuals who demonstrate behaviors associated with violent extremism while in the correctional system.
- The National Intelligence Council, DHS, FBI, and NCTC briefed fusion centers and law enforcement around the country on violent extremism.
- DHS, in partnership with the FBI and NCTC, developed case studies on preoperational indicators and known threats for State and local law enforcement and affected communities.
- The United States Government held regular exchanges of best practices with Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, the European Union, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and other partners to gain comparative insights about what might be effective in the Homeland.
- DHS expanded cooperation between the United States and Canada on CVE research and lessons learned.
- The United States Government participates in the Global Counterterrorism Forum's CVE Working Group.
- As directed in the Fort Hood Follow-on Review, DOD established the Force Protection Senior Steering Group. Among the Steering Group's duties is the coordination of non-traditional partners' activities within DOD (e.g., counterintelligence and behavioral health) to better understand how to identify and prevent all forms of violent extremism—not limited to al-Qa'ida-inspired extremism—within the military, including the potential use of DOD's extensive network of programs designed to support individuals who are potentially at risk of committing acts of violence against themselves, their families, or co-workers.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

Although we have a better understanding of the threat, there are gaps that need to be addressed through additional research and analysis. In this regard, we will:

- Expand analysis in five priority areas (Leads: DHS, FBI, NCTC, and State):
  1. The role of the Internet in radicalization to violence and how virtual space can be leveraged to counter violent extremism.
  2. Single-actor terrorism (so called "lone wolves"), including lessons learned from similar phenomena such as a school shooters.
  3. Disengagement from terrorism and violent extremism.

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4. Non-al-Qa'ida related radicalization to violence and anticipated future violent extremist threats.
  5. Preoperational indicators and analysis of known case studies of extremist violence in the United States.
- Continue DHS S&T's support for research on countering the threat of extremist violence. (Lead: DHS)
  - Continue DHS collaboration with the FBI, the BOP, and NCTC to: (1) improve awareness of the risk of violent extremism in correctional systems; (2) enhance screening of new inmates to detect individuals associated with violent extremist organizations; (3) improve detection of recruitment efforts within the correctional environment; and (4) increase information sharing, as appropriate, with Federal, State, and local law enforcement about inmates who may have adopted violent extremist beliefs and are being released. (Lead: DHS; Partners: DOJ, FBI, and NCTC)
  - Complete the creation of the FBI CVE Coordination Office to help assess and leverage existing Bureau efforts to better understand and counter violent extremism. (Lead: FBI)
  - Build lines of research specifically to support non-security Federal partners. (Leads: DHS and NCTC; Partners: EDU and HHS)

### *2.2 Increase Federal Government information sharing with State, local, and tribal governments and law enforcement on terrorist recruitment and radicalization.*

As we enhance our partnerships with State, local, and tribal governments and law enforcement to counter violent extremism, it is essential that we share our expertise and insights about the dynamics of radicalization to violence and what has worked to prevent it. This, in turn, will help our partners identify potential areas of collaboration with communities and other local actors.

### ***Current Activities and Efforts***

Examples include:

- Based on direction from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), DHS led an effort to improve the analysis of homegrown violent extremism, including analytic tools to share with State, local, and tribal partners. DHS briefed representatives of 47 states on the project.
- DHS generated case studies of known and suspected terrorists and assessments of radicalization to violence, based on recent arrests, to share with local partners.
- FBI disseminated information to public safety partners, including information about radicalization to violence.
- DHS, NCTC, and FBI briefed and disseminated information on how individuals are radicalized to violence to law enforcement, fusion centers, and local government officials, including the Major Cities Chiefs, representatives from 47 states, Mayors' Offices, and State Homeland Security Advisors.

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- In partnership with NCTC, DOJ, DNI, and FBI, DHS led the first National CVE Workshop in August 2011, which brought together intelligence commanders from major metropolitan areas and fusion center directors to increase their understanding of CVE.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

More work needs to be done to ensure our State, local, and tribal partners have the information they need to counter violent extremism. Classification remains an obstacle to broader sharing with these partners, but we can better ensure that analytic production is tailored to the needs of practitioners in the field. Major work over the next year will focus on creating more analytic products on CVE that directly support local law enforcement and government. Planned actions include:

- Development of an analytic team focused on supporting local government and law enforcement CVE practitioners and increased production of analysis at appropriate classification levels. (Lead: DHS; Partners: FBI and NCTC)
- Development of practitioner-friendly summaries of current research and literature reviews about the motivations and behaviors associated with single-actor terrorism and disengagement from violent extremism. (Lead: DHS)
- Review of information-sharing protocols to identify ways of increasing dissemination of products to State, local, and tribal authorities. (Leads: DHS, DOJ, FBI, and NCTC)
- Expansion of briefings and information sharing about violent extremism with State and local law enforcement and government. (Lead: DHS, FBI, and NCTC)

*2.3 Improve the development and use of standardized training with rigorous curricula based on the latest research, which conveys information about violent extremism; improves cultural competency; and imparts best practices and lessons learned for effective community engagement and partnerships.*

The Federal Government has expanded and improved training related to CVE over the past year, but challenges remain. In particular, there is a need for a review process and standards for training specific to CVE, which was underscored by a small number of instances of Federally sponsored or funded CVE-related and counterterrorism training that used offensive and inaccurate information, which was inconsistent with our values and core principles. As our National Strategy to Empower Local Partners highlights, “Misinformation about the threat and dynamics of radicalization to violence can harm our security by sending local stakeholders in the wrong direction and unnecessarily creating tensions with potential community partners.” Therefore, improving Federal Government-approved training practices and processes related to CVE is a top priority of this plan.

### *Current Activities and Efforts*

In November 2010, the IPC tasked DHS to form an Interagency Working Group on Training to catalogue and recommend improvements for CVE-related training across government. The Working Group brought together individuals responsible for CVE training and substantive specialists from civil rights and civil liberties offices, Federal law enforcement, and the analytic community. This is part of our overall

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emphasis on improving the quality and quantity of CVE-related training. Notable accomplishments in our efforts to improve training include:

- Between October 2010 and October 2011, DHS CRCL trained nearly 2,700 law enforcement officials on CVE and cultural awareness at 46 separate events. The training served as the basis for best practices recommended by the Interagency Working Group on Training.
- Based on input from participating agencies, DHS issued CVE training guidance and best practices in October 2011 for Federal, State, local, and tribal government officials charged with organizing training related to CVE, cultural awareness, and counterterrorism.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in October 2011 issued an Information Bulletin on CVE Training, which includes DHS's training guidance and best practices, as well as guidance for State, local, and tribal entities that regularly leverage FEMA grants to fund CVE-related trainings. DHS sent the best practices paper and the FEMA guidance to all DHS grantees, State and local governments, State and local law enforcement, relevant community stakeholders, and interagency partners.
- DHS provided a full-day of training, which included training on cultural competency, civil rights, and civil liberties to Federal, State, local, and tribal partners at 12 fusion centers in the past year and over 30 fusion centers since 2008. These trainings were coupled with 3- to 4-hour CVE training sessions for State and local law enforcement operating in the same state. Additionally, DHS provided "train the trainer" sessions for staff from nearly all fusion centers nationwide.
- DHS, working closely with other departments and agencies, local law enforcement, academics, and curriculum development experts, developed guidelines for a CVE curriculum that focuses on information-driven community-oriented policing practices and how to leverage existing community partnerships to counter violent extremism and violent crime. These guidelines were reviewed and validated in February 2011 at a "proof-of-concept" session at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), which was attended by State, local, and tribal law enforcement executives and frontline officers from rural and major city jurisdictions.
- State, working closely with NCTC and DHS, piloted specialized CVE training for United States Government officials working on CVE in the United States and abroad through its Foreign Service Institute in May 2011. Participation by domestic and international practitioners provided opportunities for exchanging best practices, enhanced the coordination of our Homeland and overseas efforts, and encouraged interagency partnerships.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

A review process by the Interagency Working Group on Training, as well as internal assessments by departments and agencies, identified two key challenges, which we will address over the next year:

- Many departments and agencies lack a review process for training materials and outside speakers on CVE, which led to a small number of cases of training that violated internal principles as well as core tenets of the National Strategy to Empower Local Partners.

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- There has been a lack of guidance and standards for training related to CVE, which left field offices, in particular, vulnerable to bad training. Without guidance or standards, it has been difficult to enforce accountability.

We have prioritized addressing these two shortcomings by doing the following:

- Departments and agencies are taking steps to identify training materials that may not meet internal standards and to improve processes for creating and reviewing such materials. Some departments are consulting with outside experts with established reputations to evaluate the content and training review process. Guidance on CVE-related training is being developed and will be issued, both across the organizations and to field components. Some departments may issue this as part of broader training guidance. (Lead: All)
- DHS, via FLETC, is in the process of developing a CVE curriculum to be integrated into existing training programs for Federal law enforcement. The curriculum will give Federal law enforcement a better understanding of CVE and how to more effectively leverage existing local partnerships. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS is in the process of establishing an internal committee to review all directly funded and issued DHS training on cultural competency, engagement, CVE, and counterterrorism. The committee will be responsible for reviewing any new content, evaluating experts, and establishing quality control. FEMA will incorporate the recently released Informational Bulletin and training guidance into FY12 grant guidance and will also leverage existing mechanisms to hold grantees and sub-grantees accountable. (Lead: DHS)

In addition to addressing the quality issue, we will work to expand the quantity of training.

- DHS, in partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department and the National Consortium for Advanced Policing, is developing a CVE curriculum that includes a 16-hour continuing education module for executive and frontline officers, as well as a 30-minute module that will be introduced at police academies. Both will be certified by the Police Officers Standards and Training Council. In October 2011 the Major Cities Chiefs Association passed a motion to adopt and implement the DHS CVE curriculum, which will be piloted with State and local law enforcement in San Diego by the end of 2011. By 2013, DHS seeks to: (1) implement the curriculum across the country on a regional basis; (2) develop a national network of trainers and subject matter experts who can administer the training and keep it current; and (3) build an online component for the curriculum. (Lead: DHS; Partners: DOJ and NCTC)
- DHS, via FLETC, will update current Federal training programs to integrate the CVE curriculum for Federal law enforcement in the coming year. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS is working with European law enforcement partners to share best practices and case studies to improve training, community policing, and operational information sharing. (Lead: DHS)
- DHS CRCL is expanding and institutionalizing its CVE and cultural competence training curricula to further enhance the material and its effectiveness. (Lead: DHS)



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- The Interagency Working Group on Training will facilitate a “train the trainer program” to increase the reach of CVE training. (Leads: DHS and NCTC; Partners: DOJ, EDU, HHS, and FBI)
- The Interagency Working Group on Training will facilitate the development of an online training program that provides professional development credit for a broad range of professions, particularly those involved with public safety, violence prevention, and resilience. This will help build a basic understanding of CVE among a broad cross-section of stakeholders who have related mandates. (Leads: DHS and NCTC; Partners: DOJ, FBI, EDU, and HHS)
- The Interagency Working Group on Training will collaborate with non-security partners, such as EDU, to build CVE training modules that can be incorporated, as appropriate, into existing programs related to public safety, violence prevention, and resilience. These modules will be crafted in a way that is relevant to the specific audiences and their missions. Only trainers who have undergone CVE-specific training will deliver training programs that include CVE modules. (Lead: DHS; Partners: DOJ, EDU, HHS, FBI, and NCTC)
- DOD’s training programs and curricula will be informed by the work of the Interagency Working Group on Training, as appropriate. Additionally, DOD is conducting a review of CVE-related curricula and will make revisions and adjustments as necessary. (Lead: DOD; Partner DHS)

### **3. Countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals**

As the National Counterterrorism Strategy emphasizes, “[t]he United States was founded upon a belief in a core set of values that is written into our founding documents and woven into the very fabric of our society. Where terrorists offer injustice, disorder, and destruction the United States must stand for freedom, fairness, equality, dignity, hope, and opportunity. The power and appeal of our values enables the United States to build a broad coalition to act collectively against the common threat posed by terrorists, further delegitimizing, isolating, and weakening our adversaries.”

Countering the ideologies and narratives that legitimize violence is central to our effort, but it also is the most challenging area of work, requiring careful consideration of a number of legal issues, especially those related to the First Amendment. In many instances, it will be more effective to empower communities to develop credible alternatives that challenge violent extremist narratives rather than having the Federal Government attempt to do so.

Our efforts include not only challenging justifications for violence, but affirming American ideals of inclusiveness and opportunity as well. Violent extremist narratives feed on disenchantment and the sense of exclusion. Our efforts therefore must include positive affirmation of our unity as a country. To some extent, this is addressed through our engagement activities, particularly where they address challenges facing all communities and not just those targeted by violent extremist radicalization. But there are also situations where we will need to more directly challenge violent extremist narratives.

#### *3.1 Increase the capacity of communities to directly challenge violent extremist ideologies and narratives.*

While the government cannot always directly contest violent extremist ideas, it can support capacity building within communities to take on this role. Whereas sub-objective 1.2 emphasizes preventative



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measures and a defensive posture to build capacity for enhancing community resilience, sub-objective 3.1 focuses on increasing the ability of communities to push back against violent extremist propaganda.

### *Current Activities and Efforts*

Most of our work in this area to date has focused on connecting community activists to potential civil society and private sector partners to focus specifically on undermining violent extremist narratives. Over the past year, we have taken the following steps:

- NCTC in 2010 developed a Community Awareness Briefing (CAB) to inform members of the public about efforts by al-Qa'ida and its adherents and affiliates to recruit Americans. The CAB highlights recruiting videos and examples of violent extremist propaganda, while underscoring the fact that these materials are often easily available on the Internet. Most importantly, the CAB aims to facilitate a discussion about what government and communities can do, together and independently, to counter the threat of violent extremist narratives. NCTC continues to deliver the presentation at forums composed of community leaders, educators, and parents in cities across the United States. In March 2011, NCTC held a workshop for local, State, and field-based Federal officials on how the CAB could be used in engagement efforts, when it makes sense and is appropriate.
- NCTC connected civic activists with technology experts, resulting in a training seminar on how to maximize the use of technology to counter violent extremism online.
- State sponsored speaker series and exchanges between international CVE practitioners and American communities targeted by violent extremist recruiters to better understand effective models for countering violent extremist narratives.

### *Future Activities and Efforts*

This is a nascent area of effort and therefore will necessitate greater focus over the next year. Our planned actions include:

- Expanding efforts to raise community awareness about the threat of radicalization to violence, building from the experience of the CAB, and adapting those materials for different audiences where appropriate. (Leads: DOJ, DHS, FBI, and NCTC)
- Learning from former violent extremists, specifically those who can speak credibly to counter violent narratives, provide insights to government, and potentially catalyze activities to directly challenge violent extremist narratives. (Lead: DHS; Partner: NCTC)
- Providing grants to counter violent extremist narratives and ideologies, within authorities and relevant legal parameters, by reprioritizing or increasing the flexibility of existing funding. (Lead: DHS)
- Brokering connections between private sector actors, civil society, and communities interested in countering violent extremist narratives. (Lead: DHS; Partner: NCTC)
- Promoting international exchange programs to build expertise for countering violent extremist narratives. (Lead: State; Partners: DOJ, DHS, FBI, and NCTC)

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- Increasing technical training to empower communities to counter violent extremists online, including the development of training for bloggers. (Lead: DHS; Partners: State, NCTC, and FBI)

### *3.2 Improve and increase our communication to the American public about the threat posed by violent extremist groups, myths and misperceptions about violent extremist radicalization, and what we are doing to counter the threat.*

It is important that we communicate to the American public the realities of what the threat is, and what it is not. Misconceptions about the threat and statements and actions that cast suspicion on entire communities based on the actions of a few distract attention from the real threat and can undermine our ability to build partnerships. An informed citizenry enhances our national security.

### ***Current Activities and Efforts***

In 2011, the Federal Government focused on developing its approach to domestic CVE and communicating this to the American public. This involved briefings to Congress, public addresses, and media interviews. We will continue these activities.

### ***Future Activities and Efforts***

In 2012, we will work to expand our efforts to raise awareness in the general public about radicalization to violence in the United States and the tools to prevent it by:

- Providing regular briefings to Congress, think tanks, and members of the media. (Lead: DHS; Partners: DOJ, FBI, and NCTC)
- Creating programs to directly engage the public on the issue. (Lead: All)
- Building a public website on community resilience and CVE. (Lead: DHS)

### *3.3 Build a strategy to leverage new technologies and address online violent extremist radicalization*

The Internet has become an increasingly potent element in radicalization to violence, enabling violent extremists abroad to directly communicate to target audiences in the United States. This direct communication allows violent extremists to bypass parents and community leaders. The SIP specifically addresses the online arena in several sub-objectives, but because of the importance of the digital environment, we will develop a separate, more comprehensive strategy for countering and preventing violent extremist online radicalization and leveraging technology to empower community resilience that considers: (1) the latest assessment of the role of the Internet; (2) the absence of clear national boundaries in online space and the relationship between international and domestic radicalization to violence; (3) relevant legal issues; and (4) the differing authorities and capabilities of departments and agencies.

## **Conclusion**

Protecting our Nation's communities from violent extremist recruitment and radicalization is a top national security priority. It is an effort that requires creativity, diligence, and commitment to our fundamental rights and principles. In his cover letter to the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners, President Obama wrote:

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Sadly, the threat of violent extremism in America is nothing new. Throughout our history, misguided groups—including international and domestic terrorist organizations, neo-Nazis and anti-Semitic hate groups—have engaged in horrific violence to kill our citizens and threaten our way of life. Most recently, al-Qa’ida and its affiliates have attempted to recruit and radicalize people to terrorism here in the United States, as we have seen in several plots and attacks, including the deadly attack 2 years ago on our service members at Fort Hood. As a government, we are working to prevent all types of extremism that leads to violence, regardless of who inspires it.

—President Barack Obama, August 3, 2011

A complex issue like violent extremist radicalization and recruitment requires a nuanced path to guide a whole-of-government approach. The SIP outlines this path and facilitates a division of labor by assigning responsibilities between Federal Government departments, agencies, and components focused on law enforcement and national security and those whose efforts support, but do not directly lie within, these areas.