

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 30, 2015 10:16 AM  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: Australia Advances Regional Cooperation at Sydney CVE Summit

B6  
B7(F)

Hi [Redacted]  
Sydney CVE Summit cable sent out last night (below). Hope you had a great weekend and so nice to sit down with you on Friday!

Best,

[Redacted]

RELEASE IN PART B7(F),B6

**From:** SMART Core  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2015 8:01 PM

[Redacted]

**Subject:** Australia Advances Regional Cooperation at Sydney CVE Summit

**UNCLASSIFIED**  
SBU



**Info Office:** Iraq\_and\_Syria, PPR\_PD\_PAO, GSEC\_SCA, SP\_EAP

**MRN:** 15 CANBERRA 484  
**Date/DTG:** Jun 29, 2015 / 292358Z JUN 15  
**From:** AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE  
**E.O.:** 13526  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PREL, PTER, PHUM, SOCI, KHLs, KIRF, KSUM, KWMN, KYOU, KPAO, AS  
**Captions:** SENSITIVE  
**Pass Line:** DEPT FOR J/CELL  
**Subject:** Australia Advances Regional Cooperation at Sydney CVE Summit

1. (SBU) Summary: Approximately 200 representatives of governments, civil society, and the private sector from the Asia-Pacific, South Asia, Europe, and North America gathered in Sydney for the Australian-government hosted Regional Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit on June 11-12. Building on many of the core themes of the February White House Summit, the summit brought together participants from around the region to look for ways to understand and combat the terrorist propaganda that contributes to extremist recruitment, to strengthen the role of women and families in combatting violent extremism, to forge effective partnerships among government, civil society, and private sector actors, to evaluate effective law enforcement approaches to countering radicalization, and to discuss how to engage the whole-of-society in building and securing resilient communities by addressing social, political, and economic grievances. Special Envoy and

Coordinator for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications Rashad Hussain addressed the Ministerial meetings on June 12, emphasizing the need to focus efforts on the perhaps less than one percent of Muslims who are susceptible to the appeal of extremist groups such as ISIL, while acknowledging that the vast majority who follow the Islamic faith ignore ISIL's propaganda. He also spoke about the need for preventing young people from ever getting to the point where they are on the fence. The Summit's outcomes, endorsed by the representatives of the 24 countries in attendance as well as the EU and the UN, included an initiative to establish a regional network of civil society groups to promote the sharing of best practices on developing counter-messaging. The U.S.-Australia co-sponsored "HackAbout" was popular with government, civil society, and private sector participants and was regularly cited as an example of how government could support civil society in the development of counter-messaging strategies. In hosting the Sydney Regional CVE Summit, the Australian government demonstrated its commitment to expanding its role as a regional leader on the issue. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Australia's Attorney General, Senator George Brandis, hosted the June 11-12 Sydney Regional Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit. The event brought together approximately 200 representatives from government, civil society, and industry across the region. Ministers and officials from 24 countries, the European Union, and the United Nations, as well as representatives from civil society and the private sector, met with the aim of building capacity to address the threat posed by violent extremism. Special Envoy and Coordinator for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications Rashad Hussain led the interagency U.S. delegation, which included officials from the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and USAID as well as the Ambassador. Representatives from Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Canada, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam attended the event, with representatives from Egypt, Iraq, and Norway present as observers.

#### **Civil Society Day**

3. (SBU) Prime Minister Abbott hosted a reception on June 10 for the heads of delegation in which he credited U.S. leadership for the progress made in countering violent extremism. He also delivered the opening address at the summit on June 11. Abbott underscored that ISIL "and its imitators" have carried out terrorist attacks in many countries around the world in the past year, including in Australia. He said that Australia is looking at what can be done to deal with Australian citizens who have "betrayed their country" by fighting with terrorists, calling such an act "a modern form of treason." Abbott emphasized his government's proposal to strip citizenship from known terrorists who are dual nationals to prevent their return to Australia as an important tool for countering the foreign terrorist threat. He praised statements by key Muslim leaders such as Prime Minister Najib of Malaysia, who has described ISIL as "against God, against Islam, and against our common humanity." Abbott thanked Muslim community leaders who have worked to prevent Australians from becoming foreign fighters.

#### **What Role for Government?**

4. (SBU) Speakers from around the region acknowledged the limitations that governments face in developing CVE messaging and emphasized the importance of increasing cooperation with civil society organizations. Brandis highlighted the challenge, saying terrorists "have exploited social media and the internet to develop a brand and to flood their target audience with propaganda that casts local conflicts to global audiences, drawing in thousands of foreign fighters from every corner of the globe." He said "as we look to counter violent extremism, we need to take a smart, strategic approach, and it would be narrow of us to assume that governments have all the answers." Both Brandis and Australian Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, emphasized that the way forward must involve the collaboration of governments, law enforcement agencies, religious leaders, academics, industry, and the technology sector, as well as community groups, families and individuals. The U.S.-Australia co-sponsored "HackAbout" -- which brought together youth, community groups, and industry to develop new and innovative ideas to counter violent extremism -- was regularly referenced as a good example of how government can help

civil society groups develop counter-messaging strategies.

#### Importance of Whole-of-Society Approach

5. (SBU) Australian Security Intelligence Organization Director General Duncan Lewis, in his address, noted that ISIL is actively seeking younger recruits than Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. In Australia, ISIL has focused its appeals on young males under 25 who have been prevented from leaving Australia. Through on-line and community contact, ISIL and its supporters have urged such individuals to conduct rudimentary attacks on non-Muslims and law enforcement that do not require extensive planning, according to Lewis. Several recent high-profile arrests in Australia and the UK have been of minors as young as 14. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop stressed the changing nature of the threat and the importance of reaching out to families, especially mothers, given that the majority of extremists are young men. Chairing a panel regarding the role of women and families in challenging terrorist propaganda, Bishop emphasized that "radicalization doesn't occur in a vacuum." Bishop called for governments to do more to engage women and families due to their ability to act as champions of counter-radicalization. [redacted] said governments cannot rely on established Muslim leadership bodies to reach at-risk youth and said that there is a need to find other ways to engage the younger generation directly. [redacted] emphasized that sports can be a valuable tool for reaching out to at-risk youth and highlighted the AFL's efforts with the Muslim community. [redacted] of the Wahid Institute stressed the importance of "retelling the narrative" rather than just trying to counter the narrative.

B6

#### Engaging the Private Sector

6. (SBU) Tech industry representatives from Facebook, Google, and Twitter spoke about their efforts to take down inappropriate online content. Twitter [redacted] said that Twitter is working to take down inappropriate content, but highlighted the challenge of regulating 500 million tweets a day. [redacted] highlighted #illridewithyou – a grassroots response to protect Muslims from the threat of reprisal during the aftermath of the Martin Place Siege in Sydney in December 2014 – as a powerful example of how social media can be used for counter-messaging purposes. [redacted] of Facebook used the example of "Bring Back Our Girls" – a campaign calling for the release of Nigerian girls kidnapped by Boko Haram – as another example of the power of social media. [redacted] noted that Facebook has policies in place to deal with dangerous organizations and takes down beheading videos and other content used to promote ISIL. She said the effectiveness of grassroots efforts to counter extremist messaging is likely underestimated and more helpful than government-led messaging. [redacted] of Google Australia reviewed the process for flagging and deleting inappropriate YouTube content and said that Google removed over 9,000 extremist propaganda videos last year. She also spoke favorably of Google's involvement in a counter-messaging initiative with Malaysia's Global Movement of Moderates, one of Embassy Kuala Lumpur's CVE grantees. [redacted] Against Violent Extremism emphasized that the internet and social media have completely changed the extremist recruitment process and what governments can and cannot control. Both [redacted] [redacted] of the NGO Radical Middle Way assessed that governments need to do a better job of evaluating what parts of their social media campaigns are effective and what are wastes of time in order to better use resources.
7. (SBU) Government, private sector, and civil society representatives repeatedly called for increased engagement by local businesses that have a vested interest in and intimate connection to their employees. [redacted] specifically said that private sector engagement needs to look beyond the big, global, tech companies to reach smaller, local companies with more limited resources. He noted that local companies have equities in the CVE space but often go overlooked. [redacted] from Malaysia's Global Movement of Moderates emphasized that the private sector has a niche role in providing expertise and technical training where governments and civil society may not be well-suited. Government officials from Australia, the United States, and the ROK reiterated this need to increase private sector engagement with the ROK announcing that it will host a roundtable with its private sector leaders this July to discuss ways to collaborate in the CVE space.

### Ministerial Discussions

8. (SBU) Presentations at the June 12 Ministerial meeting focused on the importance of developing counter-messaging to combat the specific threat posed by ISIL. Representatives from Singapore and the Philippines stressed good governance as key to addressing the challenge posed by terrorist propaganda, while Malaysia and the ROK noted the importance of empowering community voices. During the closed, government-only session, Lynda Clairmont, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of National and Cyber Security of Public Safety Canada, described the legislative changes that Canada has made to combat the extremist threat to demonstrate a possible framework for government legislative action. These changes include updating the Sharing of Information Act, upgrading the No Fly list, amending the Criminal Code, lowering the threshold for issuing warrants, amending the Immigration and Protection Act, and changing passport law to facilitate the revocation of passports of individuals of concern.
9. (SBU) In his remarks, Special Envoy Hussain outlined causes of terrorism and violent extremism, such as political grievances and warped ideology. Hussain emphasized the need to focus efforts on the one percent of Muslims who have been persuaded by extremist ideology. He argued that we must recalibrate how we define success by noting that usually, if 99 percent of people are on your side, it would not be a contest and most would declare victory. Given the danger posed to society by extremism, however, we must empower the 99 percent of Muslims who reject the views of extremists to sway the one percent. He said the United States is expanding our messaging to include original content on social media platforms in Arabic, Somali, Urdu, Hausa, and English; expanding partnerships with foreign governments and NGO partners to directly counter ISIL's messaging; and coordinating counter-ISIL Coalition messaging. He proposed that governments could do more to support CVE grants and message centers, host regional conferences and competitions like the "HackAbout" to generate new ideas, and create a "Muslim Peace Corps."
10. (SBU) Special Envoy Hussain further outlined the White House CVE Summit process and urged participants to work together in the lead up to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September when national, civil society, and private sector leaders will reconvene to report on progress on the Action Agenda. He invited governments to help expand the pool of local expertise on what drives individuals to become radicalized, welcoming delegations to support the international CVE research conference that will take place on the margins of UNGA. Hussain also reiterated the importance of partnering closely with civil society, youth, and women, welcoming the region's civil society network and anticipating that it would feed heavily into UNGA events focused on civil society learning.

### Australia-U.S. Co-sponsored "HackAbout"

11. (SBU) Australia and the United States co-sponsored a "HackAbout" led by the Australian civil society organization People against Violent Extremism (PaVE) and the U.S. civil society group Affinis Global in which 30 selected participants from community groups and industry came together to develop new and innovative ideas to combat CVE. On June 10-12, four teams conceptualized and developed on-line tools and public campaigns designed to simultaneously combat terrorist propaganda. The HackAbout culminated in presentations by the four teams to the participants in the Civil Society Capacity Building Workshop on the margins of the Ministerial meeting. Together with judges who were Muslim leaders in Australia's media community, participants voted on the project most likely to make an impact. The winning idea was called "Pentor," which offered real-time interactive mentorship specifically targeted at young people by identifying common interests between mentors and youths such as music or sports. The winning team will develop its proposal further for seed funding, and other participants may continue to develop their ideas as well.

### Summit Communique and Outcomes

12. (SBU) At the conclusion of the Summit, Brandis told participants: "We must commit to enabling and encouraging community engagement, promoting a narrative that amplifies positive content, and putting in place strong legislative frameworks and operational activities to halt the forward push of ISIL." Twenty-four

countries from the region endorsed the following five initiatives outlined in a communique released to the press:

- Establish a regional network of civil society groups to foster peer-to-peer learning and partnerships, including with the private sector, and assist with identifying and better utilising leaders and influencers across the region to reach target audiences.
- Develop a regional guide for government and civil society on effective engagement with the private sector, to facilitate closer collaboration on countering violent extremism.
- Create a regional best practice guide for the development of non-legislative, legislative and law enforcement responses to inhibit the dissemination of terrorist propaganda.
- Develop a compendium of regional counter narratives to amplify effective messages across the region.
- Invest in enhancing the role of communities to challenge terrorist propaganda, including by building the technical capability of grassroots organisations to elevate non-extremist voices that resonate with target audiences.

**Comment: Australia Committed to CVE Leadership Role**

13. (SBU) By hosting the Sydney Regional CVE Summit and ensuring representation at the level of Prime Minister and Cabinet members, the Australian government demonstrated its commitment to serve as a regional and global leader on the issue. This is in keeping with Australia's contributions to the Counter-ISIL Coalition in Iraq and its substantial humanitarian aid to Syria and Iraq. Australian media coverage of the Sydney Regional CVE Summit was positive overall, although several press reports noted that a number of civil society participants called Abbott's practice of labeling ISIL as a "death cult" unhelpful. End Comment.

**Signature:** BERRY

**Drafted By:** CANBERRA [redacted]

**Cleared By:** [redacted]

B6  
B7(F)

POL [redacted]

POL [redacted]

PAS [redacted]

[redacted]

J [redacted]

POL [redacted]

CSCC [redacted]

PA [redacted]

DRL/IRF [redacted]

DHS (INFO) [redacted]

Office of Economic Development & Growth [redacted]

CSO/P (INFO) [redacted]

INL/CAP [redacted]

INL/EA [redacted]

EAP/RSP [redacted]

DHS: [redacted]

S/GWI (INFO) [redacted]

**Approved By:** AMB:Berry, John

**Released By:** CANBERRA [redacted]

**Info:** OSLO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BAGHDAD, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; CAIRO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; HANOI, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; LONDON, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BANGKOK, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; COLOMBO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SINGAPORE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; MOSCOW,

AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; MANILA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; ISLAMABAD,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; WELLINGTON, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; KUALA LUMPUR,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; VIENTIANE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SEOUL,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; TOKYO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; JAKARTA,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; NEW DELHI, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; OTTAWA,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BEIJING, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; PHNOM PENH,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; DHAKA,  
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; PERTH, AMCONSUL ROUTINE; MELBOURNE,  
AMCONSUL ROUTINE; SYDNEY, AMCONSUL ROUTINE

---

Action Post: NONE

Dissemination Rule: DIS\_IRAQ\_SYRIA, DIS\_PPR\_PD\_PAO, DIS\_GSEC\_SCA, DIS\_SP\_EAP

**UNCLASSIFIED**  
SBU