

ERIC HOLDER'S STEP FOUR: FICTIONAL EFFORTS COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Eric Holder has attracted a bit of attention for lecturing the Europeans that they should engage in entrapment stings like our FBI, specifically to prevent Europeans from going to fight in Syria.

The second part of our comprehensive strategy looks to ensure that we have in place law enforcement investigative tools and techniques that are both effective and protective of individual rights and the rule of law. In this regard, we have found undercover operations – which the Federal Bureau of Investigation pioneered in fighting transnational organized crime – to be essential in fighting terrorism as well. In the United States, the FBI has already conducted undercover operations that have identified individuals with intentions to travel to Syria. These operations are conducted with extraordinary care and precision, ensuring that law enforcement officials are accountable for the steps they take – and that suspects are neither entrapped nor denied legal protections. Here, too, the Global Counterterrorism Forum's Rabat Memorandum calls for such techniques to be applied in countries around the world: one of the "good practices" it advocates is that countries "Provide a Legal Framework and Practical Measures for Undercover Investigations of Terrorist Suspects or Organizations

Even more noteworthy, in my opinion, is his

claim that the fourth part of our strategy to prevent Syria from becoming a training ground for terrorists is preventing radicalization in the first place.

The fourth and final element of our strategy is founded on the notion that strong laws, effective investigative tools, and robust information-sharing must be matched with public engagement – and extensive community outreach. We must seek to stop individuals from becoming radicalized in the first place by putting in place strong programs to counter violent extremism in its earliest stages. In my time here in Norway, I have had the chance to learn about – and have been deeply impressed by – Norway’s Action Plan Against Radicalization and Violent Extremism.

Indeed, I have found it critical to engage in international exchanges with my counterparts regarding how we can do better on combating radicalization, and to learn from each other. I will take home with me important lessons from Norway’s experience. These lessons will help us implement our own National Strategy and Strategic Implementation Plan, which is led by the Justice Department, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Counterterrorism Center.

Our approach depends on building mutual trust and respect with members of communities across the country – so that we can understand their needs and concerns and to foster open dialogue with community leaders and citizens. This enables us to work with them to mitigate tensions and identify emerging threats.

At the heart of these engagement efforts in the United States are our United States Attorneys, the chief federal

prosecutors in each of the jurisdictions they serve. Since 2012, our U.S. Attorneys have held or attended more than 1,700 engagement-related events. And the resulting relationships have not only served to build trust. They have also produced valuable cooperation, in some cases spurring community members to alert law enforcement about individuals who show an inclination to turn to violence.

Remember, when Mohamed Osman Mohamud's father called the FBI for help because his son was embracing extremism, the FBI used that as the predicate to entrap him.

I mean, it'd be nice if, when the national security establishment found a young man talking trash in jihadist forums, they'd find him a healthier outlet. But right now, they instead throw undercover officers at the guys, bearing inert bombs.

Let's hope the Europeans do teach us how to change that.