

## Seamus Hughes

Seamus Hughes is the Deputy Director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University. He is an expert on terrorism, homegrown violent extremism, and countering violent extremism (CVE). Hughes has authored numerous reports for the Program including 'ISIS in America: From Retweets to Raqqa' and 'The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq.' He regularly provides commentary to media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, the Atlantic, NPR, CNN, MSNBC, FoxNews, BBC, PBS, and CBS' *60 Minutes*. He has testified before the U.S. Congress on multiple occasions.

Hughes previously worked at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), serving as a lead staffer on U.S. government efforts to implement a national CVE strategy. He regularly led engagements with Muslim American communities across the country, provided counsel to civic leaders after high-profile terror-related incidents, and met with families of individuals who joined terrorist organizations. Hughes created a groundbreaking intervention program to help steer individuals away from violence through non-law enforcement means and worked closely with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, Fusion Centers, and U.S. Attorney Offices.

Prior to NCTC, Hughes served as the Senior Counterterrorism Advisor for the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. He organized over a dozen congressional hearings on the threat of homegrown violent extremism and led fact-finding delegations to the various European and Middle Eastern countries. He authored two reports for the Senate: "A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Government's Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack" and "Zachary Chesser: A Case Study in Online Islamist Radicalization and Its Meaning for the Threat of Homegrown Terrorism."

Hughes has authored numerous legislative bills, including sections of the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act and the Special Agent Samuel Hicks Families of Fallen Heroes Act. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland, and a recipient of the National Security Council Outstanding Service Award and two NCTC Director's Awards for outstanding service. He teaches classes at George Washington University and Georgetown University.

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- EXPERIENCE** **Deputy Director, Program on Extremism** June 2015 – Current  
*George Washington University, Washington D.C.*
- Manage a team of researchers and fellows examining the threat of terrorism within the United States and throughout the world.
  - Provided congressional expert testimonies on terrorism and countering violent extremism for the U.S. House of Representatives.
  - Author of numerous counterterrorism public reports and commentaries. Consults with National Security Council staff, intelligence community, and security agencies on terrorism issues.

- Staff, Homeland, Countering Violent Extremism & Cyber** December 2011 – June 2015  
*National Counterterrorism Center, McLean, VA*
- Coordinated and built consensus among various Departments and Agencies in order to efficiently and effectively implement national strategy to prevent terrorist recruitment and radicalization within the United States.
  - Coordinated United States Government and non-governmental overseas efforts to counter radicalization and recruitment of foreign terrorist organizations.
  - Engaged with religious and community leaders about countering violent extremism and foreign terrorist recruitment through presentations at places of worship and town halls across the U.S.

- Senior Counterterrorism Advisor** March 2011 – December 2011  
*U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Washington, DC*
- Lead advisor to the Chairman of the Committee on international and domestic terrorism issues with a focus on the use of the internet for radicalization and recruitment of terrorists.
  - Author of bipartisan congressional report Zachary Chesser: A Case Study in Online Islamist Radicalization and Its Meaning for the Threat of Homegrown Terrorism.

- Professional Staff Member** March 2009 – March 2011  
*U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Washington, DC*
- Investigated the threat of terrorism in the United States, organized ten Congressional hearings, and authored sections on the narrative that inspires homegrown terrorism for the Committee's bipartisan investigative report on the Fort Hood attack.
  - Conducted daily oversight of the Intelligence Community and Department of Homeland Security through briefings, hearings, and letters.
  - Led fact-finding delegations to Guantanamo Bay, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, United Kingdom, Israel, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, and Canada.

- Deputy Press Secretary** July 2007 – February 2009  
*U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Washington, DC*
- Spokesman for the Committee and interacted daily with national media to discuss the Committee's agenda including homeland security, emergency preparedness, and government oversight.
  - Drafted press releases, statements, advisories on Committee activities, including bills, hearings, and legislative markups.
  - Coordinated press conferences and media appearances for the Chairman of the Committee.

**EDUCATION** **University of Maryland, College Park, MD**  
Bachelor of Arts: Government & Politics, July 2006

**AWARDS** **Council on Foreign Relations**  
Term Member, 2019-Current

**King's College London – International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence**

Fellow, 2017-Current

**Italian Institute for International Political Studies – Center on Radicalization and International Terrorism**

Associate Fellow, 2017-2018

**White House National Security Council**

Outstanding Service Award, 2015

**George Washington University - Homeland Security Policy Institute**

Senior Fellow, 2011-2012

**National Counterterrorism Center**

Director's Award, 2013 & 2014

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Georgetown University – Adjunct Faculty 2017 – Current

- Homegrown Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment, Fall 2017
- Homegrown Terrorism and Responses to Homegrown Terrorism, Spring 2018
- Homegrown Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment, Fall 2018
- Homegrown Terrorism and Responses to Homegrown Terrorism, Spring 2019
- Homegrown Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment, Fall 2019

George Washington University – Adjunct Faculty 2017 – 2018

- Homegrown Terrorism, Summer 2017
- U.S. National Security Policy Planning, Fall 2017
- Countering Violent Extremism, Summer 2018
- Homegrown Terrorism, Summer 2018

## CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONIES

- “The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?”, before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, 7/15/15
- “Countering the Virtual Caliphate”, before the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, 6/23/16
- “Allies Under Attack: The Terrorist Threat to Europe”, before the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, 6/27/17
- “Combatting Homegrown Terrorism”, before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 7/27/17
- “Low Cost, High Impact: Combatting the Financing of Lone-Wolf and Small-Scale Terrorist Attacks”, before the U.S. House of Representatives Financial Services Committee, 9/6/17

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- “How to stop ISIS from recruiting American teens,” *The Washington Post*, 6/7/15
- “ISIS in America”, George Washington University, 12/1/15
- “Islamic State is successfully radicalizing Americans. How do we stop them?”, *LATimes*, 5/18/16
- “To stop ISIS recruitment, focus offline,” *Lawfare*, 8/7/16
- “The Threat to the United States from the Islamic State’s Virtual Entrepreneurs”, *West Point CTC Sentinel*, 3/9/17
- “The Reach of ISIS's Virtual Entrepreneurs into the United States,” *Lawfare*, 3/28/17
- “First He Became an American, Then He Joined ISIS”, *The Atlantic*, 5/25/17
- “A New American Leader Rises in the Islamic State”, *The Atlantic*, 1/13/18
- “The Travelers: American Jihadist in Syria and Iraq”, George Washington University, 2/6/18
- “The Story of an American Islamic State Member Allegedly Captured in Syria”, *Lawfare*, 1/6/19

- “Sixteen-Year-Old American Islamic State Fighter Reportedly Captured in Syria”, Lawfare, 1/9/19

## FEATURED MEDIA

- “How an academic uncovered news about Assange, a kickback scheme and an ISIS commander”, *CBS*
- “These researchers study terrorists. Sometimes, they also stumble across scoops.” *Washington Post Magazine*
- “Anderson Cooper investigates first ISIS-claimed attack in U.S.,” *CBS’s 60 Minutes*,

## ADDITIONAL MEDIA

- “ISIS in America” *CNN News*, 12/2/15
- “The terrorism question looming over the San Bernardino attack,” *PBS NewsHour*, 12/3/15
- “Where are ISIS-related arrests in US?,” *MSNBC*, 12/1/15
- “How ISIS spreads radicalization in the US,” *CNBC*, 12/8/15
- “Combating Homegrown Terrorism,” *C-SPAN’s Washington Journal*, 6/18/16
- “Could the Orlando attack have been prevented?” *CBS News*, 6/15/16
- “Study finds dozens of ISIS-related crimes in U.S.,” *The Boston Globe*, 12/1/15
- “‘Unprecedented’: What ISIS looks like in America,” *NPR*, 12/1/15
- “Nation confronts a new menace after San Bernardino shooting,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 12/4/15
- “How American Muslims counter ISIS ‘groomers’,” *The Atlantic*, 12/7/15
- “Americans attracted to ISIS find an ‘echo chamber’ on social media,” *The New York Times*, 12/8/15
- “Both San Bernardino shooters radicalized at least 2 years ago,” *The Boston Globe*, 12/9/15
- “FBI steps up pursuit of terror threats on social media,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 2/7/16
- “Conviction in first ISIS trial in the U.S. underscores foreign fighter threat,” *PBS Newshour*, 3/12/2016
- “How vulnerable is the United States to a Brussels-like attack?” *Chicago Tribune*, 3/22/2016
- “Only hard choices for parents whose children flirt with terror,” *The New York Times*, 4/9/16
- “American Isis defector charged despite no evidence of violence,” *The Guardian*, 6/9/16
- “Orlando gunman known to FBI shows difficulty of ‘lone wolf’ cases,” *The Guardian*, 6/12/16
- “Orlando Shooting Plays Into FBI’s Homegrown-Terror Worries,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 6/13/16
- “FBI under scrutiny after dropping past investigation of Orlando shooter,” *The Washington Post*, 6/14/16
- “There’s a new tool to take down terrorism images online. But social-media companies are wary of it,” *The Washington Post*, 6/21/16
- “‘I am fed up with this evil’: How an American went from Ivy League student to disillusioned ISIS fighter,” *Washington Post*, 6/30/16
- “ISIS Retweet Arrest Raises Free Speech Issues,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/12/16
- “Why Islamic State’s Abu Muhammad Adnani was much more than a spokesman,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/30/16
- “Shades of Tamerlan Tsarnaev present in N.Y. bombing suspect,” *The Boston Globe*, 9/21/16
- “Investigators said they killed for ISIS. But were they different from ‘regular’ mass killers?,” *Washington Post*, 9/23/16
- “Transcripts Show ISIS Influence on Orlando Gunman,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 9/27/16
- “Extremist Imam Tests F.B.I. and the Limits of the Law,” *The New York Times*, 9/30/16
- “Maryland imam’s advocacy of ISIS lands him at center of terrorism probe,” *The Washington Post*, 10/7/16
- “The Coldhearted Folly of Trump’s Proposed Immigration Order,” *The Atlantic*, 1/27/17
- “Arizona Man Is Convicted of Helping New York City College Student Join ISIS,” *The New York Times*, 1/30/17

- “Not ‘Lone Wolves’ After All: How ISIS Guides World’s Terror Plots From Afar,” *The New York Times*, 2/4/17
- “Arizona Man Sentenced for Planning Islamic State-Inspired Attack in Texas,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 2/8/17
- “Spicer claims he ‘clearly meant Orlando’ after citing mystery Atlanta terrorist attack three times,” *The Washington Post*, 2/9/17
- “German police say suspected Islamist extremist accused of plot was once a neo-Nazi,” *The Washington Post*, 2/28/17
- “What Lies Ahead for Obama's Countering Violent Extremism Program?” *The Atlantic*, 3/17/17
- “Fact Check: The Trump Administration’s Argument for a Border Wall”, *The New York Times*, 4/27/2017
- “Terrorists are not Snowflakes”, *Foreign Policy*, 4/27/2017
- “What life inside the Islamic State looks like for recruits”, *The Washington Post*, 6/6/17
- “Feds say JCC bomb threat suspect ran paid service on Dark Web”, *CNN*, 8/8/2017
- “FBI Says ISIS Used eBay to Send Terror Cash to U.S.”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/10/17
- “American Pleads Guilty to Accepting Islamic State Money to Fund Terrorism”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/15/2017
- “Federal government has long ignored white supremacist threats, critics say”, *The Washington Post*, 9/2/2017
- “ISIS Releases Recording Said to Be of Its Leader”, *The New York Times*, 9/28/17
- “As ISIS Loses Territory, What happens to its fighters Who Came from other countries?”, *NPR All Things Considered*, 10/24/17
- “Facebook says artificial intelligence has sped up removal of terrorist content”, *USA Today*, 11/28/17
- “Homegrown attacks rising worry in U.S. as Islamic State weakens abroad”, *Reuters*, 12/14/17
- “One Brooklyn Man’s Lonely Journey to Jihad”, *The New York Times*, 1/3/18
- “New report says most U.S. terrorist are foreign born, but check the fine print”, *NBC News*, 1/16/18
- “How an American Rose to the Upper Ranks of ISIS”, *NPR All Things Considered*, 1/17/18
- “American jihadists in Syria remain terror threat to US”, *ABCNews*, 2/6/18
- “Study: ISIS has lost territory but could still pose long-term threat”, *USA Today*, 2/6/18
- “Tech Firms Tout Progress on Scrubbing Online Terror Content, *The Wall Street Journal*, 6/19/18
- “American Accused of Being ISIS Fighter in Syria Faces Prosecution in U.S.”, *The New York Times*, 7/20/18
- “Video Purports to Show Tajikistan Attackers Pledging Allegiance to ISIS”, *The New York Times*, 7/31/18
- “To Syria And Back: How 2 Women Escaped Their Radicalized Husbands”, *NPR*, 8/8/18
- “ISIS Member Arrested in Sacramento, US Says”, *The New York Times*, 8/15/18
- “Counterterrorism expert who found Assange court filing: ‘I just thought it was a typo’, *CNN*, 11/16/18
- “How a George Washington U. Researcher Stumbled Across a Huge Government Secret”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11/16/18
- “Assange Is Secretly Charged in U.S., Prosecutors Mistakenly Reveal”, *The New York Times*, 11/16/18
- “How A ‘Court Records Nerd’ Discovered The Government May Be Charging Julian Assange”, *NPR*, 11/17/18
- “American ISIS Member Caught on Syrian Battlefield, Militia Says”, *The New York Times*, 1/6/19
- “A Border Wall to Stop Terrorists? Experts Say That Makes Little Sense”, *The New York Times*, 1/9/19
- “American Boy, 16, Caught Fighting for ISIS in Syria, Militia Says”, *The New York Times*, 1/16/19

- “FBI corruption probe goes beyond L.A. Councilman Jose Huizar to include other City Hall figures”, *Los Angeles Times*, 1/12/19
- “American ISIS Member Caught on Syrian Battlefield, Militia Says.” *The New York Times*
- “American from Texas captured while fighting for ISIS, militia says.” *ABC News*
- “American Boy, 16, Caught Fighting for ISIS in Syria, Militia Says.” *The New York Times*
- “2 American Wives of ISIS Militants Want to Return Home.” *The New York Times*
- “Coast Guard officer accused of plotting to kill Democrats, journalists.” *Politico*
- “What Happens When Americans Who Joined ISIS Want To Come Home.” *NPR*
- “The terrorism research center behind the Coast Guard officer scoop.” *The Columbia Journalism Review*
- “Arrests in domestic terror probes outpace those inspired by Islamic extremists.” *Washington Post*
- “How a change in law could lead to more arrests of domestic terrorists.” *ABC News*
- “Wisconsin Woman Used Hacked Facebook Accounts to Recruit for ISIS, Prosecutors Say.” *The New York Times*
- “Thousands of ISIS Children Suffer in Camps as Countries Grapple With Their Fate.” *The New York Times*
- “John Walker Lindh, Known as the ‘American Taliban,’ Is Set to Leave Federal Prison This Week.” *The New York Times*
- “‘American Taliban’ John Walker Lindh Released After 17 Years.” *Wall Street Journal*
- “‘American Taliban’ John Walker Lindh released from prison 3 years early,” *CBS News*