



*The School for Ethics and Global Leadership*

**The Islamic State on Social Media:  
Propaganda and Recruitment**

The School for Ethics and Global Leadership, Spring 2016  
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## Introduction

This document is the work of 24 high school juniors at the School for Ethics and Global Leadership (SEGL). SEGL is a selective, semester-long residential program in Washington, D.C. for students from across the United States. It provides intellectually motivated students with the best possible opportunity to shape themselves into ethical leaders who create positive change in our world. The Spring 2016 semester developed this collaborative policy document to provide ethical and effective solutions to the issue of the Islamic State's presence on social media. We chose this topic because we believe it to be a pressing issue that requires creative and well thought out solutions. This document reflects the collective opinion of the students at SEGL, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the faculty and staff. Our hope is that this document provides a comprehensive analysis of this issue and will serve as a first step in the implementation of ethical solutions.

We would like to thank Dr. David Ettinger at the Gelman Library of George Washington University and Bahaa El-Taweal of the Raise Your Voice campaign, as well as the other professionals who helped us in our research.

## Executive Summary

More than ever, social media has the ability to influence the decisions one makes and perceptions one forms of the world. Facebook, Twitter, and Google are social media platforms used by young people. Terrorist groups, particularly the Islamic State, have adjusted their recruiting tactics to fit the realities of today's avenues of technological communication. The Islamic State utilizes social media in an unprecedented way to attract vulnerable youth to its radical message.

The Islamic State relies on the recruitment of youth in order to survive. Because the group's legitimacy has traditionally been based off of its acquisition of territory in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State is in a constant need of new recruits in order to expand.<sup>1</sup> While young people in the Middle East are attracted to the Islamic State in greater numbers than their Western counterparts,<sup>2</sup> Westerners who are ostracized from their communities can also be vulnerable to the Islamic State's social media sites. The Islamic State's recruitment of Americans is only one dimension of the problem that this terrorist organization poses to the United States. There is another more direct threat to the United States: lone-actor terrorism inspired by the Islamic State's online postings. Videos disseminated via social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Google, attempt to inspire domestic terrorism in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The shootings in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015 are an example of how dangerous the Islamic State's social media accounts have become in their inspiration of terrorist attacks.<sup>4</sup>

The authors of this policy document have determined that there are five essential actors involved in resolving the problem of the Islamic State online: American community engagement programs, the United States Department of State, the United States intelligence community, the United States Department of Justice, and the American private sector.

Some of the groups most susceptible to being radicalized by the Islamic State online are young American Muslims and recent converts to the faith who feel ostracized from their communities due to Islamophobia.<sup>5</sup> The role of community engagement is to address how Islamophobia can be catalytic in motivating people to join the Islamic State. Through the differing methods of education of Muslim and non-Muslim people, community engagement programs seek to discontinue any societal ostracism that Muslim-Americans may experience.

The presence of the Islamic State on social media is inherently an international issue; therefore, it is within the purview of the State Department to address this problem with both internal and external solutions. In addition to working with foreign governments to develop effective international policies, the State Department has developed strategies to contribute to a counternarrative to the Islamic State's social media presence. The State Department can enhance the nature of its own social

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<sup>1</sup> Zachary Laub, "The Islamic State," ed. Jonathan Masters, The Council on Foreign Relations, accessed 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811>.

<sup>2</sup> *Global Terrorism Index* (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015), 7, <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

<sup>4</sup> Karen Yourish, Derek Watkins, and Tom Giratikanon, "Where ISIS Has Directed and Inspired Attacks Around the World," *The New York Times* (New York City, NY), March 22, 2016, Middle East, accessed April 15, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/17/world/middleeast/map-isis-attacks-around-the-world.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/17/world/middleeast/map-isis-attacks-around-the-world.html?_r=0).

<sup>5</sup> Rachel Briggs Obe and Tanya Silverman, *Western Foreign Fighters: Innovations in Responding to the Threat* (London, UK: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2014).

media presence and its partnerships with both Middle Eastern and Western nations to better participate in countering the Islamic State online.

The Islamic State's social media accounts, created with the intention of promoting the group's propaganda and attracting potential recruits, need to be more closely monitored. The United States intelligence community plays an essential role in monitoring the Islamic State's presence on social media. With the help of the private sector, intelligence agencies such as the FBI and the CIA can work to more effectively monitor the Islamic State's online presence. By doing so, the government will have better platforms with which to track terrorists, prevent attacks, and anticipate potential threats to the United States.

Because of the unprecedented nature of the Islamic State's use of social media, it is important that the United States Department of Justice reviews the legality of the solutions presented to address the problem. Both individual citizens and the American private sector have raised concerns over the federal government's monitoring of social media accounts and prosecution of private parties. These concerns necessitate that the U.S. Department of Justice establish parameters for such interactions. In this policy document, legal precedent and current laws have informed the recommendations presented to the Department of Justice.

The American private sector is involved in the fight against the Islamic State online because it is on the private sector's sites that the Islamic State's recruiting and proliferation of propaganda occurs. The private sector will be able to aid the government in defeating the threat posed by the Islamic State's presence while maintaining its autonomy. By finding a balance between customer loyalty and compliance with United States law, the private sector will be able to fulfill its obligations to private companies while assisting the United States federal government in the fight against the Islamic State.

The United States government, the American private sector, and American community engagement programs are instrumental in stopping the threat of the Islamic State online. By combining their resources these three groups will be able to reduce the flow of Americans to the Islamic State and will prevent any further lone-actor attacks on the United States. Should the aforementioned actors adjust their response to this problem, the threat of the Islamic State to the United States and to the world will be greatly reduced.

## History and Current Status

The Islamic State is a militant group that has controlled territory in Iraq and Eastern Syria since 2014, when the group split from Al Qaeda.<sup>6</sup> The Islamic State is also recognized as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and Daesh. The authors of this policy document, however, will be referring to the group as the Islamic State in order to recognize the group as an international threat, unbounded by its physical territory in Iraq and Syria. Early after its founding, the Islamic State's fight was primarily against the Assad regime as the group attempted to expand its territory in Syria in the hopes of establishing a caliphate governed by their interpretation of Islam.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation consists of a medieval application of *sharia* (Islamic law); the examples of the Islamic State cutting off hands for petty theft, decapitating prisoners, and preparing for Judgment Day all uphold this assertion.<sup>8</sup> As the Islamic State's ultimate goal is to extend the influence of its caliphate to all Muslims, the group is not only a threat to the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region but to the international community at large.<sup>9</sup> In addition to recruiting foreign nationals to their cause in the region,<sup>10</sup> the Islamic State has urged Muslims "everywhere" to carry out attacks against the Western infidels.<sup>11</sup> The Islamic State uses social media in a way unrivaled by its predecessor, Al Qaeda, for two reasons: to recruit people to join their cause in the Middle East,<sup>12</sup> and to incite attacks in other countries.<sup>13</sup>

There are two major groups who are vulnerable to the Islamic State's social media recruiting tactics. The first group is made of social media users in the MENA region who, according to the Global Terrorism Index, are most often drawn to the Islamic State's message of stability because their own countries have been disrupted by regional instability. The other group is made of social media users in the Western world.<sup>14</sup> This policy document, however, will be focusing on the latter of the two, due to the increasing relevance of Western recruits to national security. The Americans who are most susceptible to the Islamic State's message are those who have been ostracized by their communities, many of them young Muslims or recent converts to the faith.<sup>15,16</sup> This isolation is

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<sup>6</sup> Zachary Laub and Jonathan Masters, "The Islamic State," *The Council on Foreign Relations*, last modified March 22, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811>.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer R. Williams, "We Were Wrong About ISIS," *The Brookings Institute*, last modified December 2, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/12/02-we-were-wrong-about-isis-williams>.

<sup>8</sup> Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, last modified March 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Peter Bergen, Courtney Schuster, and David Sterman, "ISIS in the West: The New Faces of Extremism," *International Security and New America*, last modified November 2015, <https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/11813-isis-in-the-west-2/ISP-ISIS-In-The-West-Final-Nov-16-Final.66241afa9ddd4ea2be7afba9ec0a69e0.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel L. Byman, "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different targets," *The Brookings Institute*, last modified April 29, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "Global Terrorism Index," *Institute for Economics & Peace*, last modified 2015, 7, <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Bergen, Schuster, and Sterman, "ISIS in the West: The New Faces of Extremism," 6, <https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/11813-isis-in-the-west-2/ISP-ISIS-In-The-West-Final-Nov-16-Final.66241afa9ddd4ea2be7afba9ec0a69e0.pdf>.

heightened by Islamophobia, defined as the “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”<sup>17</sup> For victims of Islamophobia, the Islamic State offers a community and fulfills the “human desire for identity, certainty, social connection, [and] meaning.”<sup>18</sup> In this way, the group is able to draw in these “lonely young Westerners” by using social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Facebook, and Google.<sup>19</sup> Islamic State operatives use these platforms to reach out to ostracized youth, not initially revealing their link to the Islamic State.<sup>20</sup> They feign interest in potential recruits’ lives and offer support, eventually explaining the appeal of the Islamic State.<sup>21</sup> The use of aforementioned social media sites is the key first step in recruitment, which is then followed by personal connection and communication between operatives and potential recruits.<sup>22</sup>

Not only does the Islamic State provide a much-needed community for these isolated Westerners, it also comes with benefits. The use of photo-sharing on social media platforms by Islamic State operatives, specifically by youth members, contributes to this glamorized perception of the Islamic State.<sup>23</sup> *Mujahideen* (the plural form of *mujahid*, an Arabic word meaning “someone who practices *jihad*”) are shown in luxurious homes with gaming systems, American junk food, and Internet connection. Operatives of the Islamic State post photos holding Syrian toddlers alongside photos of themselves in the traditional “warrior pose” with weapons beside them.<sup>24</sup> The Islamic State’s propaganda often focuses heavily on the glamour of a greater Muslim community, and this message can be alluring to those who feel isolated by Western society.<sup>25</sup> Vulnerable recruits find a sense of kinship with young operatives who propagate the idea that life in the Islamic State is ultimately more accepting and more fulfilling than life as a Muslim in the West, where they believe they are unable to express their religion without fear of discrimination.<sup>26</sup>

Some, like founder and Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic Relations Nihad Awad, argue that the Islamic State does not represent Islamic ideas,<sup>27</sup> although recruits<sup>28</sup> and the

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<sup>16</sup> Rachel Briggs Obe and Tanya Silverman, “Western Foreign Fighters: Innovations in Responding to the Threat,” *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, last modified 2014, [http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ISDJ2784\\_Western\\_foreign\\_fighters\\_V7\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ISDJ2784_Western_foreign_fighters_V7_WEB.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Gordon Conway, comp., “Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All,” Runnymede Trust, last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Harold J. Bursztajn, Jihye Choi, Omar Sultan Haque, Tim Phillips, “Why Are Young Westerners Drawn to Terrorist Organizations Like the Islamic State,” *Psychiatric Times*, September 10, 2015, <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/trauma-and-violence/why-are-young-westerners-drawn-terrorist-organizations-isis>.

<sup>19</sup> Bahaa El-Taweal, interview by the author, Washington, D.C., United States, April 19, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Joan S. Picart, “Jihad Cool/Jihad Chic”: The Roles of the Internet and Imagined Relations in the Self-Radicalization of Colleen LaRose (Jihad Jane),” *Societies* 5, 363-364, last modified April 22, 2015, <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/5/2/354/htm>.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 363-364, <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/5/2/354/htm>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 364, <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/5/2/354/htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Sarah Lyons-Padilla et al., “Belonging Nowhere: Marginalization and Radicalization Risk among Muslim Immigrants,” *Behavioral Science and Policy* 1, no. 2, 5, last modified December 2015, [http://gelfand.umd.edu/papers/BSP\\_2\\_Lyons\\_2p%20\(002\).pdf](http://gelfand.umd.edu/papers/BSP_2_Lyons_2p%20(002).pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Nihad Awad, “ISIS Is Not Just Un-Islamic, It Is Anti-Islamic,” *TIME*, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://time.com/3273873/stop-isis-islam/>.

group itself cite religious reasoning for radical jihad.<sup>29</sup> In the Islamic State's feature film *The Flames of War*, Commander Abu Asumah Al-Maghrib, a Moroccan *mujahid*,<sup>30</sup> is shown reciting the Qu'ran, quoting, "What is the matter with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth... If you do not go forth, He will punish you with a painful punishment."<sup>31</sup> This policy document will not be arguing for or against the religious authority of this movement; rather, this document seeks to understand how the recruits see themselves and the Islamic State in order to address their susceptibility to its message.

The Islamic State has historically been motivated by a number of things, including resistance to the Assad regime and a post-colonial struggle against the modern nation state.<sup>32</sup> While unlike its predecessor Al Qaeda in that it was never explicitly anti-Western in its intent, the Islamic State is adverse to Westerners who get involved in the group's territory in the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> This anti-Western-intervention sentiment was further aggravated when President Obama authorized coalition airstrikes against the Islamic State on August 7, 2014.<sup>34</sup> Since then, the Islamic State's threat to the West and, more specifically, to the U.S., has intensified. In September of 2015, Deputy Attorney General John Carlin estimated that 250 Americans had gone to fight for the Islamic State, which is more than double the total number of Americans who left in 2014.<sup>35</sup> CNN reports that out of all the Americans going to join the Islamic State's fight in the MENA region, "around nine out of 10... are active in online jihadist circles."<sup>36</sup> But Americans and other Westerners being recruited online to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria are not the only problem; with land losses of up to 14% in 2015, the Islamic State's tactic has been shifting from the establishment of a caliphate in the Middle East to the incitement of lone-actor attacks on soft targets in the U.S. and Europe.<sup>37</sup> Thus, in this policy paper, the term "recruit" can mean one of two things – someone who is solicited through the Islamic State's use of social media to go to Syria or Iraq and fight there in the efforts of establishing an Islamic caliphate, or someone who is inspired by the Islamic State's presence on social media

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<sup>28</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS and the Lonely Young American," *The New York Times*, last modified June 27, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?_r=0).

<sup>29</sup> "A Mujahid Guide" *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/863.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> "ISIL Gives Video Eulogy for Moroccan Commander Killed by al-Nusra Front," SITE Intelligence Group, last modified April 9, 2014, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/isil-gives-video-eulogy-for-moroccan-commander-killed-by-al-nusra-front.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "The Flames of War," *Al-Hayat Media Center*, last modified 2014, <https://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/isis-releases-flames-war-feature-film-intimidate-west>.

<sup>32</sup> Byman, "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS," <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "Operation IMPACT," *National Defense and the Canadian Armed Forces*, last modified April 11, 2016, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad-current/op-impact.page>.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Dienst, "Number of Americans Trying to Join ISIS Doubles in a Year: Department of Justice," *NBC New York*, last modified September 29, 2015, <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Americans-ISIS-Double-in-Year-Terror-Recruiting-Concerns-Justice-Department-330005201.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Bergen, Courtney Schuster, and David Sterman, "How ISIS Threatens the West," *CNN*, last modified November 16, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/14/opinions/bergen-paris-attacks/>.

<sup>37</sup> Pamela Engel, "This map shows how much territory ISIS has lost this year," *Business Insider*, last modified December 21, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/map-how-much-territory-isis-lost-2015-12>.

platforms to commit acts of terror in any country. An individual of the second group does not necessarily have to be an active affiliate of the Islamic State, hence the label “lone-actor.”<sup>38</sup>

On December 2, 2015, a married couple from San Bernardino, California, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State via Facebook and went on a shooting rampage, killing 14.<sup>39</sup> This attack proved that not only was the Islamic State capable of recruiting Americans to join their cause in the MENA region, but also that the group’s social media sites had the ability to inspire lone actors to attack the United States. It only takes one recruit to the Islamic State or one lone actor inspired by the group’s usage of social media to threaten the security of the United States.<sup>40</sup> Our goal in this policy document is to outline strategies for the prevention of any further social media-inspired attacks against the U.S., as well as to stop the flow of Americans going to join the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria, or any of their affiliated provinces.

Although the Islamic State is not the first terrorist group to use social media to its advantage, it has been able to develop roles on Twitter, Google, and Facebook that recruit members and scare adversaries through propaganda.<sup>41</sup> Of these platforms, the Islamic State has had the most success with recruiting via Twitter, as evidenced by the fact that the Islamic State has accrued over 46,000 supporter accounts.<sup>42</sup> The most active of these users have been labeled as *mujabideen*. These users are at the center of the Islamic State’s social media presence as they are able to post large amounts of information in condensed periods of time, directing users’ attention to the Islamic State by flooding Twitter accounts with specific hashtags.<sup>43</sup> Hashtags are easily accessed by anyone looking to find the Islamic State online.<sup>44</sup>

To combat the Islamic State’s use of social media as a powerful recruiting tactic, the problem must be addressed with several different focuses. These include but are not limited to: community engagement programs, the State Department, the intelligence community, the Justice Department, and the private sector.

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<sup>38</sup> Lorien Chaplais, Clare Ellis, and Raffaello Pantucci, “Lone-Actor Terrorism,” *Stephen Austin and Sons*, last modified 2015, 3, [http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Literature_Review.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Tom Giratikanon, Derek Watkins, and Karen Yourish, “Where ISIS Has Directed and Inspired Attacks Around the World,” *The New York Times*, last modified March 22, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/17/world/middleeast/map-isis-attacks-around-the-world.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/17/world/middleeast/map-isis-attacks-around-the-world.html?_r=0).

<sup>40</sup> El-Taweal, interview by the author.

<sup>41</sup> J. M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, “The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter,” *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, last modified March 2015, 38, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> El-Taweal, interview by the author.



## Community Engagement

Communities, both religious and nonreligious, have a significant role in working to address the Islamic State's use of Internet for recruitment. This section of the document attempts to address the root causes of this problem through initiatives that work to support the integration and inclusion of Muslims into American society and to decrease Islamophobia. This proactive strategy aims to keep vulnerable populations from turning to the Internet and receiving warped information about Islam in the first place, thus cutting off the ability to inadvertently find Islamic State recruiters. Through this method, the Islamic State's sphere of influence will be limited logistically.

### Interfaith Initiatives

53% of Americans say they have an unfavorable view of Islam, but many Americans (47%) do not personally know any Muslims, and are twice as likely to self-report having prejudice toward Muslim.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, those who do not think that Islam and Christianity have similar roots are five times more likely to self-report prejudice toward Muslims.<sup>46</sup> These statistics make evident a lack of knowledge about even the basics of Islam. Ignorance frequently breeds bias which, combined with a lack of interfaith communication, leads to Islamophobia. Thus, there is an urgent need for a form of open dialogue, specifically one which utilizes the "contact hypothesis" proposed by Gordon W. Allport.<sup>47</sup> The hypothesis, which was updated by Thomas Pettigrew in 1998, emphasizes the significance of cross-group relationships in reducing prejudices about individuals and biases against whole groups.<sup>48</sup> A study completed by Pettigrew and Linda Tropp in 2000, including 204 studies involving 90,000 participants from 25 different countries, heavily supported the effectiveness of the contact hypothesis; 94% of the time, prejudice decreased as cross-group interaction increased.<sup>49</sup> This extremely significant theory shows that a productive method for fighting Islamophobia is through interfaith initiatives.

The Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) shares the same beliefs about the power of interfaith interaction. This organization travels to different colleges advocating for interfaith relationships, and backing it up with resources and facts. They attempt to shape students into leaders who can dismantle religious prejudice to unite their respective communities.<sup>50</sup> Six hundred eighty-eight campuses thus far use the resources of the Interfaith Youth Core to work and achieve this goal.<sup>51</sup> There is an opportunity to increase the Interfaith Youth Core's effectiveness by extending their outreach to more universities.

However, IFYC does not actually have permanent chapters at any college campus. In order for interfaith messages to be efficiently spread, there needs to be a universal interfaith club on college

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<sup>45</sup> Dalia Mogahed, *Religious Perceptions in America*, Gallup, 2009, [http://www.clubmadrid.org/img/secciones/SSP\\_MWF\\_WorldReligion\\_Report\\_en-US\\_final.pdf](http://www.clubmadrid.org/img/secciones/SSP_MWF_WorldReligion_Report_en-US_final.pdf), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Jim A. C. Everett, "Intergroup Contact Theory: Past, Present, and Future," *The Inquisitive Mind*, no. 17 (2013), <http://www.jimaceverett.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Everett-2013-Intergroup-Contact.pdf>, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 90, No. 5, [http://www.iacp.org/sites/default/files/pettigrew\\_tropp\\_2006\\_contact\\_theory\\_0.pdf](http://www.iacp.org/sites/default/files/pettigrew_tropp_2006_contact_theory_0.pdf), 757.

<sup>50</sup> "About the Movement," Interfaith Youth Core, <https://www.ifyc.org/about>.

<sup>51</sup> Eboo Patel and Alan Solow, "Interfaith Youth Core: 2014 Annual Report," *Interfaith Youth Core*, 7, <https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/audit/FY14%20IFYC%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

campuses that can implement these practices, hold events and conversations, and spread awareness throughout communities.

## Advocacy

Many Muslims who have been ostracized from society and face Islamophobia feel as though they lack public support from non-Muslims. Although there are advocacy groups for Muslims, the majority of these organizations are headed by Muslims themselves. Washington-based journalist Bahaa El-Taweal, when speaking specifically about the Council on American Islamic Relations, or CAIR, pointed out that the majority of their staff is Muslim.<sup>52</sup> He stressed the importance of non-Muslims providing support for the Muslim community, because “a Muslim doesn’t just need to feel like their community is helping them, they need to feel like their country is helping them.”<sup>53</sup> Groups not affected by Islamophobia need to work with those directly impacted to order to rectify the problem.

HeForShe, a successful and prominent international advocacy program for gender equality, sets an example of a successful advocacy campaign. The campaign uses actress and activist Emma Watson as a spokesperson for the organization, which has garnered a huge amount of support for the campaign. Since her speech at the United Nations Headquarters, the HeForShe movement has grown to include more than 700,000 commitments.<sup>54</sup> The website itself readily presents users with an option to become an ally and pledge to support gender equality.<sup>55</sup> Most importantly, the campaign reveals the effectiveness of a united movement, in this case with both men and women, fighting against gender inequality.

A movement similar to HeForShe would be helpful in combating Islamophobia if it followed a similar trajectory. Users will immediately encounter an option that allows them to pledge support and become an ally for Muslims. Following this, as HeForShe has successfully done, allies are provided with different kits that give information about how to fight prejudice. A succinct hashtag that embodies the program’s purpose should be spread by Muslim and non-Muslim spokespeople alike. Currently, there are many major Muslim organizations that are fostering an online presence to spread their messages. There is potential for CAIR, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) to assist in this movement. These organizations already work to provide support for the Muslim community and remove Islamophobia through resources such as webinars hosted by the ISNA.<sup>56</sup> The MPAC speaks out against hate speech in campaigning and creates partnerships with politicians, such as Hillary Clinton, to promote fair dialogue about Muslims in America.<sup>57</sup> CAIR spearheads advocacy in the United States and are now in their second year of major lobbying push with a national advocacy campaign.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, each of these organizations has around 100,000 likes on Facebook, which shows the breadth of their

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<sup>52</sup> Bahaa El-Taweal, interview by the author.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Stand Together,” HeForShe, UN Women, last modified April 20, 2016, <http://www.heforshe.org>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> “Webinars,” *Isna: Islamic Society of North America*, last modified February 8, 2015, <http://www.isna.net/webinars.html>.

<sup>57</sup> “MPAC President Speaks at Roundtable with Hillary Clinton,” *Muslim Public Affairs Council*, last modified March 25, 2016, <http://www.mpac.org/policy-analysis/mpac-president-discusses-partnership-with-hillary-clinton.php>.

<sup>58</sup> “Hundreds of Muslim Delegates Lobby Congress on 'Record-Breaking' National Advocacy Day,” *Council on American-Islamic Relations*, last modified April 19 2016, <http://www.cair.com/press-center/press-releases/13490-hundreds-of-muslim-delegates-lobby-congress-on-record-breaking-national-advocacy-day.html>.

existing connections.<sup>59,60,61</sup> By coming together and spearheading this larger campaign, each organization's smaller audience would be combined and their current initiatives will be unified to have a greater impact with a wider-spread outreach.

In addition to partnering with Muslim advocacy organizations, there are also pre-existing organizations with no religious affiliations that would support an advocacy program, such as the United States Institute of Peace. By gaining USIP's support, the advocacy program would not be run solely by Muslims and Muslim groups, giving it an ability to gain non-Muslim support, which is necessary for a cohesive solution.

## National Open Mosque Day

According to a survey conducted in 2011 by Ihsan Bagby, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Kentucky, there are 2,106 mosques in the United States.<sup>62</sup> The large majority of the representatives of these mosques report that their mosques are "spiritually alive and vital, their members are excited about the future, and [that] they have a clear mission."<sup>63</sup> Additionally, the study states that, on average, a mosque in America has 125 regular participants, although some mosques report having numbers up to 5,300.<sup>64</sup> These statistics show that mosques continue to be at the center of Islamic life and could be utilized as agents to combat Islamophobia.

In Australia, the Lebanese Muslim Association has made use of mosques as centers of education by sponsoring an annual "National Mosque Open Day," where a mosque in each state is open for public visit. This initiative has been active since 2014 and has provided, "an engaging opportunity for discussion and education between Muslims and non-Muslims."<sup>65</sup> Similar events have been organized in the United Kingdom and France under the respective titles, "Visit My Mosque Day" and "A Brotherly Cup of Tea," but there is no such national initiative in the United States.<sup>66, 67</sup> This December, the US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), announced their "One America" campaign, which includes the implementation of a National Open Mosque Day, but doesn't officially establish a date for the event. The event could be expanded beyond USCMO and be supported by other groups, like the Interfaith Youth Core, in an effort to make Open Mosque Day a successful and widely known national event.

Open Mosque Days are effective because they raise awareness about Islam as a peaceful, approachable religion, make people aware of the Muslim communities within their areas, and put

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<sup>59</sup> "Council for American-Islamic Relations," Facebook, last modified April 19, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/CAIRNational/>.

<sup>60</sup> "Islamic Society of North America," Facebook, last modified April 19, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/isnahq/>.

<sup>61</sup> "Muslim Public Affairs Council," Facebook, last modified April 19, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/mpacnational/>.

<sup>62</sup> Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl, and Byran T. Froehle, "The Mosque in America: A National Portrait," *Council on American-Islamic Relations*, last modified April 26, 2001, <https://www.cair.com/images/pdf/The-American-mosque-2001.pdf>, 2.

<sup>63</sup> "National Mosque Open Day," *Lebanese Muslim Association*, October 31, 2015, <http://www.lma.org.au/national-mosque-open-day>.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> "Mosques across UK open doors to public," *BBC*, last modified February 7, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35514840>.

<sup>67</sup> "Hundreds of French mosques open their doors to the public," *The National*, last modified January 9, 2016, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/hundreds-of-french-mosques-open-their-doors-to-the-public>.

people of different religious backgrounds in contact with each other. These outcomes all actively combat Islamophobia and thus, in the long run, break down the “us versus them” mentality that often leads young Muslims to feel isolated and turn to outside sources, such as the Islamic State.

## **Recommendations**

- We recommend that the Interfaith Youth Core create chapters on college campuses that function as full time clubs and connect with the community, especially schools.
- We recommend the creation of the #IStandWithMuslims campaign on any social media platform in which all people, Muslim or not, can pledge commitment to fighting Islamophobia and prejudice toward Muslims. This platform will draw support from pre-existing organizations such as CAIR, ISNA, MPAC, and USIP.
- We recommend the creation of a National Open Mosque Day, in which mosques and other Islamic community centers open their doors and allow the public to learn about Islam and discuss interfaith cooperation.

## State Department

As previously examined, the Islamic State poses a real and imminent threat to the United States. Therefore it is an important issue for the U.S. State Department. Through online recruitment and propaganda, the Islamic State targets young Muslims, both in America and internationally, to join the group and commit acts of terror such as lone-actor attacks. According to an article published by the Brookings Doha Center, “From 2013 onwards, [the Islamic State]’s unrivaled information operations and exploitation of social media brought a renewed energy toward its cause of controlling territory and establishing an Islamic state.”<sup>68</sup> Currently, the Islamic State’s effective use of social media increases recruits from the West and furthers the problem of lone-actor attacks.

The Islamic State’s propaganda often paints the terrorist organization’s goal of a global caliphate in a positive light, promising “a triumphant, model society that offers community to all who desire it, and destruction to those who don’t.”<sup>69</sup> Divisions of the State Department have used social media platforms, especially Twitter (e.g. @TheGEC<sup>70</sup> and @ThinkAgain\_DOS<sup>71</sup>), to share information about international counterterrorism efforts.

### State Department Counterterrorism Social Media Campaign

On September 9, 2011, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13584, which authorized the creation of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC).<sup>72</sup> This organization is guided by the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, issued by the Obama Administration in June 2011, that addressed challenges and successes faced by the United States as Al-Qaeda waned in power and its affiliates adopted new methods of conducting terrorist activity.<sup>73</sup> In early 2015, the State Department directed the CSCC to expand its efforts toward promoting a social media-based counter narrative against the Islamic State.<sup>74</sup> By mid-2015, Richard A. Stengel, the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, described the campaign as a failure in its original goals.<sup>75</sup> External parties criticized the campaign for the nature of its authors, rhetoric, and audience.<sup>76</sup> In January of 2016, the State Department refigured the CSCC into the Global Engagement Center (GEC), which maintained a similar mission and approach to the issue of the Islamic State on social media.<sup>77</sup> The GEC should begin to pursue employees who are closer to

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<sup>68</sup> Charles Lister, “Profiling the Islamic State,” *Foreign Policy at Brookings Doha Center*, last modified November 2014, [http://somalianation.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/en\\_web\\_listner.pdf](http://somalianation.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/en_web_listner.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> Jordan Bach-Lombardo and Charlie Winter, “Why ISIS Propaganda Works,” *The Atlantic*, last modified February 13, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/02/isis-propaganda-war/462702/>.

<sup>70</sup> The Global Engagement Center, “@TheGEC,” Twitter, last modified April 20, 2016, <https://twitter.com/TheGEC>.

<sup>71</sup> The Global Engagement Center, “@ThinkAgain\_DOS,” Twitter, last modified March 23, 2016, [https://twitter.com/ThinkAgain\\_DOS](https://twitter.com/ThinkAgain_DOS).

<sup>72</sup> Barack Obama, Exec. Order No. 13584, 3 C.F.R. 3 (2011).

<sup>73</sup> The White House, “National Strategy for Counterterrorism,” last modified June 29, 2011, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf).

<sup>74</sup> Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Intensifies Effort to Blunt ISIS,” *The New York Times*, last modified February 16, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/middleeast/us-intensifies-effort-to-blunt-isis-message.html?emc=eta1>.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Stengel, “(SBU) Paris Visit,” U.S. Department of State, last modified June 9, 2015, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2101556/diplo.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup> Alex Altman, “Barack Obama’s Social Media Flame War Against ISIS,” *Academic Search Complete*, September 10, 2014, EBSCOhost.

<sup>77</sup> Office of the Spokesperson, “A New Center for Global Engagement,” U. S. Department of State, last modified January 8, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251066.html>.

the age of its audience and continue to employ those who are experts in the field of counterterrorism communications. The GEC's social media campaign should expand its rhetoric to not only include "narratives around thematic campaigns on the misdeeds of our enemy," but also to include hopeful, positive messages to those vulnerable to the Islamic State's recruitment.<sup>78</sup> Both of these strategies will result in the GEC's social media campaign connecting more closely with its audience.

## State Department's Employment in Social Media/Communications

The State Department will benefit from a diversification of its employees and interns to present not only a wider variety of views, but to obtain a more nuanced knowledge of certain fields (e.g., the Internet) which the Islamic State exploits. Currently, the State Department has over 11,000 employees working in the Civil Service section of the Department, focused on carrying out the Department's mission statement.<sup>79</sup> By adding a new task force focusing on Internet counterterrorism, the State Department would diversify the backgrounds of its employees working on the issue, giving the State Department more Internet and social media fluency, as well as different areas of expertise. As for social media fluency, the ages of 14-15 are the height of Internet literacy, due largely to a technological normalization for younger generations.<sup>80</sup> Although new employees wouldn't be quite that young, employing younger task experts would rectify an issue seen in previous social media campaigns: miscommunication and misunderstanding between those in the State Department and social media consumers with a difference of worldview. Similar programs, such as the "Peer 2 Peer: Challenging Extremism" program, already exist at 23 universities around the world.<sup>81</sup> Already, bright young students pursue this program in efforts to create social media campaigns to rival those of the Islamic State.<sup>82</sup> By bolstering a peer-run social media campaign directly addressing the same audience the Islamic State is trying to recruit (that is, young people isolated by mainstream society, usually because of their religion), the State Department's campaign would most effectively combat the susceptibility of the Islamic State's current recruitment base.<sup>83</sup> Currently, State Department internships do not focus on communications or Middle Eastern relations.<sup>84</sup> Through improved avenues of communication, the State Department can adapt their media campaigns to appeal to at-risk audiences and increase online presence. Through the lens of Middle Eastern relations, the State Department can fully understand and address the international ramifications and roots of the appeal to Americans of joining the Islamic State to more fully address concerns and questions surrounding the terrorist organization. Thus, the program will increase expertise, personal engagement, and accessibility to relevant information.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> U. S. Department of State, "What We Do: Mission," <http://careers.state.gov/learn/what-we-do/mission>.

<sup>80</sup> Juliette Garside, "Ofcom: six-year-olds understand digital technology better than adults," *The Guardian*, last modified August 6, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/aug/07/ofcom-children-digital-technology-better-than-adults>.

<sup>81</sup> Dina Temple-Raston, "White House Invites Millennials To Thwart ISIS' Recruitment Efforts," *National Public Radio*, last modified June 5, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/06/05/412177020/white-house-invites-millennials-to-thwart-isis-recruitment-efforts>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Alessandria Masi, "ISIS Recruiting Westerners: How the 'Islamic State' Goes After Non-Muslims and Recent Converts in the West," *International Business Times*, last modified September 8, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-recruiting-westerners-how-islamic-state-goes-after-non-muslims-recent-converts-west-1680076>.

<sup>84</sup> U. S. Department of State, "Intern: Which Program is Right For You?," last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://careers.state.gov/intern/which-program-is-right-for-you>.

## Middle East and North Africa

Creating a social media presence in the United States is not the end of a solution; there is a need to stop the root of the problem. That root lies in the Middle East and North Africa, where the Islamic State is primarily based (specifically, Syria and Iraq).<sup>85</sup>

Internet access in these countries provides both an opportunity and a threat for United States national security. As a result, the State Department has a role in addressing the social media threat and effects of the Islamic State. Approximately 32.66 out of 100 people in developing countries in the MENA have access to the Internet,<sup>86</sup> just below the world average of 40.69.<sup>87</sup> The Islamic State has approximately 46,000 Twitter supporter accounts associated with it.<sup>88</sup> Of these accounts with publicly shared locations, 866 are based in Saudi Arabia, 507 in Syria, and 453 in Iraq, demonstrating that there is a sizeable online presence within the Middle East itself.<sup>89</sup> The United States can use its relations with certain countries in the Middle East, including Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Bahrain, and Oman, to work with governments to generate their own public media campaigns.<sup>90</sup> In this effort, Jordan is a particularly strong ally, given its location bordering both Syria and Iraq, both partly under the Islamic State's control.<sup>91</sup> We also recognize that the United States has a long-standing history of relations with the country, and that Jordan is a partner in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>92</sup>

Through the use of internal and external strategic solutions, the State Department creates a compelling message that has the ability to circulate and have an impact on many people through clear media campaigns on the Internet. There must be expert advice and accurate information to answer questions about the Islamic State and its acts of terror.

### Recommendations

- The State Department should expand its internship programs in order to attract a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, as well as to expose interns to careers in counterterrorism.
- The State Department should refigure the social media presence of its Global Engagement Center in terms of its authors, rhetoric, and audience.
- The State Department should work with governments within the MENA, particularly Jordan, to allow them to create public media campaigns and further address the problems of discontent in these affected countries while combatting "Islam vs. the West" rhetoric.

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<sup>85</sup> The White House, "ISIL STRATEGY," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/isil-strategy>.

<sup>86</sup> The World Bank, "Internet Users (per 100 people) in the Middle East and North Africa Data," <http://beta.data.worldbank.org/?indicators=IT.NET.USER.P2&locations=XQ&year=2014>.

<sup>87</sup> The World Bank, "Internet Users (per 100 people) in the World," <http://beta.data.worldbank.org/?indicators=IT.NET.USER.P2&locations=1W&year=2014>.

<sup>88</sup> Berger and Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter," 4, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>90</sup> Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Middle East/North Africa (MENA)," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/europe-middle-east/middle-east/north-africa>.

<sup>91</sup> "Islamic State group: Crisis in seven charts," *British Broadcasting Company*, last modified March 30, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

<sup>92</sup> U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations With Jordan," last modified July 3, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3464.htm>.

# Intelligence Community

In the United States Government the Intelligence Community, specifically the FBI and CIA, is charged with combatting terrorism on American soil through espionage, surveillance, and other preemptive measures. The Intelligence Community sees the increase of the Islamic State's online presence and online recruitment of Americans as a serious issue to the health and safety of the American people. However, there are numerous effective means of combating this growing threat to the United States that the CIA and FBI have both used or may use in the potential future.

## Communication with the Private Sector

In an interview with CNN in February 2015, the head of the FBI's counterterrorism division, Michael Steinbach, expressed his concern over the Islamic State's ability to lure young Americans into their organization.<sup>93</sup> Although he claimed that "The FBI is working around the clock to combat the recruitment of Americans," he also admitted that it was a challenge to try to combat these new social media tactics while maintaining the privacy afforded to every American citizen.<sup>94</sup>

There have been many recent clashes between intelligence agencies and private sector companies in relation to "encrypted communications and lawmakers' social media monitoring."<sup>95</sup> The recent legal battle between Apple and the FBI over the unlocking of the phone owned by a shooter in the San Bernardino massacre exemplifies the tension present between the FBI and the private sector.<sup>96</sup> Because the Islamic State almost exclusively uses social media sites to propagate its message, especially Twitter, cooperation between the private sector companies (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, and Google) and the Intelligence Community (e.g. FBI and CIA) will be key in fighting this specific form of terrorism. We are aware that the FBI already works with the private sector on some monitoring efforts which sets the stage for increased collaboration.<sup>97</sup> A study regarding the Islamic State's use of Twitter revealed that "there is clear intelligence value to be extracted from the ISIS accounts... Although the volume of material created challenges in approaching this material systematically, the data analysis provided a number of clear insights."<sup>98</sup> Cooperation between the FBI and Twitter in monitoring efforts could dramatically increase the effectiveness of tracking and limiting the Islamic State.

Twitter has been expanding its team of people who review suspicious user activity, saying in a statement released in February 2016 that they have "teams of specialists in the U.S. and Ireland that scour accounts, looking for those linked to extremist groups or just spewing 140-character calls to

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<sup>93</sup> Pamela Brown and Wesley Bruer, "FBI Official: ISIS Is Recruiting U.S. Teens," *CNN*, last modified February 4, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/03/politics/fbi-isis-counterterrorism-michael-steinbach/>.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Sara Sorcher, "Exclusive: How US Government Wants Silicon Valley Tech Leaders to Fight ISIS," *The Christian Science Monitor*, last modified January 8, 2016, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Passcode/2016/0108/Exclusive-How-US-government-wants-Silicon-Valley-tech-leaders-to-fight-ISIS>.

<sup>96</sup> "Breaking Down Apple's iPhone Fight With the U.S. Government." *New York Times*, last modified March 21, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/03/politics/fbi-isis-counterterrorism-michael-steinbach/>.

<sup>97</sup> FBI agent, telephone interview by author, Washington, D.C., United States, April 20, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Javier Lesaca, "Fight against ISIS Reveals Power of Social Media," *The Brookings Institution*, last modified November 19, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/techtank/posts/2015/11/19-isis-social-media-power-lesaca>.



violence.”<sup>99</sup> Federal Intelligence Agencies are also monitoring groups extensively on the Web: 1,271 government organizations are working on counterterrorism, homeland security, and intelligence.<sup>100</sup> We believe that due to the FBI’s extensive ability to monitor accounts that once Twitter flags an account as problematic, instead of taking down account on its own or in conjunction with the American Intelligence Community, it should turn monitoring efforts over to the US Government. The Intelligence Community can monitor everyone on the Internet; according to the Patriot Act, monitoring would commence following a continued series of suspicious terror related activities. Under the Patriot Act such potential or actual act of terror could be but are not limited to sabotage and communications with known Islamic State social media accounts.

It is prudent for the United States Government to monitor the accounts of those who frequently visit and participate in the online activities of the Islamic State in the realm of recruiting and promoting terror. If the account flagged belongs to a private citizen of the United States, that citizen would be subject to increased scrutiny and monitoring of their online activities by the Federal Government for a period of up to 30 days. If that monitoring reveals that the persons in question serve a direct threat to the United States, then it shall be in the best interest of the United States Government and its citizens to continue monitoring those flagged citizens digital profiles, as well as increased surveillance. This increased monitoring would allow the FBI to continue the work they already do in using legal means and warrants to arrest those people who are putting out terroristic material.<sup>101</sup>

## Creation of a Software

The FBI and CIA should look into the possible creation and funding of a software that would drastically hinder the recruitment ability of the Islamic State. There are already numerous softwares easily accessible that allow users to buy fake likes, retweets, and followers, and we propose the creation of a new software that could imitate the “twitter-sphere” for larger accounts that support the Islamic State.<sup>102</sup> Once an account was transferred over to the software, the tweets and posts broadcasted from that account would no longer be seen by its followers. However, the account that supports the Islamic State would still be receiving fake likes, comments, and retweets: the work of the software. The account that supports the Islamic State would also retain the ability to be directly messaged or contacted if the interested party knew the exact name of the offending account. While we understand how difficult it will be to simulate the social media atmosphere, such as private communication, we believe the relatively large follower base of Islamic State accounts (1,004 followers/account) and the ability to still direct message some accounts would help mitigate these risks.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Samuel Lieberman, "Twitter to Isis: Delete Your Account," *New York Magazine*, last modified February 5, 2016, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/02/twitter-to-isis-delete-your-account.html>.

<sup>100</sup> Dana Priest and William M. Arkin, "A Hidden World, Growing beyond Control," *The Washington Post*, last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/articles/a-hidden-world-growing-beyond-control/>.

<sup>101</sup> FBI agent, telephone interview by author.

<sup>102</sup> Jim Dougherty, "How Fake Twitter Follower Bots Work," *Leaderswest*, last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://leaderswest.com/2012/08/07/how-fake-twitter-follower-bots-work/>.

<sup>103</sup> Berger and Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter," 9, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

The Islamic State uses Twitter more extensively than other forms of social media because Twitter is the easiest place for these accounts to put out material. Facebook is, according to Steve Stalinsky, the executive director of Middle East Media Research, “the leader and the best at removing content.”<sup>104</sup> This software would focus specifically on Twitter in order to address the larger need.

The creation of the software is necessary as a large concern of the private sector is shutting down the Twitter accounts that contain propaganda of the Islamic State. In the interest of monitoring threats present online, the American Intelligence would prefer these accounts to stay open. Between September and December of 2014, 1,000 accounts that supported the Islamic State were deleted; the most active accounts were those most likely to be deleted.<sup>105</sup> However, as mentioned above, the American Intelligence Community has much to gain from the active monitoring of accounts controlled by the Islamic State: “a significant number of accounts provided reliable GPS coordinates in ISIS territories.” In order to merge these two conflicting interests, we propose this software so that social media accounts would be able to abide by their policies of shutting down terrorism on their sites and while allowing federal intelligence agencies to still monitor accounts they believe to be useful. In terms of funding this software, the Intelligence Community already invests 188 million dollars into counterterrorism efforts, and we recommend some of this money be put towards this software.<sup>106</sup>

## Recommendations

- Have the FBI take over monitoring and flagging of accounts on social media from private companies in order to ensure that the monitoring is legal and effective.
- If the account monitored belongs to a private person, these accounts that are affiliated with the Islamic State (as the Intelligence Community has determined) will be subject to increased monitoring and possible arrest.
- If an account supporting the Islamic State’s online presence directly threatens the US, the account would be transferred to the software (see below).
- Creation of a software to simulate Twitter for accounts that are propagating terrorism of the Islamic State.

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<sup>104</sup> Julia Greenberg, "Why Facebook and Twitter Can't Just Wipe Out ISIS Online," *Wired*, last modified November 21, 2015. <http://www.wired.com/2015/11/facebook-and-twitter-face-tough-choices-as-isis-exploits-social-media/>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> "ISIS: Twitter Presence," Statista, last modified 2015. <http://www.statista.com/statistics/412435/isis-twitter-accounts-tweets/>.

# Department of Justice

The mission of the United States Department of Justice is “to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.”<sup>107</sup> For the purposes of this paper, we will be focusing on the Islamic State’s use of social media for recruitment and proliferation of threatening messages within the United States. In accordance with the mission of the United States Department of Justice, our recommendations will focus on legally expanding the U.S. Federal Government’s ability to monitor and prosecute American citizens in order “to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic.”<sup>108</sup> We believe that the rights of American citizens can be abridged by way of strict scrutiny. “Strict scrutiny is a form of judicial review that courts use to determine the constitutionality of certain laws. To pass strict scrutiny, the legislature must have passed the law to further a ‘compelling governmental interest,’ and must have narrowly tailored the law to achieve that interest.”<sup>109</sup> This section of the paper will utilize legal precedent and current laws to prove that such compelling governmental interest does exist.

## National Security Division (NSD) Task Force

The National Security Division (NSD) is an existing agency under the Department of Justice. The National Security Division’s stated mission “is to carry out the Department's highest priority: to combat terrorism and other threats to national security. The NSD's organizational structure is designed to ensure greater coordination and unity of purpose between prosecutors and law enforcement agencies, on the one hand, and intelligence attorneys and the Intelligence Community, on the other, thus strengthening the effectiveness of the federal government's national security efforts.”<sup>110</sup> Under the NSD, the Litigation Section “reviews and prepares requests for the Attorney General authorization to use FISA information in criminal and noncriminal proceedings. The section also drafts motions and briefs and responds to defense motions to disclose FISA applications and to suppress the fruits of FISA collection.”<sup>111</sup> By using the Internet, the Islamic State is exponentially increasing the pace at which terrorist acts are committed, recruiting is carried out, and propaganda is disseminated. Because the Islamic State’s use of social media for recruitment and propaganda presents a unique and present danger to the U.S. and its people, and because investigating and prosecuting terror-related online activity is unique legal territory, a task force specifically working to effectively counter this threat is necessary.

In order to effectively combat the terrorist group, a team that specializes in terror-related online activity needs to be created. The task force will work exclusively against the Islamic State’s use of the

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<sup>107</sup> “About DOJ,” last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.justice.gov/about>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> “Strict Scrutiny,” *Legal Information Institute*, last accessed April 20, 2016, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/strict\\_scrutiny](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/strict_scrutiny).

<sup>110</sup> “About the Division,” last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.justice.gov/nsd/about-division>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Internet by coordinating with the Office of the Attorney General by drafting legal briefs, issuing warrants and subpoenas, preparing requests for the Office of the Attorney General, and preparing motions. Members of the task force will be working exclusively on cases related to the Islamic State's use of the Internet so they will understand the law better than anyone else, making sure terrorists using social media and other websites are being investigated and prosecuted as efficiently as possible.

## Issuance of Subpoenas

In United States Code Title 18 Section 2331, terrorism is subdivided into two categories: international terrorism and domestic terrorism. Because the DoJ's jurisdiction is restricted to within the borders of the United States, the DoJ will only work with the definition of domestic terrorism. In United States Code Title 18 Section 2331, "the term "domestic terrorism" means activities that— (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended—(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States."<sup>112</sup>

When the Department of Justice discovers online activity suggesting involvement in acts of terror as defined above, an investigation into the account posting this material may begin. Accounts related to or associated with the original posting account may also be investigated.

Investigations of this nature include two search processes, physical and electronic. Because Internet companies are third-parties that have no relation to crimes being investigated or prosecuted, the DoJ is not able to seize and search their physical equipment (servers, drives, etc.). The DoJ can, however, issue subpoenas for relevant electronic information. ("It can send the warrant to the provider and have the provider send back the relevant information. Generally *United States v. Bach*, 310 F.3d 1063 (8th Cir. 2002) (approving such as procedure as constitutionally reasonable).")<sup>113</sup> Warrants are not necessary if in the Terms of Service, customers agree to give up their rights to reasonable privacy.<sup>114</sup> Twitter's Terms of Service says, "We also reserve the right to access, read, preserve, and disclose any information as we reasonably believe is necessary to (i) satisfy any applicable law, regulation, legal process or governmental request, (ii) enforce the Terms, including investigation of potential violations hereof, (iii) detect, prevent, or otherwise address fraud, security or technical issues, (iv) respond to user support requests, or (v) protect the rights, property or safety of Twitter, its users and the public."<sup>115</sup> All three Internet companies this paper focuses on (Facebook, Google, and Twitter) include variations on this clause in their Terms of Services, agreements all users must accept. Because all users agree to these terms, the DoJ need not issue warrants, and may instead subpoena third-party Internet companies for information relevant to terror-related investigations. Because the subpoena issuing procedure is less time-consuming than issuing a warrant, the

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<sup>112</sup>"18 U.S. Code § 2331 - Definitions," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2331>.

<sup>113</sup> Orin Kerr, "A remarkable new opinion on search warrants for online accounts - And why I think it's wrong," *The Washington Post*, last modified March 27, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/03/27/remarkable-new-opinion-on-online-accounts/>.

<sup>114</sup> "Searching and Seizing Computers and Obtaining Electronic Evidence in Criminal Investigations," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-ccips/legacy/2015/01/14/ssmanual2009.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> "Twitter Terms of Service," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en>.

prosecution and investigation processes may be expedited. As a result, threats can be further mitigated.

## Secrecy Orders Related to Monitoring

The Department of Justice may issue subpoenas with indefinite secrecy orders when the subject of the investigation is suspected of terrorist activities. More specifically, when issuing a subpoena the DoJ may obtain the consent of a judge for an indefinite non-disclosure order pursuant to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986.<sup>116</sup> For a non-disclosure agreement the DoJ needs to reasonably believe that alerting the subject of the inquiry to the subpoena would impede or harm the investigation.<sup>117</sup> However, there have been challenges, most recently by Microsoft, to the legality of non-disclosure agreements issued for electronic surveillance. Citing the 4th Amendment, these companies contend that subjects of electronic surveillance have a constitutional right to be notified of said monitoring.<sup>118</sup> The DoJ holds that sufficient laws and court precedents exist to support and continue requests for secrecy orders. The 4th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides for citizen's protections against unreasonable government intrusion.<sup>119</sup> The law states that "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated"<sup>120,121</sup> The Supreme Court Case *Katz V. United States*, and subsequent ruling, have established the idea of a "reasonable expectation of privacy". Today this is understood as protection from searches, seizures, or government investigation of any place or possession that the general public holds to be a private realm, without a warrant.<sup>122</sup> However the right to privacy exists only in so far as it relates to the government's search and seizure of citizen's private property. Citizens relinquish this right to privacy when they agree to social media companies' terms and conditions, which stipulate that any user generated content can be disclosed in response to a perceived threat or legitimate government request.<sup>123,124</sup> Though private citizens create the content of social media, they neither own the content nor have a reasonable expectation of privacy. In *Florida V. Riley*, a man growing marijuana in a greenhouse not in plain-view of the street, was observed to be growing said marijuana by an officer in a helicopter. Riley argued that information obtained by the police officer without a warrant for surveillance was unlawful and inadmissible as evidence. The Florida Supreme court held that there was no reasonable

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<sup>116</sup> Stephen Smith, "Gagged, Sealed, and Delivered: Reforming ECPA's Secret Docket," last accessed April 19, 2016, <http://harvardlpr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Gagged-Sealed-and-Delivered.pdf>.

<sup>117</sup> "Searching and Seizing Computers and Obtaining Electronic Evidence in Criminal Investigations," <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-ccips/legacy/2015/01/14/ssmanual2009.pdf>.

<sup>118</sup> Brad Smith, "Keeping secrecy the exception, not the rule: An issue for both consumers and businesses," last modified April 14, 2016, <http://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2016/04/14/keeping-secrecy-exception-not-rule-issue-consumers-businesses/#sm.000014ayr99rkkfk1tvo257y0tt2a>.

<sup>119</sup> Christopher Slobogin and Joseph E. Schumacher, "Reasonable Expectations of Privacy and Autonomy in Fourth Amendment Cases: An Empirical Look at 'Understandings Recognized and Permitted by Society,'" last accessed April 21, 2016, [http://www.jstor.org/stable/1372714?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1372714?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>120</sup> "Fourth Amendment," last accessed April 19, 2016, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/fourth\\_amendment](https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/fourth_amendment).

<sup>121</sup> "Bills of Rights," last accessed April 20, 2016, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html).

<sup>122</sup> "Expectation of Privacy," last accessed April 20, 2016, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/expectation\\_of\\_privacy](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/expectation_of_privacy).

<sup>123</sup> "Twitter Terms of Service," <https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en>.

<sup>124</sup> "In the Matter of the Search of Information Associated with [redacted] @mac.com that is Stored at Premises Controlled by Apple, Inc.," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2014/03/Facciola.pdf>.

expectation of privacy because Riley knew he was leaving his greenhouse exposed.<sup>125</sup> The same precedent applies in the case of social media content; a reasonable expectation of privacy does not exist because the users know, and acknowledge in the terms-and-conditions, that the material they produce is not entirely protected or private.

## **Recommendations**

- We recommend that when the Department of Justice requires access to social media accounts for the purpose of furthering an investigation into terrorist-related activity, the Department of Justice will issue subpoenas for relevant electronic evidence to third-party companies.
- We recommend that the Department of Justice produce a secrecy order when the department or the Intelligence Community monitors an individual's use of the Internet, specifically a person's use of social media. The production of a secrecy order does not allow private companies to disclose information to their users when the users are being monitored by the public sector.
- We recommend the creation of a taskforce under the National Security Division of the Department of Justice that is responsible for holding the Intelligence Community accountable for acting legally.

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<sup>125</sup> "Florida v. Riley," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/488/445/case.html>.

## The Private Sector

The Islamic State runs an aggressive online campaign that recruits new members and pushes pro-Islamic State propaganda. The Islamic State's main online target is Muslims in the West;<sup>126</sup> according to Nicholas Rasmussen, director of the National Counterterrorism Center. As of September 2015, 250 of these draftees are Americans.<sup>127</sup> Recruitment, however, is not the only threat posed by the Islamic State online; as the caliphate loses physical territory in the MENA region, the group has also turned towards inspiring lone-actors through social media to commit acts of terror in their own countries. The Islamic State uses the Internet to stage this campaign; private sector companies such as Google and various other social media websites, particularly Facebook and Twitter, are their main platform. While the United States government is working to battle terrorism, it has also called on the private sector for help on this new front – the Internet.<sup>128</sup> These private sector companies can play an active role in mitigating the influence the Islamic State has in the digital sphere.

### The Private Sector's Responsibility in the Internet War on the Islamic State

The collaboration of the private sector and the government will most effectively address the issue of online terrorist propaganda. As the Brookings Institute reported, “no single authority possesses the scope and power to fully address the challenges presented by the presence of ISIS and other similar groups on social media.”<sup>129</sup> The premier objective of the private sector is to provide goods and services in order to generate profit; the fight against the Islamic State has the potential to be an engine for economic growth.<sup>130</sup> If private sector companies develop effective ways to limit online terrorist recruitment and propaganda, social media will be safer and the public might be more inclined to use it. Limiting the Islamic State's presence on the Internet may also bolster a company's reputation with investors and users. Several companies have implemented similar tactics, including CVS. The pharmacy decided to stop selling cigarettes and tobacco products in 2014. The company has used this decision as a way to remarket the company as “CVS Health,” setting it apart<sup>131</sup> from other pharmacies such as Walgreens and Rite Aid that still sell cigarettes and tobacco products.<sup>132</sup> Social media companies could use anti-terrorist advancements to market themselves as safer and

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<sup>126</sup> Jamie Krawford and Laura Koran, “U.S. officials: Foreigners flock to fight for Islamic State,” *CNN*, last modified February 11, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/10/politics/isis-foreign-fighters-combat/>.

<sup>127</sup> Dienst, “Number of Americans Trying to Join ISIS Doubles in a Year: Department of Justice,” <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Americans-ISIS-Double-in-Year-Terror-Recruiting-Concerns-Justice-Department-330005201.html>.

<sup>128</sup> Fred Kaplan, “Should Silicon Valley Go to War,” *MIT Technology Review*, March 2016, 2, ProQuest, 78.

<sup>129</sup> Berger and Morgan, “The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter,” 59, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

<sup>130</sup> John Dudovskiy, “Leadership Differences between Private and Public Sector Organisations: Literature Review,” *Research Methodology*, last modified November 8, 2013, <http://research-methodology.net/leadership-differences-between-private-and-public-sector-organisations-literature-review>.

<sup>131</sup> Scott Hensley, “By Dropping Cigarettes, CVS Gives Its Reputation a Boost,” *NPR*, last modified February 5, 2014 <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/05/271997564/by-dropping-cigarettes-cvs-gives-its-reputation-a-boost>.

<sup>132</sup> Tripp Mickle, “CVS to Spend \$50 Million on Antismoking Program Aimed at Youths; Pharmacy Chain Looks to Cement Position as Health-Care Company, Build on Decision to Ban Tobacco Products,” *Wall Street Journal*, last modified March 10, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/cvs-to-spend-50-million-on-antismoking-program-aimed-at-youths-1457586001>.

nobler in the fight against terrorism. Defeating online terrorist promotion will allow social media companies to set themselves apart from their competitors. Private sector technology companies should be racing to end Islamic State propaganda online. It benefits the private sector by fostering competition, and it benefits consumers and the American people.<sup>133</sup>

## Current Policies in the Private Sector

Many of the Islamic State's recruits are enlisted using social media platforms controlled by private sector corporations such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google.<sup>134</sup> Facebook's policy states, "You will not post content that: is hate speech...incites violence; or...graphic or gratuitous violence...[w]e don't allow any organizations that are engaged in...[t]errorist activity [and we] also remove content that expresses support [for these groups]."<sup>135</sup> While their policy states that they work with law enforcement when authorities believe there is a legitimate threat to public safety,<sup>136</sup> they also rely on users to point out misuse of its service.<sup>137</sup> Twitter's policy states, "international users agree to comply with all local laws regarding online conduct.... You may not make threats of violence or promote violence, including threatening or promoting terrorism."<sup>138</sup> Both companies' responses to the violation of their terms of service is to delete the post or the account that promotes or contains violence.<sup>139</sup> While Facebook and Twitter merely delete accounts, Google's British branch has implemented a more innovative solution. The company has ensured that anti-terrorist ads will come up when users enter terrorist keywords into Google search.<sup>140</sup> This method should also be implemented in the United States. Another solution to minimizing the spread of Islamic State propaganda is to have their message automatically taken down from social media sites. Social media companies have developed a way to deal with a similar online threat, in regard to child pornography.<sup>141</sup> In these new systems, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children maintains a database of thousands of photographs of child pornography that are frequently shared and/or downloaded. Online, these images are scanned and identified.<sup>142</sup> Anything that matches is deleted and, by federal law, reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and then to law enforcement agencies.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, specific Islamic State messages that are frequently shared or created should be run through a database and taken down. Social media companies have

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<sup>133</sup> Hensley, "By Dropping Cigarettes, CVS Gives Its Reputation a Boost," <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/05/271997564/by-dropping-cigarettes-cvs-gives-its-reputation-a-boost>.

<sup>134</sup> Berger and Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter," 4, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> Facebook Legal Team, "Terms," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/terms>.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Facebook Inc., "Community Standards," last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards>.

<sup>138</sup> Twitter Legal Team, "Terms," last modified 2016, <https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ben Quinn, "Google to point extremist searches towards anti-radicalisation websites," *The Guardian*, last modified February 2, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/02/google-pilot-extremist-anti-radicalisation-information>.

<sup>141</sup> Scott Higham and Ellen Nakashima, "Why the Islamic State Leaves Tech Companies Torn Between Free Speech and Security," *The Washington Post*, last modified July 16, 2015, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-states-embrace-of-social-media-puts-tech-companies-in-a-bind/2015/07/15/0e5624c4-169c-11e5-89f3-61410da94eb1\\_story.html?kmap=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-states-embrace-of-social-media-puts-tech-companies-in-a-bind/2015/07/15/0e5624c4-169c-11e5-89f3-61410da94eb1_story.html?kmap=1).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.



increasingly demonstrated an active interest in defeating online terrorism and related threats.<sup>144</sup> Bahaa El-Taweal, who works at The Raise Your Voice campaign, a counterterrorism project funded by the United States government, explained on April 18, 2016 that in recent years, Facebook and Twitter have hired Arabic speakers to apply anti-terrorism tools. The private sector has acknowledged that it is necessary to combat the Islamic State's use of the Internet but that they still need to implement more meaningful, innovative solutions.<sup>145</sup>

## Private Sector and Government Cooperation

Across the private sector there is fear that in the fight against terrorism, the government will slowly grant itself the power to dictate the actions of the private sector.<sup>146</sup> Amongst private companies, there is a "question [of] whether government has any business putting private industry to work on such a venture, which could rub up against the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments."<sup>147</sup> This rift is apparent with the contentious fight between the government and Apple over the opening of the San Bernardino shooter's iPhone.<sup>148</sup> Making a statement about his commitment to his customers' privacy, Apple CEO Tim Cook argued that the FBI's request for Apple to unlock this terrorist's phone was "setting a dangerous precedent that threatens everyone's civil liberties."<sup>149</sup>

The rift between the government and the private sector hinders the fight against ISIS. Collaboration between the government and private sector companies will make the fight against the Islamic State more effective.<sup>150</sup> It is important for the private sector to maintain autonomy and control of the data it has, but private sector companies and the government must reach a compromise; private sector companies can maintain oversight of government actions against terrorism online while allowing the government to keep the American public safe. The threat of regulation of social media companies is imminent: "[c]ompanies should...craft policies and publicly articulate their priorities. If they do not bring their vision to the government, the government is likely to bring a much more restrictive vision to them."<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the companies in the private sector cannot give the government power to limit free speech on the Internet. However, the private sector must engage in an open dialogue with the government about situations that require, for the sake of national security, a specific page or profile to remain open so that they may be or continue to be monitored by them. The grounds for keeping a page or profile active is direct interaction with accounts proven to be owned and run by the Islamic State. Direct interaction is defined as actively promoting the message of the Islamic State through means such as "retweeting" or sharing. Instances of supporting without spreading, such as liking or favoriting, is not defined as actively promoting as it does not proliferate the Islamic State's message. The responsibility for proving such activity and a legitimate threat to

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<sup>144</sup> Kaplan, "Should Silicon Valley Go to War," 78.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Katie Benner and Matt Apuzzo, "Narrow Focus may Aid F.B.I. in Apple Case," *The New York Times*, last modified February 22, 2016 [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/technology/apple-unlock-iphone-san-bernardino.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/23/technology/apple-unlock-iphone-san-bernardino.html?_r=0).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Berger and Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter," 60-61, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

public safety falls to the government. If proven, both the private user interacting with the Islamic State account and the Islamic State account can be kept online to be monitored by the government.

## Private Sector and White Hat Hacker Groups

The fight against the Islamic State is multifaceted and evolving daily. The private sector on its own cannot adapt in a time-efficient manner to shut down all recruitment and propaganda accounts.<sup>152</sup> In addition to collaborating with government intelligence, private sector companies can work with independent hacker groups to defeat ISIS online. White Hat hacker groups, defined as “hackers who use their skills to benefit society,” such as Anonymous and Ghost Security Group, have proven they are able to effectively navigate the Internet and locate such accounts.<sup>153</sup> The Ghost Security Group alone, which has agreed to collaborate with the government,<sup>154</sup> suspended 100,000 social media accounts and took 180 Islamic State propaganda websites offline in the end of 2015.<sup>155</sup> The hacktivist group Anonymous has accessed 9,200 ISIS Twitter account handles and released the list to the public.<sup>156</sup> Using the Twitter hashtag #CtrlSec, hundreds of unidentified members across the world have systematically flagged ISIS accounts beginning in February 2015. Twitter began cooperating with the movement by systematically confirming and suspending the flagged accounts.<sup>157</sup> Because White Hat groups are already targeting Islamic State accounts on social media platforms, communicating directly with these White Hat groups will simply expedite the current processes of defeating pro-Islamic State accounts. Finally, collaborating with White Hat groups will ensure the safety of users on social media sites without giving the government total control. The partnership of these groups and online private sector companies will ensure safety nets in a system where no one party is equipped to combat the enemy alone (see section “The Private Sector’s Responsibility in the Internet War on the Islamic State”).

## Online Counterterrorism Campaigns

The private sector must play an active role in the campaign against terrorism. Social media outlets such as Facebook and Snapchat often highlight special days on either their news feeds or as a filter. For example, Snapchat sponsors National Sibling Day, Valentine’s Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and creates filters in recognition of these events. Facebook posts banners at the top of every user’s NewsFeed on special days as well.<sup>158</sup> There is already a recognized anti-terrorism day in India

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<sup>152</sup> Christopher S. Stewart and Mark Maremont, “Twitter and Islamic State Deadlock on Social Media Battlefield,” *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified April 13, 2016, [http://www.wsj.com/articles/twitter-and-islamic-state-deadlock-on-social-media-battlefield-1460557045?mod=rss\\_Technology](http://www.wsj.com/articles/twitter-and-islamic-state-deadlock-on-social-media-battlefield-1460557045?mod=rss_Technology).

<sup>153</sup> Dale Janssen and Cory Janssen, “What is a White Hat Hacker?,” *Techopedia Inc.*, last accessed April 20, 2016, <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/10349/white-hat-hacker>.

<sup>154</sup> David Gilbert, “Anonymous Is Hacking ISIS, But Warns Collaborating With US Government Is ‘Deeply Stupid,’” *International Business Times*, last modified December 15, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.com/anonymous-hacking-isis-warns-collaborating-us-government-deeply-stupid-2226066>.

<sup>155</sup> “Ghost Security Group,” Vimeo video, 3:10, posted by Ghost Security Group, January 2016, <https://vimeo.com/144219468>.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Michael Howard, “Is Twitter Catfishing ISIS?,” *The Daily Beast*, last modified March 17, 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/03/17/is-twitter-catfishing-isis.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Facebook Legal Team, “Terms.” <https://www.facebook.com/terms>.

on May 21st with the possibility for it to be implemented on a worldwide scale.<sup>159</sup> Publicizing the fight against terrorism will encourage the public to help in the war against the Islamic State.<sup>160</sup>

## Promoting Alternatives

The end goal and optimal result is to stop all Islamic State propaganda and recruitment. To initiate this goal, the private sector must target people who are initially drawn to the Islamic State's message and inundate them with opposing rhetoric. With contradicting messages on various Islamic State sites, the Islamic State will appear less legitimate.<sup>161</sup> By promoting public access to information against the Islamic State the private sector will be doing its part in disarming the Islamic State.

## Recommendations

- The private sector must become more transparent in its policies towards its users and the government. Private sector social media companies should explicitly state their procedures for dealing with terrorism on their website. If the government needs to monitor an account that violates the sites Terms of Service, this account will stay up for at least 720 hours (equal to 30 days). At the end of the 720 hour period, the government should update the private sector on its needs regarding access to those accounts.
- The private sector should communicate with Anonymous, Ghost Security, and other White Hat hacker groups to defend the autonomy of the Internet and more effectively protect it from dangerous propaganda. The nature of this collaboration should primarily be to identify, remove and prevent the creation of Islamic State propaganda accounts. Private sector companies will have full authority over hacker groups.
- The private sector should launch an anti-terrorism campaign and promote an "International Anti-Terrorism and Coexistence Day" on May 21 (currently observed as anti-terrorism day in India).
- Social networks should implement fake Islamic State accounts and sites to discredit Islamic State ideology.
- In search engines, when one searches for keywords associated with terrorism the first few results and advertisements should support anti-Islamic State rhetoric. Google and other search engines should consider offering a discount on advertising to companies that commit to creating advertisements that include anti-Islamic State messaging in their advertisements.

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<sup>159</sup> KeepIn Calendar, "Anti Terrorism Day," *Windows, Inc.*, last accessed April 20, 2016, <http://keepincalendar.com/May-21/Anti%20Terrorism%20Day%20/549>.

<sup>160</sup> Alexandra Ma, "People Fight Back Against Brussels Terror with Love," *Huffington Post*, last modified March 22, 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/Internet-brussels-solidarity\\_us\\_56f12e6ee4b084c6722148da](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/Internet-brussels-solidarity_us_56f12e6ee4b084c6722148da).

<sup>161</sup> Kaplan, "Should Silicon Valley Go to War," 80.

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