Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me first thank you on behalf of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change for
the opportunity to present the results from the research our Institute has
conducted on terrorism and extremism.

Our work in this area has contributed particularly to counter-narratives, foreign
fighters, and the online counter-extremism landscape. Specifically, the research
and reports that form the basis of this statement have explored and gathered
evidence on:

 The propaganda, ideology and narrative of ISIS, al-Qaeda in the Arabian
Peninsula, and al-Qaeda offshoots within Syria.
 In other reports, we have explored the Individual journeys into violent
extremism, based on two large samples: one consisting of biographies of
100 leading terrorist figures from across the Middle East and Africa, and
another, most recently conducted, on 113 men and women who have
travelled for jihad from the UK, or have been convicted for, or perpetrated,
terrorist offences or attacks.
 Finally, we have contributed to research and evidence on Online extremist
content – particularly content that is accessible via popular search engines.

I will now continue my statement, drawing on the findings and recommendations
that can be drawn from our evidence-based reports. I will conclude with a
summary of on-going and intended research n
BT-179(on)] TJ
ET
Q
q
0pinp
Q
q4( )-179(on
Q
r)4(a)79] TJ

percent of our cross-group sample). As a consequence of this emphasis on Tawhid,
all victories are attributed to God, and shortfalls and setbacks are framed as tests
from God (explicitly discussed in 43 percent of the propaganda).

As for shaping their group identity, they claim not only to be voices for the
oppressed, but crucially allies of Allah – His proxies on this earth to instil good and
eradicate evil. In their propaganda, the groups uphold the basic tenets of Islam –
submission to the Will of the one God, belief in the central aspects of the faith, and
the performance of good deeds. The dominance of these themes throughout the
propaganda is evidence that the ideology of the groups is based on religious
values. However, the application of these values is fixated on the justification of
Jihad as the ultimate demonstration of submission, belief, and performance of
good deeds. Similarly, Islamic scripture is relied upon heavily across the
propaganda of all groups, but typically manipulated to suit their fixation on
violence, and their superiority over all other religious denominations,
communities, and traditions.

In addition to Islamic creedal values, more universal values of honour and
solidarity exist throughout terrorist literature. The act of jihad is framed as a noble
act, often presented in chivalric terms, and martyrdom, by death in battle, is
framed as the greatest virtue.

To conclude from this research, the ideology, presented through the propaganda,
is rooted in a clear and consistent values system, and through it, the objectives and
conduct of the group and its members, justified. Effective counter-narratives
should reflect this attention to values and emotion, and address the perversion of
Islamic beliefs and scripture to present (scholarly) consensus against
misinterpretations.
The empirical evidence from this research conducted by TBI provides valuable

interpretations. Many of these sites dominate results for keyword searches that
are not even especially violent. Many legitimate referencing sites host books and
lectures by known terrorists, and the material is available without warning or
safeguards in place. In many cases, when users were directed to sites for Islamic
content, such as translations of the Quran and other Islamic literature, they were
in fact entering sites that hosted politicised Islamist and jihadi content. It was also
clear from our research that websites with Islamist and terrorist affiliations are
artificially promoting their content, and using Search Engine Optimisation,
increasing the chances of their content reaching the top two pages of popular
search engines.

This is a clear blind spot in our current counter-narrative strategies but is crucial
to preventing extremism and delegitimising the ideas of terrorist groups. Through
the evidence we have gathered from this research, we have called for a global
commitment on safeguarding the Internet, and greater collaboration and
integration of efforts between government, civil society and tech firms. We
continue to engage with the latter.

The link between non-violent extremism and violent extremism remains a source
of debate. Yet online, the connection is more pronounced, and the divisions
arbitrary. Similarly, our research into the individual lives and journeys of the most
globally recognised terrorists, and UK foreign fighters, reveal the symbiotic
connection between non-violent and violent extremism. Just over 50 percent of
prominent terrorists from across the Middle East and Africa can firmly be
identified as having entered terrorist networks via Islamist circles and groups.
Likewise, and more pronounced, of our UK foreign fighters study, 77 percent of
our sample were known to be associated with non-violent Islamist groups and
networks before turning to terrorism. Further research is urgently required to
understand the exact ideological and operational overlaps between violent and
non-violent extremist groups.

Finally, moving into 2018, TBIGC will provide further evidence on global terrorism
and extremism trends. A series of reports on our Global Extremism Monitor is
scheduled for publication from Spring 2018. Our data captures global acts of
violent, religious and political extremism, sectarianism, and religious and ethnic
persecution.

A preliminary analysis of trends from our Monitor suggests shifts in female suicide
behaviours, and our data explores this shift in the demographics of those
perpetrating suicide operations, the efficacy of these operations globally, and the
impact of counter-extremism measures in neutralising the threat of martyrdom-seeking and suicide attacks. Through this monitor, we have also captured unique
data into newly emerging groups since 2015. In a 3-month pilot phase carried out
in the final quarter of 2016, the Global Extremism Monitor identified 56 distinct
violent extremist groups emerge. The data gathered will help to explore and
understand the process and conditions through which groups spawn, thrive and
mature. We intend to overlay our data alongside global policy developments, and
other related secondary data, including socio-economic factors, to generate a

neural network capable of identifying the beginnings of extremism in various
locations.
As the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change continues its work to promote co-