When the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to the U.S. Congress, it was a rare example of courage, clarity, and candor in a political leader in these times. Here is another example from Theresa May, the Home Secretary for the U.K.

— Rick Joyner

British Home Secretary to Islamic Extremists: "The Game is Up"
By Soeren Kern

(This article was originally published on Gatestone Institute on April 2, 2015.)

“There is increasing evidence that a small but significant number of people living in Britain—almost all of whom are British citizens—reject our values. It's clear from these examples that extremism can take many forms. They utterly reject British and Western values, including democracy, the rule of law, and equality between citizens, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality. They believe that it's impossible to be a good Muslim and a good British citizen. And they dismiss anybody who disagrees with them—including other Muslims—as 'kafirs,' or non-believers.” — Theresa May, British Home Secretary.

"Intolerance, hatred, and bigotry become normalized. Trust is replaced by fear, reciprocity by envy, and solidarity by division. [I]f anybody else discriminated against women, denounced people on the basis of their religious beliefs, rejected the democratic process, attacked people on the basis of their sexuality, or gave a nod and a wink in favor of violence and terrorism, we wouldn't hesitate to challenge them or—if the law was broken—call for their prosecution and punishment.” — Theresa May, British Home Secretary.

Some Muslim groups say May's comments amounted to "Islamophobia."

Manzoor Moghal, the chairman of the Muslim Forum, a think tank, told the BBC that May's proposals would infringe on freedom of speech.
British Home Secretary Theresa May has unveiled a series of new proposals aimed at combating Islamic extremism "in all its forms."

The plan is part of the Tory election manifesto, a declaration of policies and programs to be implemented if Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party stays in power after the general election on May 7.

The home secretary has pledged that a future Tory government would—among other measures—ban Islamic hate preachers, shut down extremist mosques, and review whether Sharia courts in England and Wales are compatible with British values.

May has also promised to crack down on Islamic extremism in British prisons, to monitor how police are responding to so-called honor crimes, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage, and to change the citizenship law to ensure that successful applicants respect British values.

Reaction to May's proposals has been mixed. While many are pleased with her expressed determination to confront Islamic extremism, others believe that many elements of the plan will be difficult, if not impossible, to implement, especially if the Conservatives enter into another coalition government with the liberal Democrats, who are opposed to any attempts to limit free speech.

May announced the crackdown during a hard-hitting speech in London on March 23, when she defined extremism as "the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs."

Speaking with a clarity not seen in most public discourse about Islam today, May singled out Islamic extremism as posing the foremost threat to contemporary Britain. She said:

"There is increasing evidence that a small but significant number of people living in Britain—almost all of whom are British citizens—reject our values. We have seen the Trojan Horse plot to take over state schools in Birmingham. Some concerns about religious supplementary schools. Widespread allegations of corruption, cronyism, extremism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism in Tower Hamlets. Hate speakers invited to speak at British colleges and universities. Segregation by gender allowed at universities and even endorsed by Universities UK [a lobbying group representing British universities]. Charities and the generosity of the giving public abused by extremists. Examples of Sharia law being used to discriminate against women. Thousands of 'honor' crimes committed every year. And hundreds of British citizens who have travelled to fight in Syria and Iraq.

"It's clear from these examples that extremism can take many forms. It can be ideological, or it can be driven by social and cultural norms that are contrary to British values, and quite simply unacceptable. We have been clear all along that the government's counter-extremism strategy must seek to defeat extremism in all its forms, but it's obvious from the evidence that the most serious and widespread form of extremism we need to confront is Islamist extremism.

"Islamist extremists believe in a clash of civilizations. They promote a fundamental incompatibility between Islamic and Western values, an inevitable divide between 'them and us.' They demand a caliphate, or a new Islamic state, governed by a harsh interpretation of Sharia law. They utterly reject British and Western values, including democracy, the rule of law, and equality between citizens, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality. They believe that it's
Impossible to be a good Muslim and a good British citizen. And they dismiss anybody who disagrees with them—including other Muslims—as 'kafirs,' or non-believers.

"Extremism is not something that can just be ignored. It cannot be wished away. It must be tackled head on. Because where extremism takes root, the consequences are clear. Women's rights are eroded. There is discrimination on the basis of race and sexuality. There is no longer equal access to the labor market, to the law, or to wider society. Communities become segregated and cut off from one another. Intolerance, hatred, and bigotry become normalized. Trust is replaced by fear, reciprocity by envy, and solidarity by division.

"But tackling extremism is also important because of its link to terrorism. Not all extremism leads to violence and not all extremists are violent, but there is without doubt a thread that binds the kind of extremism that promotes hatred and a sense of superiority over others to the actions of those who want to impose their beliefs on us through violence.

"I know there are some people who disagree with me. They say what I describe as Islamist extremism is simply social conservatism. But if anybody else discriminated against women, denounced people on the basis of their religious beliefs, rejected the democratic process, attacked people on the basis of their sexuality, or gave a nod and a wink in favor of violence and terrorism, we wouldn't hesitate to challenge them or—if the law was broken—call for their prosecution and punishment."

May ended her speech with a warning to Islamic extremists: "The game is up. We will no longer tolerate your behavior. We will expose your hateful beliefs for what they are. Where you seek to spread hate, we will disrupt you. Where you break the law, we will prosecute you. Where you seek to divide us, we will stand united. And together, we will defeat you."

Some elements of May's counter-extremism plan were previously outlined by her during a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in September 2014. May had planned on publishing the official counter-extremism strategy before the dissolution of Parliament on March 30, but was forced to water down several key proposals due to opposition from senior members of her own party.

According to the Financial Times, Universities Minister Greg Clark was opposed to a proposal to order universities to ban extremist speakers, while Justice Secretary Chris Grayling urged caution on moves to control imams who were already in jail. Communities Secretary Eric Pickles was opposed to vetting faith leaders, while Education Secretary Nicky Morgan was critical of a tougher anti-extremism enforcement role proposed for Ofsted, the official education watchdog.

Some observers say May’s plan may suffer the same fate as a similar 12-point plan outlined by former Prime Minister Tony Blair in August 2005, a month after four British Islamists carried out bombings in London that killed 52 people and injured 700 more.

At the time, Blair vowed to show that the "rules of the game are changing" for Islamic terrorists. But most of Blair's plan was never implemented, due to infighting within the Labour government and concerns that some proposals were in breach of human rights laws.

Haras Rafiq, the managing director of the Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism think tank, praised May’s speech but said there was too much talk and not enough action. In an interview with Newsweek magazine, he said:
"For the lifetime of this coalition government, we have had no published strategy on tackling the ideas and ideology behind non-violent extremism. We are still having the same conversations. We are still talking about Sharia law, still talking about learning more, still talking about tackling non-violent extremism, why aren't we doing it?"

Rafiq added:

"Banning non-violent extremists in a liberal secular democracy does not work. We can say over the last 10 years the policy does not work. Take the policy of Anjem Choudary and Al-Muhajiroun. Once they were banned initially, they just kept popping up under different names."

The Labor Party's shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, said there was a "massive gap between rhetoric and reality." She said that although the principles behind May's proposals were "the right ones," she questioned the absence of "policies to back those principles up."

Some Muslim groups said May's proposals amounted to "Islamophobia." The chairman of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, Massoud Shadjareh, said: "Nobody will be fooled by the Home Secretary's claims that these measures are designed to tackle extremism. They are a shameless expression of a hate and bigotry that is increasingly becoming normalized in Britain."

Manzoor Moghal, the chairman of the Muslim Forum, a think tank, told the BBC that May's proposals would infringe on freedom of speech. "We might be sleep walking into what would be like a police state," he said. Moghal also said that Sharia courts "do not contradict British laws" and were "subservient to British laws all the time."

The debate over how to deal with Islamic extremism has intensified since it emerged that more than 500 British jihadists are fighting with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Beyond security, however, the issue also has an important political dimension.

This year’s general election is one of the closest in decades, with polls showing the Conservatives running neck-and-neck with the Labor Party. This is partly due to the rise of the anti-immigration UK Independence Party (UKIP), which is now the third-biggest party in Britain, and twice as popular as the liberal Democrats.

A recent study found that the Conservatives could lose nearly two million voters to UKIP on May 7. UKIP has long called for taking a harder line against Islamic extremists in Britain, a concern apparently shared by a growing number of British voters.

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