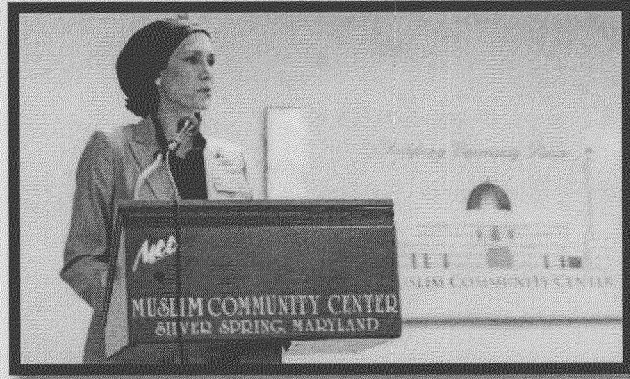


FAITH COMMUNITY ROLE IN PUBLIC SAFETY AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

By: Dr. Hedieh Mirahmadi, Founder of ICC & President of WORDE

Speech Date, August 28, 2013

1. Thank you all for agreeing to join us tonight as we discuss the faith communities' role in public safety and preventing violent extremism.
2. I would also like to thank our special guests for coming all the way from DC from the Dept of Homeland Security, Mr. Irfan Saeed, from the NCTC, Mr. Seamus Hughes, and from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Chaplain Ibrahim Aziz.
3. We are proud to say that this partnership between the faith community and MCPD is the first effort across the country that is community led rather than being driven by a particular law enforcement agency. WE believe that gives us the opportunity to have vital input into the direction and focus of the relationship and we believe it goes a really long way into building trust between us.
 - a. The faith community role in Public Safety can include a wide array of issues—anything from working together on reducing crime both in our neighborhoods and online, protecting our children from gangs and other forms abuse, or preventing Violent Extremism-- which we can define simply as any ideologically motivated violence that furthers political goals.
 - b. Despite what some people may think, VE is not exclusive to any one religion. In fact, of the over 63 AQ inspired plots since 9-11, about 26 of those plots involved converts so that means 1/3 of those involved grew up in a religion other than Islam.
 - c. In fact, 45% of those indicted on terrorism charges since 9-11 were not Al Qaeda inspired. This tells us that no family is immune from the dangers of radicalization.
4. So what we hope to accomplish in this partnership can be outlined in 3 categories:
 - a. One: educating, and building awareness in the faith community about the various facets of public safety and VE. We will host a series of workshops that will cover everything from internet safety for young adults, to understanding the threat of radicalization or political violence within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.
 - b. We also plan to cover the non-ideological precursors that cause VE such as acculturation problems that may stem from the trauma of war, domestic violence or social alienation, as well as the various psychiatric conditions, which may create vulnerability in certain persons.



- c. Second: As we build this awareness and stay focused on these issues, we hope to attract and cultivate the expertise within our communities to deal with these conditions so that we can intervene before an at risk individual chooses the path of violence. This will be us pooling community resources to develop innovative solutions to preventing violence.
 - d. Finally, we hope to create a reliable and effective relationship between government/law enforcement and the community experts [social workers, psychologists, mentors, and clergy] to intervene in cases where mentoring or counseling could deter an individual from the path of violence.
 - i. And this is why the relationship with the MCPD and Chief Manger is so important as well as an ongoing relationship with the Board of Education and the MCPS.
5. As an analyst and community organizer in the field of countering violence extremism, I can say that the case of the Tsnarev's brothers indicates to us why developing this prevention model is so important:
 - a. First off, when these young men, lost the presence of their parents, did their friends and parent's of their friends realize they were left without adult supervision or guidance?
 - b. Did their Sports coaches start to notice their erratic behavior or their anti-social perspectives on life in the US? Did the Muslim community members notice?
 - c. But an even bigger issue is even IF any of these individuals saw the change and were alarmed, would they have any resources available to them to intervene?
 6. The same thing can be said about Adam Lanza and the Newtown school shooting. He had displayed many warning signs of aberrant behavior but no one alerted to intervene.
 7. The tragic reality of the Boston terror attack or the Newtown school shooting—both are events that remind us why we need to build awareness about the social, psychological, and ideological factors that can lead to VE and why we need identify the expertise in the community to deal with it. It is also tell us why the faith community needs to create the space within our institutions to address these issues.
 8. Finally it's important to mention that we will also need to re-evaluate how we chose to define at risk individuals for violence. Traditionally in the US, that refers to low income persons with a tendency towards gangs or drugs.
 9. But the new reality in our country is that we have many young adults who may be suffering from the social and psychological trauma of war or conflict, especially from Muslim majority countries like immigrants from Iraq, Africa, Pakistan, or Afghanistan as well as the rising incidents of developmental conditions which can also make an individual vulnerable. The demographics of our County in particular is also changing and our programs and the allocation of resources must also change.
 10. As we progress and plan for the coming events, we look forward to hearing from each of you if you have any expertise to offer and if you have any suggestions for programming.
 11. We are honored and privileged that we have with us tonight and as our primary partner in this endeavor, Chief Tomas Manger of the MCPD. Chief Manger has been the Chief of Police in Montgomery County, Maryland, since February 2004. He began his law enforcement career in

1977 with the Fairfax County (Virginia) Police Department. He rose through the ranks to become Chief of Police in 1998. During his tenure in Fairfax County, Chief Manger received numerous awards including the Silver Medal of Valor. He is credited with reorganizing and expanding the Police Department's Community Policing efforts. His commitment to the highest ethical standards for policing and his enactment of new policies to increase departmental accountability earned him significant recognition from the community, including the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission Award for outstanding contributions, and the N.A.A.C.P.'s Community Service Leadership Award. In 2012, Chief Manger was inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame.

12. Please join me in welcoming Chief Manger to further discuss these issues with us and when he concludes, we will open the floor to questions and suggestions.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. I hope you will also join us for our upcoming events which include:
 - a. The workshop at the HHS Emergency Operations Center on September 9th, which is to help the faith community become more involved in disaster preparedness.
 - b. The MC friendship picnic on October 13th at Weaton Regional Park
 - c. And our internet safety event on Oct 29th, location to be announced soon.
2. If you received an email from the FCWG then we should have your email for future notices but if you did not receive the email from us directly and want to be informed of future events, please give me or a member of my staff your contact information.