

# The Rise of Islamic Extremism in Canada



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## Background

My family and I came to Canada 24 years ago from Pakistan because we saw the rise of fundamentalism in the land of our birth. I grew up in a pluralistic, visionary country with people of other faiths, mostly Christians and Zoroastrians, and I studied in a Catholic school. We rarely came across blatant extremism, terrorism, or political Islam.

However, in 1977, Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq came into power after removing and hanging the democratically elected Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Bhutto. Zia, a follower of Abul Ala Mawdudi, founder of the Islamist party Jamaat-e Islamiyya, implemented his extreme version of Islam. Women had to cover their heads in public, co-education was eliminated in schools, and Friday was made the weekly holiday. Islam, which had never been imposed upon Pakistan's citizens, was suddenly forced into the public sphere. This discomfited those of us who had always lived moderate, normal lives imbued with a traditional, spiritual interpretation of Islam. Zia-ul-Haq was also responsible for implementing, in 1979, the *Hudood Ordinance*. These were Pakistani legal provisions intended to implement Islamic Sharia law by enforcing punishments, primarily upon women.

All this would have still have been palatable, but for two things:

1. the unquestioned use of violence;
2. distortion of historical facts, the Prophet's sayings, and his character, thus giving legitimacy to militancy.

One of the legacies of President Zia was to fan the flames of sectarian differences. I am a Sunni – the majority in Pakistan – married to a Shia, so our lives were on the edge. In 1979, for the sake of our sanity and well-being, we decided to leave Pakistan. After a brief stint in Dubai, we applied to immigrate to Canada. The process was smooth because we had the employment prerequisites that Canada needed. The immigration officials who interviewed us painted a glowing picture of Canada and told us about our rights in this country. Not once, however, did officials mention attendant responsibilities.

Despite the vast differences in culture, terrain, and weather, we felt totally at home in Canada. Our two boys were only two and four years old. We wanted to give them a religious education so we taught them at home and on Sundays, they attended Islamic School in Brampton. We always went with them and stayed until class was over. Occasionally, if the teacher said something that sounded intolerant, I would challenge her views and instil a sense of respect for all among my kids. However, the kids were generally taught about their faith with no infusion of politics or hate.

Initially we were charmed by the concept of official multiculturalism in Canada. As new immigrants, it meant a lot to know that we could preserve our own culture and heritage. We joined the workforce and as we expanded our own horizons, we started seeing signs that something was not right. We found it odd that the Canadian government, in the name of multiculturalism, was giving official government funding to Pakistanis to learn their own language and hold 'multicultural' concerts - essentially, songs and dances by their own community, for their own community. Of course, many Canadians were taking advantage of this ultimately misguided policy, and it was increasingly apparent to us that state-funded multiculturalism was helping to import archaic and centuries' old cultural practices into the Canadian framework without thought of the need to adapt to a new culture. We labelled this "excess cultural baggage", a new, potentially divisive facet of multiculturalism that promised to split, rather than to build and unite, the people of our new country. It occurred to us that, to the extent that multiple "cultures" exist at all in a country, they should do so in a natural, "default" kind of way, not as the result of artificial, government-run programs.

My thoughts went to Lebanon, a country that prided itself on a mosaic of different cultures and faiths co-existing, while happily living in their own enclaves. We know what happened there when there was a collision between religion and politics; it exploded into civil war.

There were also small signals that all was not well with the Muslim communities in Canada, especially those of Pakistani origin. For example, the mother of one of my children's classmates of Pakistani origin, asked me why my kids sang the Canadian national anthem when it is *haram*, forbidden. Upon asking where she got that information, she confessed that the imam of the local mosque had told the congregation that it was against the faith to sing the national anthem, or, indeed, to show loyalty to Canada.

Upon investigation, we discovered that some mosques were giving sermons against loyalty to Canada and at other places; the sermons were different in English and Arabic, the English version being toned down. Added to this disagreeable situation was the fact that many immigrants were enforcing cultural values and ideas that were at odds with Canada's established traditions of democracy, freedom, and equality. No government

or other authority seemed to contest any of this, and so these messages and teachings began to spread in the communities that had been subject to such instruction.

From a religious perspective, in a strange way it seemed that we were being followed by the same ideology from which we had escaped. One thing we were sure about, having lived and travelled in the Arab world before coming to Canada, was the expanding influence of Wahhabi/Salafism in Canada, especially among the country's Pakistani Muslims. We saw it manifested in supposedly innocuous cultural nuances – for example, some Pakistani-Canadians dressing like Arabs, resisting Western values, expressing hostility toward the principles of freedom and gender equality. We saw many Islamic schools or madrassas being established.

I had not set out to be a writer about Islamic issues – my original dream was to be a romantic writer. But when I saw the rise of Wahhabi/Salafism in Canada, I was dismayed. The mainstream non-Muslim community at that time had very little knowledge about Islam because, until the 1980s, Muslims were the 'exotic other.' Therefore, I started writing for The Toronto Star to educate both Muslims and non-Muslims about the spiritual message of the faith and to encourage immigrants to embrace the good in Canada.

Later our kids went to college and we found much to our dismay that the Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) could be quite outspokenly anti-Semitic and extremist in their views. At York University, they often approached my son to convince him to be a better Muslim by joining in congregational prayers as an option over classes or be part of their (outreach programs). They left nasty notes on my niece's door about how she would burn in hell if she did not wear the hijab. The hijab in fact started to become a political symbol and I saw a sudden rise of orthodox religiosity amongst young Muslims who were being sucked into the hardline Wahhabi/Salafist ideology.

Stephen Suleyman Schwartz, an American Sufi Muslim journalist and author of *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*, explains Wahhabism, the religious tendency from which so much of this radicalism seems to spring:

*Wahhabism is an extremist, puritanical, and violent movement that emerged, with the pretension of 'reforming' Islam, in the central area of Arabia in the eighteenth century. It was founded by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who formed an alliance with the house of Saud, in which religious authority is maintained by the descendants of al-Wahhab and political power is held by the descendants of al-Saud: This is the Wahhabi-Saudi axis, which continues to rule today. From its beginning, Wahhabism declared the entirety of existing Islam to be unbelief, and traditional Muslims to be unbelievers subject to robbery, murder, and sexual violation. Wahhabism has always viewed Shia Muslims genocidally, as non-Muslims worthy of annihilation. Wahhabism has always attacked the traditional, spiritual Islam or Sufism that dominates Islam in the Balkans, Turkey, Central Asia, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Wahhabism and neo-Wahhabism (the latter being the doctrines of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Pakistani Islamists)*

*are the main source of Islamic extremist violence in the world today. Wahhabism represents a distinct, ultra-radical form of Islamism. Wahhabism is completely subsidized by the Saudi regime, using oil income.*

*Wahhabism has always maintained a two-faced policy regarding the West. It has always depended on the armed forces of the Christian nations – Britain, the U.S., and France to secure its domination in the Arabian Peninsula, while it violently attacks Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists, as well as traditional Sunnis, Sufis, and Shias, throughout the rest of the world. Thus, the presence of U.S. troops guarding the Saudis did not begin with the Gulf War in 1991. From 1946 to 1962, the U.S. maintained an airbase in Saudi Arabia, and before that, the British assisted the Wahhabi-Saudi alliance against the Ottomans. When the Saudis needed to clear the Grand Mosque in Mecca of protestors in 1979, they employed French paratroopers to kill Muslims within the walls of the mosque. [1]*

Around 2000, I also started writing articles warning Canadian Muslims about the dangers of radicalization, especially among the youth who were confused, with nowhere to go between the Mosque and the Mall for answers to their questions. They had all the prerequisites of fodder for Islamist mercenaries looking for victims to brainwash. The youth had grievances, both real and imagined, and the burgeoning number of recruiters offered an ideology they could latch onto. If needed, they would doubtless have Saudi funding to support their nascent extremist viewpoints. Wahhabism/Salafism had found its way to North America.

### **9/11 and the Immediate Aftermath**

On September 9, 2001, the world changed and so did my life. It seemed that many of our warnings had fallen on deaf ears. 9/11 was shocking and mind-boggling, but was it a surprise? Not exactly. The writing had been on the wall for some time. We had seen the signs in Pakistan and now in North America, so the fear that something terrible was about to happen had been palpable well before the terrorists struck the United States.

While 9/11 may have exposed the existence and methods of a few terrorists, even that catastrophe failed to convey the full scope and extent of the pre-9/11 threat of Islamic extremism. Terrorism and violent extremism are products of sustained ideological messaging that is propagated over time, whether overtly or through more subtle means. My observation is that “radicalizing to extremism or violence,” as the term of art has it, requires time. This implies that threats are the result of mental and material transitions; part of this reflects movement along a radical continuum that sees individuals and groups graduating from inchoate states of awareness, hostility and material preparation, to the acting-out phase that is so publicly reflected in measurable and often violent ways. Moreover, this, in turn, suggests that the actual incidence of Islamist plots and attacks in Canada greatly understates the underlying, developing extremist reality that is upon us, and that may be waiting to break out. The serial arrests and convictions of violent Islamists in recent years can therefore be understood to reflect the fruit of

years of radicalizing agitprop to which unknown numbers of Muslim youth have been exposed. In order to understand better the roots of Canada's developing malaise, one can find some of its foundations in the way in which Canada's liberal immigration and political asylum policies and the porous Canadian-American border have leant themselves to manipulation and abuse by radical Islamists.

What was happening on the ground in Canada, immediately before and after 9/11? In the late 1990s, Islamist groups in Canada were identified as Hezbollah, several Sunni Islamic extremist groups, including Hamas, and others with ties to Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Lebanon, and Iran. [2]

In 1998, Ward Elcock, then director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), testified before a Canadian Senate special committee that with perhaps the exception of the United States, there were more international terrorist organizations active in Canada than in any other country in the world. He said that the counter-terrorism branch of CSIS was investigating over 50 organizations and about 350 individuals.

Elcock's accounting included Sikh, Sri Lankan, and other terror groups that reflected the migration of what were referred to as "homeland" turf wars onto Canadian soil. However, a number of the struggles implicated in these statistics, such as that involving Sri Lanka, reflected non-religious conflicts, and contests largely confined to the involved immigrant communities. Islamist terrorism on the other hand, is about imposing an ideology upon the West, by force if necessary, and consuming everyone who stands in the way. The emotional and financial support for this movement comes largely from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf for the Sunnis, and from Iran, for the Shias.

### **Tracing the Rise of Islamic Extremism in Canada**

The earliest Muslims migrated to Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[3] They came for a better life and many of them settled in the Prairies. These early Muslims adapted to the new country very well, some even changing their names, to anglicise them. They followed their faith without imposing it on others and were not caught up in dogma and ritual, working side by side with their fellow Canadians.

The second and third waves came from South Asia and it was here that many of the problems started. In 1981, there were only six ethnic enclaves in Canada; this number increased to 254 in 2002, and is still increasing. In his 2011 testimony before a Canadian Senate subcommittee, David B. Harris, Canadian lawyer and long-time intelligence specialist, referred to the problem of extremist attitudes being imported by immigrants from certain Muslim-majority countries. Relying on Pew surveys, he observed in the context of the tens of thousands of post-9/11 Egyptian immigrants, that the majority of "Muslim Egyptians prefer Islamists in charge, versus 27% wanting modernizers.

Eighty-four percent favour death for converts from Islam, 82% want death for adultery." [4]

Soon, we started to see the overt rise of extremism in Canada. In December 1999, US Customs officials arrested Ahmed Ressam near Seattle after he came off a ferry from Canada in a car loaded with jars of nitroglycerine, timing devices, and other bomb-making materials. Ressam belonged to a Montreal-based terrorist cell thought to be linked to both the Algerian terrorist group Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and al-Qaeda. The cell had planned a millennium terror attack at Los Angeles International Airport.

Soon after, in 2000, Mr. Elcock told the National Post that Islamic terrorists were the leading threat to Canada. [5] There followed a report showing that in 15 years there was a disturbing trend of terrorists moving from fundraising, procurement and other support roles, to actually planning acts on Canadian territory.

On 2 June 2006, 17 Muslims, including five juveniles, were arrested in Canada for planning major terrorist attacks on Canadian soil. The plot involved the storming of Canada's Parliament and beheading of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The terrorists wished to bargain for the immediate release of Muslim prisoners in Canada and Afghanistan. Because these were largely "home-grown" Islamic terrorists, some blame was rightly directed towards Canada's decades-old multiculturalism policies. "It's breathtaking that this is going on in Canada," International Trade Minister David Emerson told the CBC, "To see the home-grown nature of it is shocking to me." [6]

2009 was a bumper year for Canadian terrorism issues. In 2009 Momin Khawaja was the first Canadian to be convicted under Canada's federal anti-terrorism act. Khawaja was charged with financing and facilitating terrorism and for building a remote-control device that could trigger bombs, was sentenced to 10½ years in prison, although this was increased to life on appeal. That year, we heard that the supremacist group Hizb-ut Tahrir would be holding a public conference in Mississauga, Canada, where we lived. [7]

In the past three decades, hundreds of young minds have been poisoned. In February 2010, the BBC aired a three-part documentary called *Generation Jihad* in which the producer travelled across North America speaking to radicalized youth. The producer warned of an entire generation of young Canadian and British Muslims who have been infected with the terrorism virus.

Our efforts to alert media to this confident public display of radicalism were met with journalistic responses to the effect that there would be nothing to report or challenge in the absence of outright violence. Attending under cover, we concluded that Hizb-ut Tahrir opposition to violence was tactical and temporary, that the group is sympathetic to Jihadist ideology and works to create a politically charged atmosphere conducive to

terrorism. Hizb-ut Tahrir representatives clearly and confidently stated that it is incumbent on all Muslims to implement Sharia where they live, and to have a Khalifa (Caliph – the single man who rules, guided first by Sharia law) from amongst them.

Apart from these, several other terroristic groups, or entities of troubling tendencies, have a presence in Canada. Among them:

Al-Qaeda is banned in Canada but has affiliated persons inside the country. Beyond Canada's borders, the organization has killed Canadian citizens in both the Bali Nightclub bombing and the September 11 attacks. Operating as a network of networks, the group is the most widespread and dangerous in the world today.

Ansar al-Islam: This is reported to have the greatest degree of training in producing chemical and biological weaponry. Members were also involved in the February 2003 production of the bio toxin ricin in Britain. Two of the group's leaders are Canadian and have lived in Toronto.

Armed Islamic Group (GIA): Appearing in 1992, the group has engaged in an exceptionally violent conflict with the Algerian government, but has also operated in France. It has supporters throughout the Algerian expatriate community, including inside Canada. The group has been banned by the Canadian government.

Salafist Group for Call and Combat: Another group arising out of North Africa. Members of the group have been active in Canada and the group is banned here.

Muslim Brotherhood – MAC. The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) has declared on its website that it aims at applying Islam “as understood in its contemporary context by the late Imam, Hassan al-Banna.” In order to clarify the dangerous implications of this profession of faith, Montreal-based counter-Jihad website *Point de Bascule* reproduced the 50-point Manifesto written in 1936 by the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna. His proposals for reform are very specific and touch all fields of human activity: political, judicial, administrative, social, educational and economic.

Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad are believed to raise money in Canada. The Hamas-linked Holy Land Foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in Canada. Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist groups were banned in Canada in November 2002 [8]. The value in banning terror groups can be limited by the ability of members to change their organizations' names and resume operations.

The restrictions on Canada's capacity to deal with extremist interlopers are illustrated literally and symbolically by the family of the late Pakistani immigrant Ahmed Khadr, a senior al-Qaeda operative who used Canada as his base and bolthole. Meanwhile

several Khadr family members live happily in Canada while they badmouth the country in public. Their track record has much to say. One daughter Zaynab, 23, was married, with Osama bin Laden present at the nuptials, in 1999. Zaynab endorses the 9/11 atrocities and hopes her infant daughter will die fighting Americans while she expresses her hate for Canada. The potential for radicals to infiltrate and influence sensitive Canadian circles was illustrated by public reports that Zaynab married the son of a Canadian federal court judge, although there was no suggestion of any impropriety on the judge's part. [9]

The eldest son of Ahmed Khadr, Abdullah Khadr told CBC Television before being detained in Islamabad in 2004 that every Muslim dreams of being a martyr for Islam, and was accused by Washington of supplying missiles to al-Qaeda in Pakistan and conspiring to murder Americans abroad.

Numerous people have been detained in Canada on the basis of terrorism-related allegations, since 9/11, but not charged. Hassan Almrei, Adil Charkaoui, Mohamed Harkat, Mahmoud Jaballah, and Mohammad Mahjoub have been held under security certificates but were not charged.

In August 2010, three Ontario men accused of taking part in a domestic terrorist plot and possessing plans and materials to create makeshift bombs, had allegedly selected specific targets in Canada. The suspects are said to have discussed attacks on specific government buildings and city public transit systems, security sources told CBC News. "This group posed a real and serious threat to the citizens of the National Capital Region and Canada's national security," they said. [10]

In 2013, Canadian authorities alleged that they had interrupted an Islamist plot against a trans-border train line. Two people face charges.

On the website of Public Safety Canada several terrorist groups are listed, some of which are known under different names.[11] The majority of them are international Islamic groups.

### **Where are We More than a Decade after 9/11?**

As far back as 2002, the CSIS director warned that:

*"...most of the world's terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, have adherents in Canada, as they do in every other western democracy. Sunni Islamic terrorist organizations from Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Somalia also have sympathizers in Canada, and we are obliged to deal with that reality."* [12]

Indeed, it was already being reported at that time that CSIS' counter-terrorism program was investigating "50 organizational targets and 300 individual targets" in Canada.



The scale of this situation is a reminder of the interplay between radicalism and terrorism, on the one hand, and Canada's enormous per capita immigration, on the other. About 260,000 immigrants are admitted each year to Canada or over 500,000 newcomers per annum, if student and temporary-worker visa-holders be taken into account. Within the immigrant category, tens of thousands seek political asylum and safe haven as refugees. Canada, however, does not automatically detain refugee seekers upon entry, even those with questionable backgrounds, so thousands of potential terrorists disappear annually into Canada's ethno-cultural communities. Armed with a fraudulent French passport, for example, Ahmed Ressam entered Canada in 1994 claiming refugee status. One way to improve Canada's immigration situation and ease the terrorism risk, would be to close a variety of loopholes.

It is now a crime to knowingly provide material support to terrorist organizations, including support of a logistical or financial nature. Canada's laws require the publishing of a list of terrorist groups deemed to constitute a threat to the security of Canada and Canadians. Canadian law has also increased the government's investigative powers and paved the way for the country to sign the last two of the United Nations' 12 anti-terrorism conventions.

Vulnerabilities remain. One place where vulnerable children can be brainwashed is in certain Islamic schools. While teachers may not be overtly encouraging violence, gender segregation is common and creates inequality. In this, there can also be a latent incubation period in which anti-West themes sometimes become embedded in children's minds in a way that may undermine taboos against violence, particularly violence targeting the West, its people and institutions. Moreover, there is little accountability for teachers' credentials in Islamic schools. I was a member of the public committee for the Ontario College of Teachers and was appalled to learn that currently, unless private school employers require membership in the College as a condition of employment, those employed as teachers in the private school system need not be members of the OCT - hence an accountability lacuna exists. There are 700 private schools in Ontario, and only about 100 have their teachers registered. This includes private religious schools.

Foreign funding for Islamic organizations and schools is a problem because funding - including from abroad - can come with vested subversive agendas. However, law and policy can be hard to change. According to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, as technology improves and integrates trading and financial systems, terrorists' ability to collect and move funds between jurisdictions complicates the tasks of tracing and confiscating their assets. The Criminal Code, the United Nations Afghanistan Regulations (UNAR), and the United Nations Suppression of Terrorism Regulations (UNSTR), arm Canada with means of identifying terrorist entities - organizations and individuals - and to freeze their assets in Canada.

## Solutions

The best examples of de-radicalization are those that have involved accountability within pertinent communities. The Tamil and Sikh communities in Canada have managed to control extremism and terrorism within their ranks, to some extent. The Canadian Somali community is currently faced with a major challenge, some of the community's youth having apparently been drawn into terrorist activities by Somalia's al-Shabaab terrorist group, the entity reportedly responsible for the 2013 Nairobi shopping-mall massacre.

According to Ahmed Hussen, President of the Canadian Somali Congress, the Canadian government was concentrating on detecting and arresting terror suspects, but leaving their rhetoric unchallenged. "The strategy of Canadian officials as they confront this phenomenon in my community has been to view this serious matter only through the prism of law enforcement," he said. "There has not been a parallel attempt to counter the toxic anti-Western narrative that creates a culture of victimhood in the minds of members of our community." Mr. Hussen was the lead witness at a Committee on Homeland Security hearing in Washington, probing radicalization within the American Muslim community.

A counter narrative is urgently needed to defeat the voices of those extremists and victim-mongers who prey on Muslim youth, before targeted youth become terrorists. There are few, if any, think tanks in Canada looking in a genuinely realistic way at a long-term vision of the future of Canadian youth, from a counter-radicalization perspective. Contrary to our experience in Canada, the UK has had a history of think tanks that have been prepared to deal realistically with threats, and a few of these have pressed government for constructive change. Some British think tanks have produced publications that address some of the key "definers" of terrorism and the rise of radicalization on British university campuses.

The advent of campus radicalization and foreign funding is a concern that has not been directly, or at least, adequately, addressed by Canadian policy makers and government officials. Some Canadian universities have started establishing chairs in Islamic studies through financing from Arab sources. The University of Western Ontario's affiliated Huron University College, an Anglican institution, recently established such a chair in its theology faculty. Controversy, including vigorous protests by alumni, was sparked when it was discovered that the Muslim Brotherhood-oriented Muslim Association of Canada and the troubling, Virginia-based International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) would provide most of the \$2 million in funding for the new Chair. Some commentators noted the connection of one or two of the Muslims implicated in the Chair initiative with a Libyan-based international religious organization. To the shock and consternation of moderate Canadian Muslims and non-Muslims, alike, Huron University College appointed to its Islamic chair, Muslim Brotherhood-oriented figure

Dr. Ingrid Mattson, former head of the Islamic Society of North America, a US organization that was designated by Washington an unindicted co-conspirator in a history-making terror-funding prosecution. Mattson and other radical interests have been able to parlay the ostensible respectability of such appointments into opportunities to gain access to elite circles, as when Dr. Mattson was invited to be the keynote speaker at an Ottawa Muslim Women's Organization event that was moderated by CBC Ottawa and – in a serious lapse of vice-regal judgement – attended by Her Excellency Sharon Johnston, wife of the Governor General. [13]

Meanwhile, in Canada's capital, Carleton University's Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam had no compunction about hosting an event for Tariq Ramadan, a personality of the Iranian government's Press TV who is reputed to be a leading Muslim Brotherhood front-person.

Another ideological war is being fought on behalf of the extremists by controversial Pakistani scholar Dr. Farhat Hashmi who has set up Al-Huda Academy, a female-only school, in Canada. [14] A July 2006 article in Maclean's, reported that she was still teaching her students a fundamentalist brand of Islam, promoting polygamy and subservience to men, some nine months after immigration officials demanded she leave the country. Yet she remains here. Moderate Muslims believe her lessons encourage extremist views among her students in Mississauga – the same Toronto suburb where many of the 18 men arrested on 2 June 2006, on terrorism-related charges, grew up and developed into radicals. Some of those young men's militant views are reputed to have been influenced by their ideologically inclined wives, a reminder that the radicalizing of females in childhood can have grave downstream consequences. As for the dyed-in-the-wool quality of some of those convicted in the Toronto 18 affair, one need only look at Somali-born Canadian convict Ali Mohamed Dirie. After serving his time, he promptly headed for Syria, where he was reportedly killed in 2013, fighting in the ranks of an extremist rebel group. [15]

Canadian government policies need more strongly to reinforce Canadian values. For instance, it would seem to ill serve the public interest to countenance official discussion about the possibility of welcoming Sharia law. Yet, this is what happened in the key Canadian province of Ontario. In late 2003, Canadian media reported that the hardline Islamic Institute of Civil Justice would offer arbitration in family disputes in accordance with Ontario's Arbitration Act of 1991 and what Institute backers regarded as Islamic legal principles. A vociferous two-year debate ensued about the introduction of "Sharia civil law" in Ontario, culminating in a report by former Attorney General Marion Boyd. Although radical Sharia advocates like the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) (now rebranded the National Council of Canadian Muslims [NCCM]) ultimately failed in their campaign, the treatment of the proposition as one worthy of discussion has since encouraged Canadian and doubtless other Islamists to promote their agendas and become aggressive about bringing in Sharia by stealth.

Some observers feel that Canada is one of the few G20 countries lacking appropriately complete security legislation. At a conference in Ottawa, for example, a former Chair of the Senate's National Security and Defence Committee suggested that there was a need for Canada to establish laws, including legal procedures, that would be specific to national security and terrorism in Canada, and that this system is separate from criminal law as currently understood. Needless to say, such proposals could have considerable potential constitutional implications that would have to be examined.

Security should not be a concern for Muslim Canadians alone, but of all Canadians because the safety of Canada affects all of us. We need to work together to unravel some of the reasons why we are faced with this crisis today. We must do whatever responsibly can be done for the safety of Canada. If this means that we need to monitor what is being said in mosques, so be it. Apparently, certain students and medical interns entering Canada are not subject to background security checks. This should be rectified.

Canada's immigration intake is the highest per capita in the world, at about 280,000 per annum. Canada's population was about 29 million a decade ago – today it has rapidly climbed to 34 million, due largely to immigration. In a single recent year, the Minister of Immigration boasted that Canadians welcomed 519,000 newcomers, including certain visa holders, a number that approaches 600,000, today. A major study by Canada's Fraser Institute suggests that immigration costs Canada \$16 to \$23 billion net when social welfare expenditures are considered, yet the inflow continues for what appear to be political reasons associated with government's desire to ingratiate itself with fast-developing ethno-cultural and religious vote-banks. [16]

According to recent statistics, the Canadian Muslim population – roughly 940,000 – will triple by 2030. A 2007 Environics poll concludes that 12% of Canadian Muslims could justify mass casualty attacks in Canada, including a takeover of the country's Parliament and killing of the Prime Minister. It has been estimated that this translates into between 49,000 to 119,000 people who could rationalize attacking their fellow Canadians. [17]

The refugee system needs to be overhauled. A survey based on media reports of 25 Islamic terrorists and suspects who entered Canada as adults indicated that 16 claimed refugee status. In the period immediately following 9/11, Canada allowed more than 15,000 people to make refugee claims, with close to 2,500 coming from terrorist-producing countries like Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Iraq, Algeria, Albania, and Afghanistan. Canada also laid out the welcome mat for thousands fleeing illegal status in the US. Canada's legal regime essentially supports a proposition that, once a person sets foot on Canadian soil, they can claim asylum or refugee status and be entitled to health care, welfare payments and other benefits – and potentially lengthy legal proceedings. The record of deportations points to a far-from-rigorous government

determination to remove the unwelcome. The joke is that people eat their passports en route to Canada.

In the name of public safety and social cohesion, an immediate moratorium should be imposed on Canada's accepting immigrants from Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, and other nations known to support terrorism or produce terrorists. Bona fide Convention refugees are, of course, a different matter.

In 2003, the respected Center for Immigration Studies in Washington released a paper *North American Borders* by Professor Glynn Custred [18]. "Canada is a weak link in America's defence against terrorist operations," wrote the professor. "US security is only as good as Canadian security since the US has no control over who comes into Canada." This is a realistic appraisal fraught with adverse possibilities for trade relations between the United States and Canada.

The waiting period for getting Canadian citizenship should be increased to at least five years so that thorough background checks can be made. As it stands, landed immigrants need only have spent three of the preceding four years in Canada, in order to win citizenship, easily one of the most limited residency requirements of any country. This should help weed out terrorists, foreign intelligence officers, Chinese triads, Russian mafia, and warlords, to name a few groups.

There needs to be better monitoring of foreign fundraisers by Revenue Canada and greater transparency about funds being channeled into Muslim organizations and mosques.

To combat "home-grown terrorists" we need to introduce homegrown preachers as they have started doing in England and France, although we should not be blind to the fact that some of the extreme elements of Muslim Brotherhood and other front organizations are homebred.

Some immigrants park their families in Canada while the men leave to work abroad and come back only to use the social welfare system. How will such families develop loyalty to Canada when they have a foot in two contrasting worlds? These families can also have issues adapting to Canadian lifestyles, many coming from highly patriarchal cultures in which young boys are left in charge of their mothers and other female relatives, an arrangement that gives them a distorted understanding of women's rights and gender equality.

One must also ask why Canada continues to be a haven for terrorists even as it has experienced a relative paucity of violent terrorist attacks. An October 2003 Library of Congress report titled *Nations Hospitable to Organized Crime and Terrorism*, reported that:

*“...terrorists and international crime groups are increasingly using Canada as an operational base and transit en route to USA. A generous welfare system, lax immigration laws, infrequent prosecutions, light sentencing and long borders and coastlines offer many points of entry and facilitate movement. Canada is a favoured destination for terrorist groups and international organised crime groups.” [19]*

James Bissett, former Executive Director of the Canadian Immigration Service has said that, “The philosophy of the immigration department is to facilitate, to speed things up, and to get people in. Enforcement and control are given very low priority”. [20] This is evident in the fact that once a landed immigrant sponsors and brings in their extended family, their siblings do not have to undergo a background check; also medical interns and foreign students do not face the same background checks as regular applicants and can come in without any screening. Once in the country, they are essentially off the radar for any kind of tracking purposes.

The classic expression of Canada’s systemic inability to deal with certain kinds of immigration problems bearing on national security, involves the case of Mohammad Issa Mohammad. A Greek court sentenced Mohammad to 17 years for an attack on an El-Al airliner in Athens in 1968 in which a passenger was killed. The convict was released after just two years later in an inmates-for-hostages exchange engineered by a Palestinian terror group that took over a Greek airliner. He thereupon returned to work with terrorist operators for several years. Then, in 1987, Mohammad equipped himself with a false identity and succeeded in entering Canada as a landed immigrant. He was ordered deported in 1988, and was finally deported after 25 years and over \$3 million in legal costs in May 2013.

More recently, Raed Jaser was arrested in Toronto on 22 April 2013 along with co-accused Chiheb Esseghaier, a Tunisian living in Montreal. They were charged with terrorism offences over what police described as an extremist plot to kill train passengers.

Following the arrests, it was revealed by the National Post that Mr. Jaser was a failed refugee claimant who had been convicted of threatening and multiple counts of fraud since coming to Canada in 1993 – but that he had been accepted as an immigrant nonetheless after having his criminal record pardoned. Furthermore, a transcript of a 2004 Immigration and Refugee Board detention hearing for Raed Jaser [21] shows Canadian immigration authorities tried to deport him nine years earlier but never did so because, as a stateless Palestinian, he could not be sent to any other country.

Canada’s citizens and authorities must come together, free themselves of the shackles of political correctness, and deal decisively with the threat of extremism coming from abroad, and arising in our midst. Revised approaches to law and policy might be among the answers to the problem of extremism and terror.

If we grapple sensibly with the extremist challenge, Canada can remain 'strong and free,' become a model for the rest of the world, and be a safe haven in which our children and grandchildren, can enjoy the benefits of being "Canadians first".