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**SPECIAL REPORT:
THE CANADIAN
WHO DETOXIFIES
JIHADISTS**

**U.S. AMBASSADOR
DAVID JACOBSON
SAYS HE'S JUST AN
ORDINARY GUY**

**Please
don't
call me
'Excellency'**



Alastair Sweeny on the rise of the BlackBerry
Fen Osler Hampson on the dogs of war
Jennifer Campbell on the return of John Manley





Detoxifying Canada's jihadists

How Muhammad Robert Heft works with troubled and radical Muslim youth to rediscover the non-violent instructions of the Koran. By Donna Jacobs

PART I – Muhammad Robert Heft

The scene is a huge conference room at Ottawa's Crowne Plaza Hotel. The topic: Terrorism, Cyberspies and a New 'Cold' War. Canada's top people in security and intelligence have convened to assess the risk of terrorism in one of the world's most peaceable places.

CSIS Director Richard Fadden speaks: "Terrorism itself is often portrayed not as a real crime but as a political one. Terror is downgraded to a form of dissent, an act of revolutionary charm rather than a criminal code offence and a violation of international human rights standards... We have a serious blind spot as a country."

RCMP Commissioner William Elliott warns that Canada cannot ignore “the reality and the severity” of the terrorist threats it faces. “Al-Qaeda-related entities serve as an inspiration to violent extremists all over the globe,” he says. “Al-Qaeda is both a brand and an ideology. It is an ideology that is at the heart of the radicalization of citizens of many countries, including Canada.”

And then, unscripted, Muhammad Robert Heft, white-robed and turbaned amidst a roomful of Western security experts in suits, stands up in front of the audience and speaks.

“I came here with Mubin Shaikh,” says the ruddy-cheeked, blue-eyed Protestant who converted to Islam in 1998. “Mubin was the police agent who penetrated and revealed the Toronto 18 to the RCMP and who is responsible for hundreds of us being safe.

“I think people don’t recognize that when you put your life on the line for the safety of Canadians, and people in the world, you get demonized in your own community because, in effect, they see you as a traitor. It’s very, very difficult to balance.”

(Mr. Shaikh is a controversial figure in the Muslim community because he received money from the RCMP for his work. Later, Mr. Heft says that Mr. Shaikh risked his life and his reputation trying to prevent terrorism. And even though the Muslim community is skeptical because of “past mistakes and run-ins with the RCMP and CSIS,” he believes Mr. Shaikh would have the support of the majority of Muslims had he refused financial compensation.)

Then Mr. Heft, who runs a social services and de-radicalization service at his Paradise Forever Islamic Centre in Toronto, makes his own more optimistic prediction.

He couldn’t have had a better audience. The annual CASIS conference (Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies) was founded by Canadian academics to bring discussion on national security into a public forum. Besides CSIS, the RCMP, the Canadian Security Establishment and the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre, the conference attracts most of Canada’s academics who specialize in terrorism and security (many of whom presented ground-breaking papers on security threats).

“I forecast that that over the next few years, you’ll be seeing a lot of people like Mubin and myself,” says Mr. Heft. “You’ll

be seeing a lot of people coming forward from our community who want you to know that this look (gesturing to his Muslim garb) has been hijacked.

“So you have to differentiate between a person’s look and the ideas the person carries. To help do that, we want to let you know there are people working on a grassroots level, for free, in Muslim communities. To be independent, I can receive no federal funding whatsoever.

“Yet representatives of the U.S. in Canada have come to us to talk and to understand the Muslim mentality. The Canadian government comes to us for help. CSIS and the RCMP — we cooperate for the sake of justice. We try to help them understand the mentality of the people with deviant views — and keep these individual away from the vast majority of Muslims who are law-abiding citizens.”

Mr. Heft’s grassroots program, located on two floors of a modern medical building at 2045 Dufferin Street in Toronto, is nicknamed P4E. “Paradise Forever — there’s nothing better,” the Winnipeg-born former Lutheran says, “than meeting your Lord.”

The newly-renovated 18-bed Islamic centre, complete with prayer room, food bank, computer lab and social services offices, has a staff of three, including administrator Abdul Sharif Hamilton, a fellow convert from Montreal — and \$17,000 in security equipment.

But, by far, what has most captured the interest of Canadian intelligence agencies is the centre’s “theological detox” program.

Before Mr. Heft admits troubled young Muslims to intensive counselling and study of the Koran, he requires that would-be jihadists and misguided Muslims sit in a circle — which includes police — and confess and repudiate what they believed and acknowledge the harm that these beliefs could cause to themselves and to the average Canadian.

“I’ve been in contact with several lawyers of the Toronto 18,” he says, “and two of the men themselves.”

Mr. Heft described his detox operation in an interview with *Diplomat* magazine.

Young Muslim men arrive at the centre, sometimes angry new converts bent on *jihad* against the West. They’re either Canadian-born Muslims, or they were welcomed by Canada as immigrants. They can only stay at the centre if they seek a job, an education or a trade — and they pay \$400 a month. “We don’t run a wel-

fare operation here.”

“Yes, I deal with the most troubled,” says Mr. Heft, 37, who, as president, oversees the operation.

He adds that he would accept Toronto-born Omar Khadr at the centre if he is sent back to Canada from Guantanamo Bay in Cuba where he is charged with terrorism and with killing a U.S. soldier with a grenade in Afghanistan.

“It’s such a hot potato nobody knows what to do with him,” Mr. Heft says. “So I say give him to us for two years. Our place is under surveillance already. We’ve got security cameras. Family visits would be in English and supervised. I’ve got connections to the RCMP and CSIS. He could wear an ankle bracelet. We have a lot of support from the community with psychiatrists, psychologists and he could be confined, other than school and work, until he finished the program.”

Remarkably, Mr. Heft plays an open hand with jihadists and CSIS, the RCMP and Metro Toronto police.

The men who stay at his centre know that he meets with these agencies — all which have P4E either under surveillance or on their radar. He stands at the cultural fracture line of the Muslim and Western world.

“I educate the RCMP and CSIS on profiling,” he says. He also does bridge-building. Last year, he set up a soccer game between the RCMP and Muslim youth who might have been “a little apprehensive of the RCMP.” They ended the 4-4 tied game with a “no-holds-barred conversation.”

RCMP Superintendent Jamie Jagoe oversees national security investigations in his job as assistant criminal operations officer for the Toronto-based Integrated National Security Enforcement Team, Ontario Division.

“After the soccer match, the youth talked about some challenges that they’re faced with, just in their day-to-day life,” says Supt. Jagoe. “And some of our officers talked about what they do, just to help build bridges and develop a relationship with young people, a few of whom might encounter problems ranging from crime to drugs to radicalization.”

He says that outreach programs are paying off. “Since we started talking to the community about the phenomenon of radicalization of youth, and young people wanting to commit an attack on Canadian soil, we have seen an acknowledgement grow that has generated a dialogue.

“At first there was almost complete



Abdullah Mathew Braun, U.S. president of P4E; Abdul Shakur Brooks, of the P4E education department; and Muhammad Robert Heft in the Dubai desert.

denial and now people are willing to talk about it," he says. "Where Mr. Heft is taking that dialogue is first to accept that there is a problem.

"We're supportive of anybody who takes a community-based approach to dealing with these issues and certainly the solutions to these issues, I believe, are everybody's responsibility," he says "not just police. Mr. Heft is one of many people who are doing this work.

"Like young people experimenting with drugs, we have found there are those individuals who sometimes start down a certain path towards radical action. We want to prevent radicalization before it escalates to a criminal act."

Asked to describe his approach to radical destruction-bent Muslims, Mr. Heft tells a story instead.

Prior to the 2005 arrests of all but one of the Toronto 18, he worked at the biggest Muslim organization in Canada — the Islamic Foundation of Toronto in Scarborough.

"I was running my program from a three-bedroom brick house at 98 Robinstone Drive in Scarborough where up to 13 young men — perhaps one-third of them would-be jihadists or otherwise troubled young Muslim men — stayed three to six months.

"They were all young Canadian guys," he says. Their ancestries were diverse — Trinidadian, Italian, Spanish, Somali —

though some came from long-established families in Toronto and Nova Scotia.

"The only thing that some of the new Muslims in the house wanted to talk about was *jihad*," Mr. Heft says.

"Well, the house was a townhouse, so the walls were very thin. The neighbour was a Muslim. He goes to the mosque and he complains. He says: 'All these guys are doing is yelling and screaming about fighting *jihad* and they're keeping my family awake.'

"So what do they (the Islamic Foundation of Toronto) tell me?" Mr. Heft asks, frustration still evident. "They say: 'Kick the guys out of the house. We might shut down the house because it's too much work.'

"Now think about this: I've got guys in my house who are talking about *jihad* or pseudo-*jihad*. Now you're going to kick them out and send them where?"

"Now on top of that, I told them that CSIS was watching the house — that CSIS had a great interest in the house. They said 'Oh, we don't want CSIS watching the house. Don't meet with CSIS anymore. Let's shut down the house.'"

(Mr. Heft says that he has met with CSIS agents monthly since about 2003, helping them identify threats in the Muslim community "not through spying on individuals but in helping CSIS understand and develop effective policies and procedures. We'd have coffee, sit and talk

and I'd generally update them on what we were doing.")

"I said, 'Listen, if we kick those guys out, basically, you're going to see them on the 6 o'clock news in six months from now. They're going to be in big trouble.' They were sympathetic to all the ideas that the people were spewing through the Toronto 18. Some of them *were* from the Toronto 18 — Fahim Ahmad and Jahmaal James and Ali Dirie — they all knew people in the house and were friends with them and some were trying to recruit the guys I was trying to help.

"The first person convicted in the Toronto 18 terrorist plot, a young offender, had come to our house as a 15-year-old. He wasn't allowed to stay there because he was underage. He ended up going to the Salaheddin Islamic Centre in Scarborough, because we couldn't house him. He and others were talking to Ali Hindi."

(Imam Hindi, the Salaheddin centre's imam, has ties to the Khadr family — some members of whom adhered to Osama bin Laden's goals and have been injured or killed in doing so — that are well-documented. Equally well-documented now through recent testimony and videotapes was the serious intent of the Toronto 18 plotters to set off fertilizer bombs in the CN Tower, the Toronto CSIS building, the Toronto Stock Exchange and an Ontario military base.)

Says Mr. Heft: "I resigned because I



From left, MP Derek Lee; Ibrahim Bomelha, adviser to the prime minister and ruler of Dubai; and Muhammad Robert Heft during their 2009 trip to Dubai.

refused to kick them out of the house.” The Islamic Foundation of Toronto subsequently shut down the house.

Mr. Heft follows that story with another: “I had somebody at my centre, a Canadian-born white guy, who was trying to buy grenades and AK-47s. He found someone who had access to those weapons. That person came to me. Within 10 minutes, I got in contact with CSIS and let them know what was being talked about, and I set up a meeting between this person and CSIS.

“If somebody comes to me with information like that,” Mr. Heft says, “that’s an imminent threat.” The man wanted to give the guns to his family, who are not Muslims. “Now he is being watched and has, outwardly, renounced those ideas. A lot of these new Muslims get caught up in conspiracies — like one day the Canadian government is going to collapse and the average person will be fighting for his life to protect himself.”

PART II — The Muslim Way

It’s the summer of 2009 and Mr. Heft and Liberal MP for Scarborough-Rouge River Derek Lee make an unofficial visit to Dubai with the help of the United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Canada, Mohamed Abdulla Al Ghafli.

Mr. Heft and Mr. Lee meet with Ibrahim Bomelha, personal adviser to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is prime minister and ruler of Dubai and vice-president of the UAE.

The Sheikh’s charity, the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Humanitarian and Charity Foundation Establishment, supports Mr. Heft’s Paradise Forever (P4E) Islamic Centre in Toronto and its de-radicalization program for new converts with a yearly donation in six figures — whatever it takes, says Mr. Heft, to cover operating expenses.

It is one of the Sheikh’s countless donations. Often he provides disaster relief on a huge scale, such as the 2,000 food kits distributed to victims of the Sumatran earthquake last October — each food kit feeding a family of seven for a month — along with 20,000 hygiene kits and 4,000 blankets. He sent emergency supplies and medicines, including milk for 30,000 malnourished Gazan children and food parcels, during Israeli and Palestinian fighting in the Gaza in January 2009.

The two Canadians also meet in Abu Dhabi with the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Authority, the official charity of the UAE, chaired by Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, president of the UAE. Mr. Heft says that the Red Crescent is raising \$1.3 million towards his purchase of the medical building where he rents 10,000 square feet on two floors.

Sheikh Khalifa’s support for the Red Crescent Authority, which in the Middle East corresponds to the Red Cross, has totaled \$860 million in recent years and \$130 million in the first nine months of 2009 alone. According to the Emirates News Agency, the UAE Red Crescent has extended its help to people of 90 countries with services that range from disaster and

poverty relief and education to support for 52,000 orphans.

As they reach out for financial support, says Mr. Heft, Mr. Lee lends credibility to P4E: “Hey, these guys are on the up and up — help them out.”

Mr. Heft puts it this way: “In 2006, it was hard to get community support because people were skeptical of whether the arrests (of the Toronto 18) were legitimate. Guys like me needed support, but at the same time, to be independent, we can’t be funded by the government of Canada. So people can indirectly support us by vouching for our credibility.”

Mr. Lee says he’s impressed with the way Mr. Heft works.

“He tells youth under his care that there’s nothing to fear. He re-orientes them to worship under the guidance of the Koran. And he tells them not to get sucked into this unholy violence advocated by al-Qaeda and those who associate with it.”

Mr. Lee’s parliamentary experience on national security is significant. The Queen’s University law school graduate helped establish the first Commons subcommittee on national security, sat on the first five-year review of CSIS and pushed for oversight on the Canadian Security Establishment, Canada’s signals intelligence agency. He is now working to set up a parliamentary committee to receive classified information, an arrangement he says exists in Britain, the U.S. and Australia.

Mr. Heft also sought out Dan McTeague, Liberal MP for Pickering-Scarborough East and opposition critic for consular affairs, who works to rescue Canadians detained abroad. Both MPs are active in local Muslim events.

Mr. Lee says both Canadian and U.S. authorities are interested in the P4E program.

Barbara Cordero, vice-consul at the U.S. consulate in Toronto, and Kirk van der Walde, deputy political counsellor at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, have visited his centre, Mr. Heft says, “and liked what they saw.” Sometime within the next three years, he may open a similar program in Atlanta or Chicago.

Imam Hamid Slimi, chairman of the Canadian Council of Imams and president and founder of the Faith of Life Network, says Mr. Heft’s program answers a great need among new Muslims.

They’re looking for support because mosques and Islamic centres are still building infrastructure, he says. Many lack services for new Muslims — whether basic proper religious training to coun-

teract radical views or simple shelter. “Some of my students had nowhere to go in winter and Mr. Heft’s centre provided them a place. That’s the spirit of Islam — to shelter the unsheltered. We need more such programs.”

Shaykh Yusuf Badat is imam at the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, one of Canada’s largest mosques, with attendance of 3,000 for weekly Friday service. He’s also executive director and secretary of the Canadian Council of Muslim Theologians. He has known Mr. Heft and his centre for five years.

Imam Badat says many young Muslims found a retreat at P4E. Many had histories with crimes and violence. Mr. Heft “got close to them and they trusted him and his counselors. The young Muslims opened up and found the right path, inspired through services provided by centre,” says the imam. “Some of them still attend our mosque. Some got married, are very responsible, have families and are taking care of their kids and living normal lives.”

He describes Mr. Heft’s program as unique and highly professional: “It is well-laid out, well-structured, and well-connected with people in the community.”

The centre’s broad focus — helping young Muslims with drug addictions and family problems — reaches out to youth “in a Muslim way,” Mr. Lee says, “and shows them they can find spiritual and temporal fulfillment in the Koran and in prayer and meditation.”

During his first tour of the P4E centre, Mr. Lee says, he felt a nostalgic tug on seeing the former medical examining rooms turned into monastic bedrooms. It reminded him of his own years as a seminarian studying for the Catholic priesthood.

Mr. Heft, who until recently supported his wife and two young sons on \$18,000 a year, says he’s perpetually short of funds for the centre. He had to suspend his food bank last autumn (which he estimates helped 400 to 500 Muslim and non-Muslim families in its seven months of operation.) He plans to reopen it in February.

His half-million-dollar budget goes to salaries (his take-home salary is capped at \$47,000.) He breaks down his expenses: Rent costs \$180,000. Participating in conventions, running television programs and other outreach efforts cost \$140,000. Sponsorship of new Muslim converts and salaries costs another \$180,000. Next year, the centre plans to hire a social worker and a full-time imam and provide \$100,000 in student stipends for overseas religious



A flame erupts from a building hit with a missile launched by U.S. soldiers in Mosul, Iraq in July 2003. Muhammad Robert Heft went to Iraq as a human shield a four months prior to this.

study, with another \$50,000 for secular scholarships.

And the one big-ticket item: Buying the fully leased medical building to finance the centre. A letter from the federal government, vouching for his program, he says, would be helpful in fund-raising.

As for his focus, he says it’s the centre all the way.

“I’m there seven days a week, I’m grassroots, I’m available. I’m not a guy who’s walking around giving speeches to everyone. I’m out of my element (at conferences.) Even when I meet those people, it’s only for a specific reason and then I leave. I’m not wining and dining.”

Part III - Jihadist

About 13 years ago, Robert Heft hit rock bottom.

“I’d gone bankrupt,” he says. “I lost about \$120,000 at casinos, Proline sports betting and bookies.” He turned to the Bible. Conversations with the Palestinian clerk of a convenience store introduced him to Islam. He converted in 1998.

Ten months later, full of a new convert’s ardour, he was cultivated by a Canadian Egyptian, a member of the radical *Takseer al hijrah* living in Toronto whom he’d met at the Halton Mosque in Oakville.

Mr. Heft describes the typical recruitment razzle-dazzle.

“He charms you because, first, he’s an Arab and understands Arabic language. He’s memorized the whole Koran and, I guess, as a new convert, you’re an out-

sider. And there were many incidents in my first 10 months as a Muslim. I was welcomed and encouraged to turn to the community for support. When I asked for financial assistance, I was told I was under investigation for converting for money.”

“You know, also, as a new convert you think (some of) these guys (in the Muslim community) are not real Muslims. They don’t pray. They’re not fasting. They’re not following the religion. And that’s how they (radicals) catch you.

“At first, radicals don’t talk about warfare. They talk about things you can relate to — the community’s lack of religiousness. They say that you have to understand Islam has gone underground, almost a society within a society.

“And then, as he charms you, he says ‘Oh, there are millions of us around the world and we’re all an underground part of this group. Our goal is to overthrow the Muslim governments and, secretly, the Canadian and Western governments.’

“And they recruit new Muslim converts who are perfect targets since we are able to move around freely, without a lot of suspicion.

“I was finished with the Egyptian (radical), but I happened to be in Egypt in 2003 on the first day of bombing in the Iraq War. They were broadcasting images of children with three-quarters of their brains blown out.

“I was staying with a couple of Egyptians who said they planned to go to Iraq and help the Iraqi people. I decided I wanted to go as well. I thought Saddam was an idiot and I had no problem with

him being taken out of power. I thought that the people on the losing end were the civilians. I went as a human shield.

"I don't think I was thinking really extreme thoughts. I had no intention of picking up an AK-47. I don't believe in guns.

"I used the word *jihad* because my struggle was that I felt there were a lot of idiots in the world who shouldn't be in power. It seemed America only chose idiots (where there was possible gain) in return — in Iraq's case, a tremendous amount of oil.

"I went through the Syrian border with a medical supply bus and went to Baghdad and ended up staying one night in a Sheraton Hotel. I spent most of my time in the main electrical plant until the main transformer was blown out by a bomb about a kilometre away. I spent my last night in the Sheraton, took a taxi from Baghdad through Kirkuk to the front lines in Mosul, re-entered Syria and flew back to Egypt and then to Canada.

"While I was there, I was inspired (by the concept) that the real enemy of Muslims was the ignorance they sometimes have of their own religion. Bombs were going off all around. Anti-aircraft guns were shooting at missiles overhead.

"If there were any circumstances in which a person was going to think about God, it was going to be in the time they were facing death. I realized that a lot of these so-called Muslim leaders or political movements have very little to do with Islam and much to do with their ambition for political power.

"I was analyzing the question: As a human being, where is my value, if I have any, best used? I thought these thoughts sitting there waiting for a bomb to come on me, with the vast majority of the human shields being Christian and people of other faiths. Eighty percent of the human shields weren't even Muslims.

"I was in the middle of shock and awe for a week.

"When I got back to Canada, my wife told me CSIS had called looking for me. I already knew CSIS people because, when I (previously) applied for a visa to Saudi Arabia, I believed the Saudi embassy might have contacted CSIS to have this person checked out. I was a guy with a big beard and a religious hat.

"So what have you been up to?' the CSIS agent asked me.

"I was in Iraq in *jihad*,' I said.

"Do you think we can talk about that?' he inquired.

"That's how I got to a place where I

don't think they (CSIS) fear me, because if they want to know anything about me, they just have to ask. (Looking back,) I don't think I'm unbalanced when I believe there are some cases in world where people are unfairly being fought, Muslim or not-Muslim. I'm not a pacifist."

PART IV — Beliefs Today

Muhammad Robert Heft doesn't have to be politically correct. He is standing over chasms few manage to straddle. He meets all questions with disarming candour.

From his childhood in Winnipeg to an Islamic centre in Toronto, his path has been wildly indirect. Between these end pieces, he lived in Toronto, Montreal and Milton — where he lived from age eight until he married a Yemeni woman, 10 years ago. From 1996 to 1999, he owned and managed the men's Gen-X Hockey team in Milton. From 2001 to 2002, he taught English in Taiwan. In 2003, he started Paradise Forever Islamic Centre.

But there is another tale, one of his own fall to gambling and *jihad* — and his sought-after redemption. "For any harm I caused to another person," he says, "all I can do is to sincerely repent and change and show people I may have hurt in my past that I am sincerely trying to make up for it in how I live now.

"Any good that I do in the world, I give thanks and praise to God. And any mistakes I make, I ask those people and God to forgive me.

"I could never grasp the Trinity in Christianity," he says, explaining his conversion to Islam. "I never believed that God was a man, when God was the creator of man. I believed Jesus was a messenger of God and a prophet. Not God."

The details of his life are fresh in Muhammad Robert Heft's mind these days because he's working on his autobiography, due out this year. *From Blackjack to Iraq and Back: The making of a Fundamentalist* is being ghost-written by Donna Pearce, a co-writer/editor of books and Hollywood movies in the U.S.

Mr. Heft found Ms. Pearce online and told her his story. "She said it needed to be told to build bridges between Muslims and the West."

His own misguided and radical-thinking past has both equipped him and played a major part in driving him to start P4E.

"At the centre, I've had only a couple of people come through with the wrong idea. Outside the centre, between eight and 12 people, many affiliated with the Toronto 18, who used to very be anti-semitic, spoke a lot about warfare in general but are now trying to give back to Canada.

"We have a floor for women. Women don't get taken very seriously and it's not a good thing because some of the wives of these (radical) people are influential. I've seen people teach their kids some awful ideas. Some women are influencing children, close relatives and possibly their husbands. Sometimes we get infatuated by women."

Even as he walks the line between two cultures, he is not risk-free. "Once the RCMP came to me. They said that Ali Dirie, one of the Toronto 18, said he wanted to 'knock me out,' which is code for 'kill me,' the next time he saw me.

Ali Dirie moved with his mother to Canada from Somalia when he was seven. Last September, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven years in prison for procuring weapons, arranging false travel documents and trying to recruit extremists for a domestic terrorist. In taped court evidence, he called white people the "No. 1 filthiest people on the face of the planet. They don't have Islam. In Islam there is no racism, we only hate *kufar* (non-Muslims)."

Members of the RCMP, who were monitoring Ali Dirie, came across the death-threat intercept, went to Mr. Heft and told him they were "morally and legally obliged to warn him." They asked if he wanted to press charges, says Mr. Heft. "I told them basically that the guy's a clown — I'm not really worried about it.

"I've had other people say they're going to kill everyone at the centre. And 99 percent of these people are full of hot air. I have confidence in my Lord and in government agencies trying to protect citizens who are trying to make a difference. I know these things are being intercepted and dealt with.

"The most effective *jihad* is your own internal struggle against your own desires, your own sins, your own problems. Look, these Muslims who justify suicide bombings and killing civilians — they'll lie, they'll cheat, they'll steal. They'll not follow the principles of Islam.

"They may be looking for the Koran to justify their desire to enact revenge for what they feel is oppression of Muslims, to justify their anger, frustration, their (casting) blame and vengeance.

"(But), if you kill my son, I have no

right in Islam to kill your son. I have a right to take you to a legal system, to a judge and to go through a legal process. Islam isn't about vigilantism. They feel angry because the Jews have Jerusalem, for example — and they feel they are justified by any means necessary to get Jerusalem back.

"Some Muslims are ungrateful for all the things Canada has given to them. On a theoretical level, extremists say 'God owns the world so what I take from North America — the welfare, the healthcare — I have no responsibility to be grateful to the people here, because God gave these things to me.' The Koran says to be favourable those who are favourable to you."

"Radical Muslims take something out of context in the Koran to justify killing. They say, 'Look all we're doing is doing what the Koran said. It said: Kill them. We're killing them.' "

Why? "Because they're not Muslim."

He says there is a "radical kind of so-called Muslims" who preaches world conversion by force. "God tells us in the Koran it is only for us to give the message. God changes the hearts of people. So you can't force somebody's heart to believe in Islam.

"I think the end goal of these radicals is not conversion. It's power.

"So I think we have blood on our hands as a community. We've had different leaderships throughout the history of Islam that maybe took things too far — like the Crusades did. But in general, there was no issue about the Jews, Christians and Muslims living together, with them having their own legal systems, but living with the protection of the Muslims."

Of course, he says, many people didn't come to Canada for religious purposes. "They came for a better life. Some came here to take (all the benefits given by Canada). And their goal is to bring relatives back from their country to Canada.

"They're not the problem, on a radicalization level. They're flabbergasted when they see someone on TV who talks about 'Death to America' and stuff like that. They're thinking, 'Oh, look you idiot, you're going to make my job harder to make money.'"

What should Muslims in Canada do to help rein in the radical members of their community?

"They have to become more balanced in their approach to the government," Mr. Heft says, "and more grateful to the community in Canada."

"Yes, the government is going to make

mistakes. Not everybody in the government or government agencies is a saint and they might have a bias against Muslims. But the vast majority of them are just average people who are trying to catch the bad guys. And it just so happens that the Muslims have some bad guys in our community.

"It's not because they don't have bad guys in the Jewish or Christian or other communities. But it just so happens that right now, we're that community and we have to recognize and take responsibility for those few people.

"We can't deflect our responsibility — 99.9 percent of the Muslims in Canada would never hurt anybody but that 0.1 percent is all it takes for us to be stereotyped."

Another solution: "Talk more openly about the problems that community really has, about *jihad* and radicalization of the youth."

To those few people who come to Canada, who hate the Western culture here and nurse ideas of harming Canada and Canadians: "We should tell them to go back to a Muslim country. Some of the stuff they get away with saying in Canada — if they ever said those things in some

Muslim countries, they would probably find themselves in a jail underground and they might disappear for the rest of their life.

"I'm guessing but I'd say nine out of 10 mosques are OK." He estimates there are 100 mosques in Toronto, where 60 percent of Muslims live, and perhaps another 100 more mosques located across Canada.

"Those (one percent) of imams are not preaching violence openly. No one is telling people to go and fight. But the approach is to inflame the community to not build bridges with Western society. Those imams preach that the West is unjust and responsible for the world's immorality and problems. So these imams just put a sort of a wedge between the people who are listening to them and the greater Canadian community.

"Canadians just don't understand. And we're not communicating. I think the non-Muslim Canadians are coming to the conclusion that we're not serious about cooperating for justice. They could care less if we play hockey and wear beards. They want to know we're team players when it comes to the safety of Canadian citizens."

Donna Jacobs is the publisher of *Diplomat*.



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