

Remarks by Assistant Attorney General John Carlin
Opening of Madison Valleywood Project
Department of Justice
February 24, 2016

- Welcome and thank you all for joining us today. My name is John Carlin and I am the Assistant Attorney General for National Security at the Department of Justice.
- I know that many of you have traveled here from different parts of the country to contribute your expertise, and the fact that such an impressive group has been assembled on such short notice speaks volumes to your commitment to working together to address one of the most significant challenges of our time.
- The purpose of today's meeting is to bring together **relevant experts from the advertising, social media, and technology industries, along with civil society representatives** to collaborate in generating and amplifying compelling content to undermine ISIL's online messaging and recruitment efforts.

Threat

- We've convened this meeting of private sector and civil society leaders because of the **unprecedented CT threat environment**.
 - Inspired by ISIL's public calls for violence, homegrown violent extremism will likely continue to pose one of the most significant terrorist threats to the U.S. homeland in the near future.
 -
-

- In my position, I see this threat every day. But the days it has hit home the hardest is when I've spoken with the families of victims. Families who have had to watch their loved ones beheaded in videos posted and viewed around the world. Families who have been devastated as ISIL turns their tragedy into its propaganda. Families who have had to ensure the taunting and tweets of ISIL supporters cheering the latest atrocity.
 - For in our interconnected world, it takes just the push of a button for ISIL to reach an exponentially greater number of people. ISIL has turned to social media – the language of youth and a global marketing tool designed to reach households around the world.
 - In the U.S., we have identified new trends in our investigations and prosecutions, seemingly driven in part by the influence of social media.
 - **First, youth.** ISIL continues to target the young, including children, in its recruiting efforts, and its message is getting through.
 - In the United States, over 55 percent of defendants in foreign terrorist fighter cases are under 25-years-old. Over a third are 21 or younger.
 - **Second, and perhaps most alarming, we are witnessing a surge in what we call homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) – individuals inspired by this extremist ideology to conduct attacks inside the United States.**
-

- ISIL and its supporters have repeatedly called for attacks right where potential attackers live. Terrorism with the reach of mass, global marketing. No passport or travel required.
- **Law enforcement is a powerful tool to counter this emerging threat, but it is not--and cannot be--the only tool.**
 - Leaders in the private sector and civil society must also develop ways to reach individuals early on their path toward radicalization.
- Moreover, while this is a complex and alarming threat, it is equally important to remember that **ISIL remains one of the most rejected brands in the world**, including in the United States. Only a small fraction of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims has bought into ISIL's ideology.
- Unfortunately, even this tiny fraction of ISIL supporters poses a significant threat to our national and international security.
- So we face a number of challenges. How can we reach the audiences we are trying to reach without operating on the flawed assumption that a large percentage of the population might somehow be potential recruits?
-

Purpose of Meeting

- This group and our many partners dedicated to countering violent extremism are critical to answering that question.
 - Over the past year, I and many others in government have spoken with numerous organizations and companies from
-

across different sectors that have expressed an interest in contributing to efforts to counter the terrorist recruiting of ISIL and other groups.

- We have had productive and encouraging meetings with leaders from the advertising, social media, and information technology sectors, along with leaders from academic and non-profit organizations.
- We have heard of Facebook's robust training efforts aimed at empowering groups that oppose hate. Twitter and YouTube have made great strides in identifying and removing terrorist content that violates their terms of service. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) have expressed great interest in using their skills to help groups craft effective counter-ISIL messaging. We've read the research of the academics here today, and met with many of the NGOs who have worked for years on these issues.

- One common refrain we have heard in our conversations is that despite the great interest in countering ISIL's activities, more could be done if the many different organizations working in this area could share their expertise with each other.
 - It was that common refrain that was the spark for today's meeting. We in government recognize, and appreciate, that the private sector and civil society have their own independent role to play in challenging ISIL's message of violence.
 - **And so I need to be very clear that while we are hosting today's event, this is your meeting, not ours.** I and the
-

other Government officials are here to provide information and context, but we are not here to try to set the agenda for your efforts.

- Instead we convened this meeting to provide a forum for all of you to meet and speak with each other, to brainstorm ideas, and to build new collaborative efforts.
- We anticipate—and indeed hope—that after today you will continue to meet without the government – to continue to develop your own efforts, building on the connections you make today.

Conclusion

- As a parting thought, the President recently noted, most young Muslim Americans have the same day to day concerns as their peers. They excel in a number of fields and we shouldn't view them through the prism of security. The question is instead how can we reach the right audiences most effectively- not just the "fence-sitters" who are considering joining ISIL's call to violence, but their immediate influencers such as family members and friends, as well as to cultural influencers and broader audiences to prevent violent extremism?
- These are areas where you are the experts. We know that the government is not the best messenger to these communities. So we are grateful for your interest in coming together and continuing to lead the charge.
- I look forward to participating today and hearing the great ideas that come out of this collaboration. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

will now

provide you a short briefing regarding the threat, and then we'll be handing things off to ^{(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)} [REDACTED] who will be facilitating the rest of the afternoon's activities. Thank you.
