ADDRESSING THE VIOLENT EXTREMISM NARRATIVE

Ehsan Zaffar

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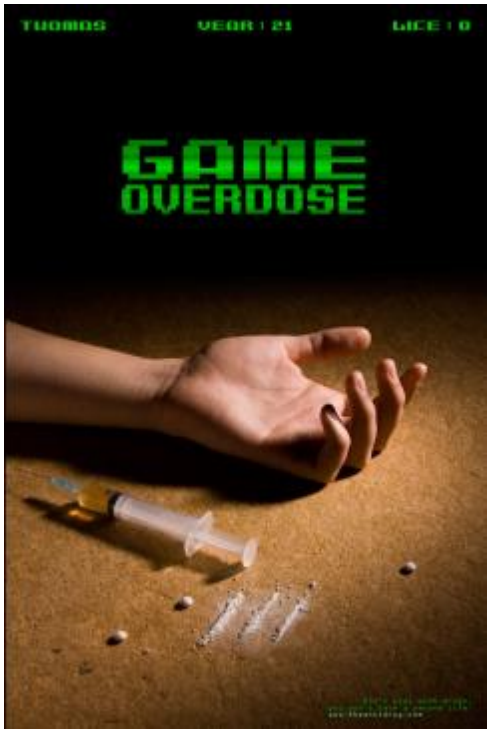
- **Understanding the Threat**
- Distinguishing the Threat
- Addressing the Threat
- Criticisms and Next Steps

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/THINKSTOCK

Response


GAME
OVERDOSE

DRUGS

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

Reaching communities through
prevention,
education
and support

YOU FADE AWAY

Response

??

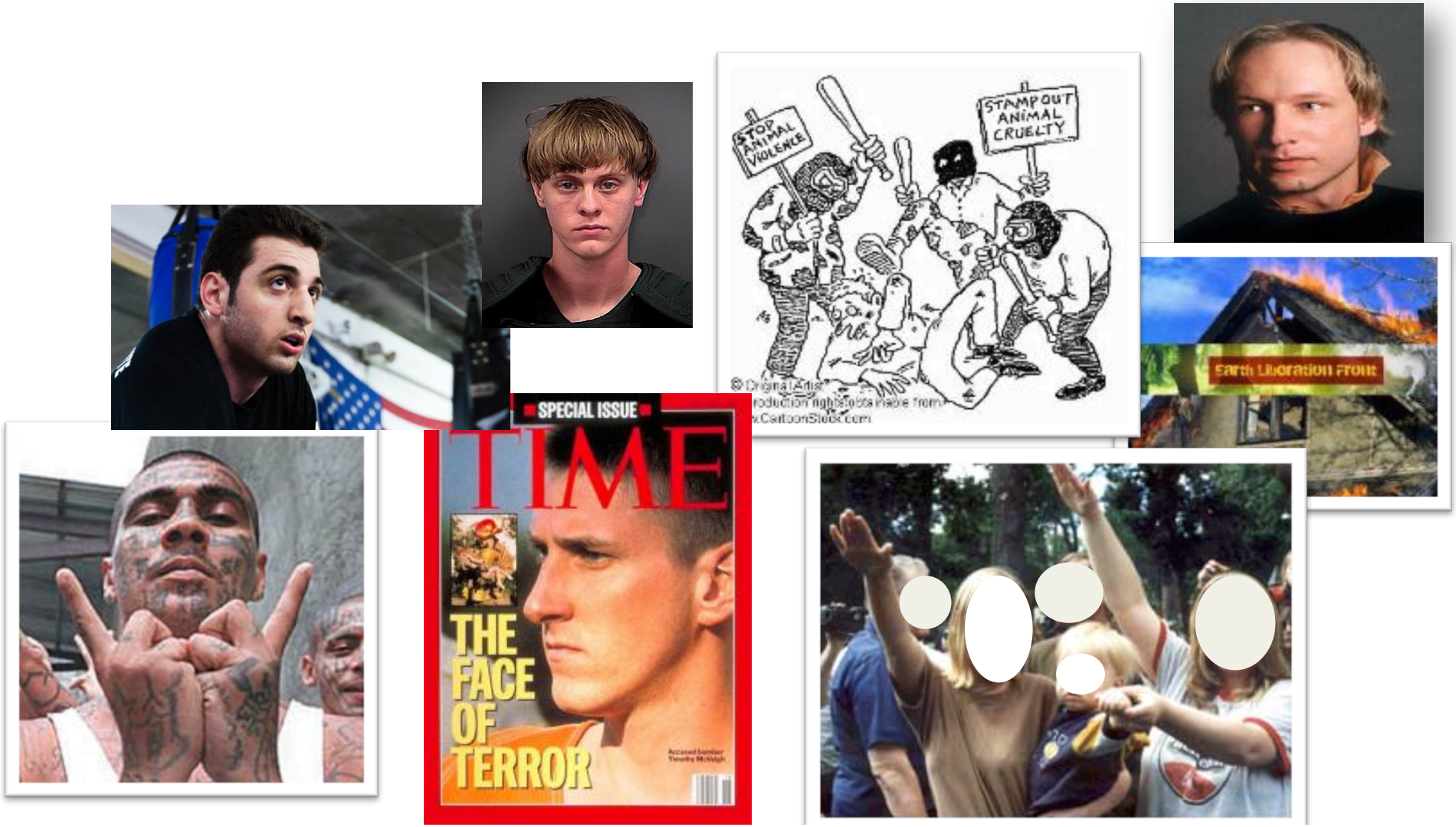
Defining Violent Extremists

- "Individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals"
  Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, August 2011, White House.

- Domestic Terrorists
- Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE's)

Defining Violent Extremists:

The Violent Extremist



Defining Violent Extremists:

The Violent Extremist

- We face a *wide range* of violent extremist threats …
  - Violent White Supremacists
  - Violent Eco-Terrorists
  - Neo-Nazis
  - Gangs
  - Religiously/ideologically motivated violent extremists

North Side
666
Feel Our
Pain

Defining Violent Extremists:

The Violent Extremist

Wade Michael Page

Defining Violent Extremists:

The Violent Extremist

Wade Michael Page

October 29, 2013

HUFF POST CRIME

Wade Michael Page, Temple Shooter, Used Internet To Further Beliefs

05/14/13 11:29 AM ET EDT AP

MILWAUKEE -- The man who killed six people and injured four others at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin was actively using the I to become more radical in his white supremacist beliefs in the months before the shooting rampage, according to a recently ur FBI warrant.

The court document shows federal agents quickly collected evidence of Wade Michael Page's Internet connections with white groups. The documents say Page became increasingly interested in conspiracy theories and videos online. The warrant does what Page was viewing, but that it disturbed his girlfriend, Misty Cook.

Page, 40, and Cook, 32, were active participants in an online message forum for a white supremacist group and joined in dozens same conversations, according to research by the Anti-Defamation League and the Journal Sentinel (http://bit.ly/10uCGat).

Page was active on social media, having at least two Facebook pages, under the names "Wade Hammer" and "Jackboot," a typical of others who used the Internet to become increasingly radical, the warrant said.

"FBI experts believe the Internet continues to serve as the primary radicalization instrument, used to recruit teenagers and young into the radical skinhead movement," the document said.

The FBI generated 200 investigative leads, interviewed 300 people and collected more than 200 pieces of evidence, Teresa L. C special agent in charge of the FBI's Milwaukee office, said in November.

The FBI eventually determined there was no conspiracy behind the shooting and that Page acted alone in the rampage, fin evidence to suggest the attack was "directed or facilitated by any white supremacist group," the document said.

Members of the Sikh community have lobbied Congress to require the FBI to track hate crimes against Sikhs. In March, more th members of Congress asked the FBI to track hate crimes against Sikhs, Hindus and Arab-Americans.

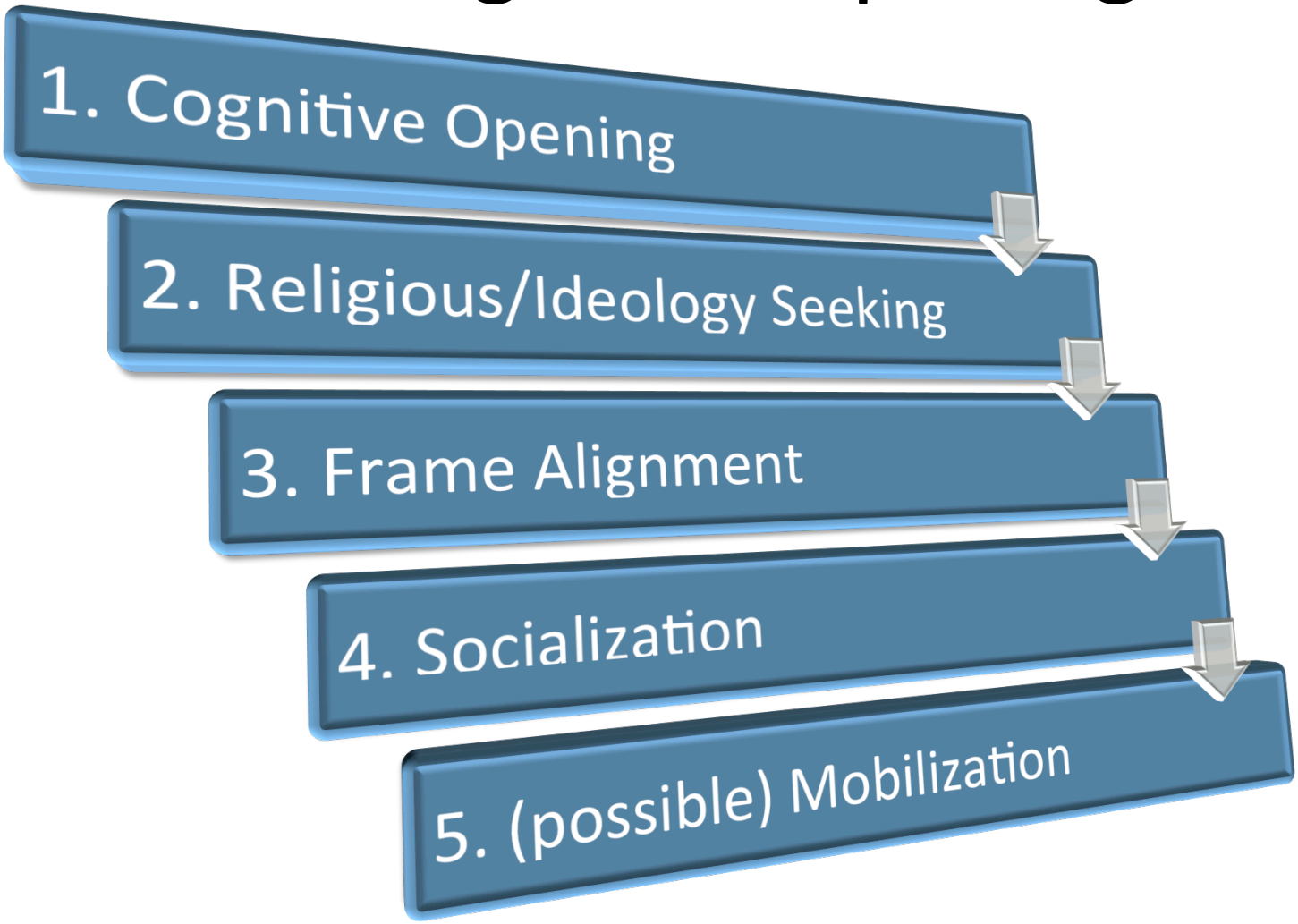
Information from: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, http://www.jsonline.com

Filed by Simon McCor

VIEW ALL USER COMMENTS

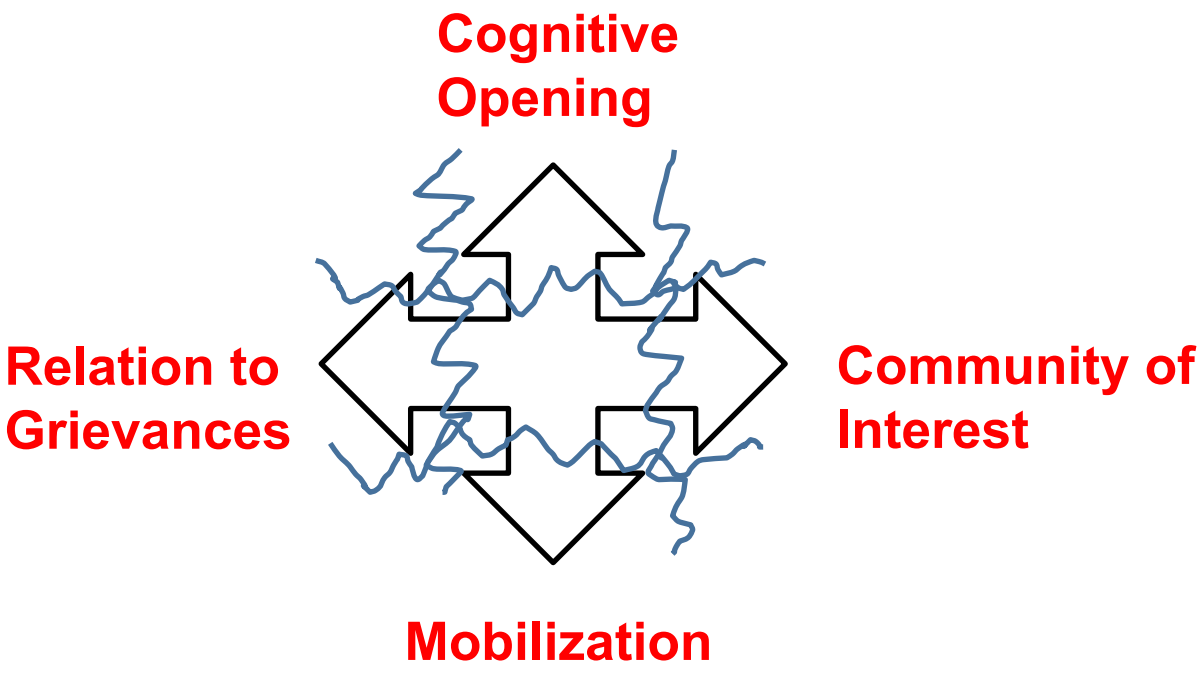
Understanding the Threat:

Cognitive Opening



Understanding the Threat:

Grievances



Dr. Peter Neumann, ICSR
Dr. Erroll Southers, CREATE

Understanding the Threat:

Joining the Cause

- Examples:
  - Economic (loss of job; mobility)
  - Social/cultural (racism; humiliation)
  - Political (repression; torture; political violence)
  - Personal (death; victimization by crime; feud)
  - Outreach (movement can reach out to aggrieved)

Understanding the Threat:

Joining the Cause

- **Violent Non-ISIS/Al-Qa'ida Inspired**
- Discuss Grievances
- Community of Interest
  - One to one interaction

- Operational Planning
  - Mobilization
- Conspiracy
  - Further Criminal Enterprise

- **Al-Qaida, ISIL Inspired**
- Discuss Grievances
- Community of Interest
  - No direct interaction

- Limited Operational Planning
- Limited direct transmission
- **Do what you can**

Understanding the Threat:

“Do what you can”/Cycle of Grievance

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters: Afghanistan

- US citizens or residents traveling to foreign war theatre, such as Afghanistan.
- Trained fighters may return home with combat skills and violent agenda.
- Often recruited through social media.

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

- Was studying dentistry at Howard University in Washington, DC
- Left his home in Virginia with four friends to allegedly join the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- Arrested and sentenced to ten years by Pakistani officials for terrorism charges

Interrogation Report

These five foreigners were held by the Police on December 9, 2009. They were all college students. They had deep interest in the religion and they were of the opinion that a Jihad must be waged against the infidels for the atrocities committed by them against Muslims around the world. Among them Ahmed Abdullah Minni used to regularly visit the internet page of YouTube. He used to the praise the videos which showed attacks on the US Army and Installations. This became a regular feature and Minni, a registered user of YouTube, regularly praised such attacks. Soon after, Minni was contacted by a person named "Saifullah". The two

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters: Somalia

- US citizens or residents traveling to foreign war theatre, such as ~~Afghanistan~~ **Somalia**.
- Trained fighters may return home with combat skills and violent agenda.
- Often recruited through social media.

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

Between September 2007 and October 2009, approximately 20 young men left the Minneapolis area to fight for Al Shabaab, an Al-Qa'ida affiliated group in Somalia.

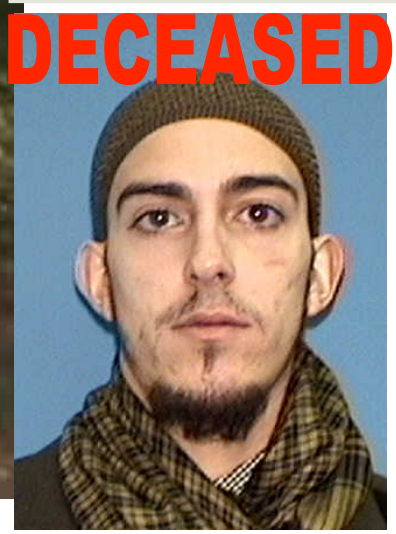
Burhan Hassan
Age 17
Killed

Jamal Bana
Age 19
Killed

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

August 2013.



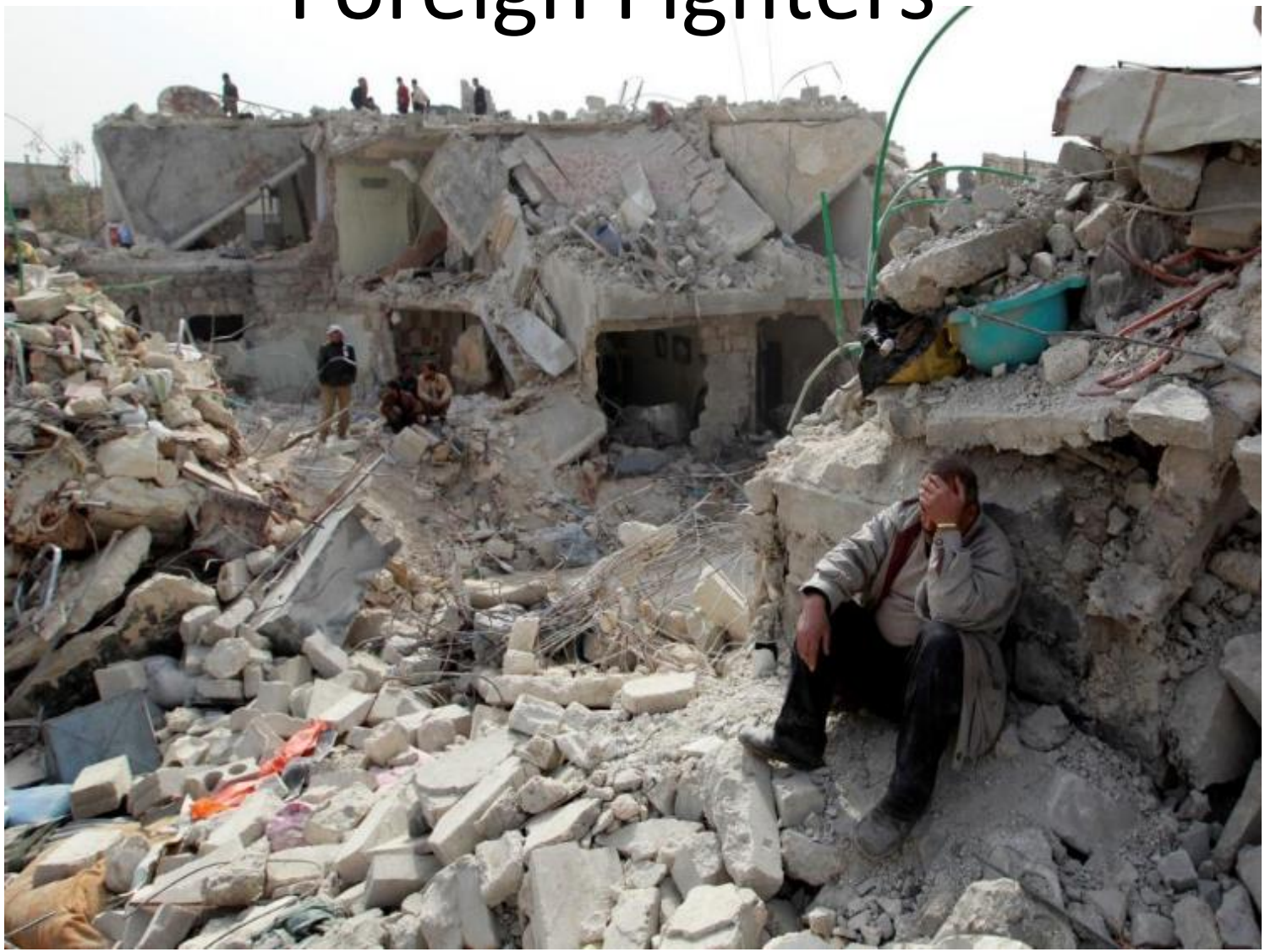
Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters: Syria

- US citizens or residents traveling to foreign war theatre, such as ~~Afghanistan~~ **Syria**.
- Trained fighters may return home with combat skills and violent agenda.
- Often recruited through social media.

Understanding the Threat:

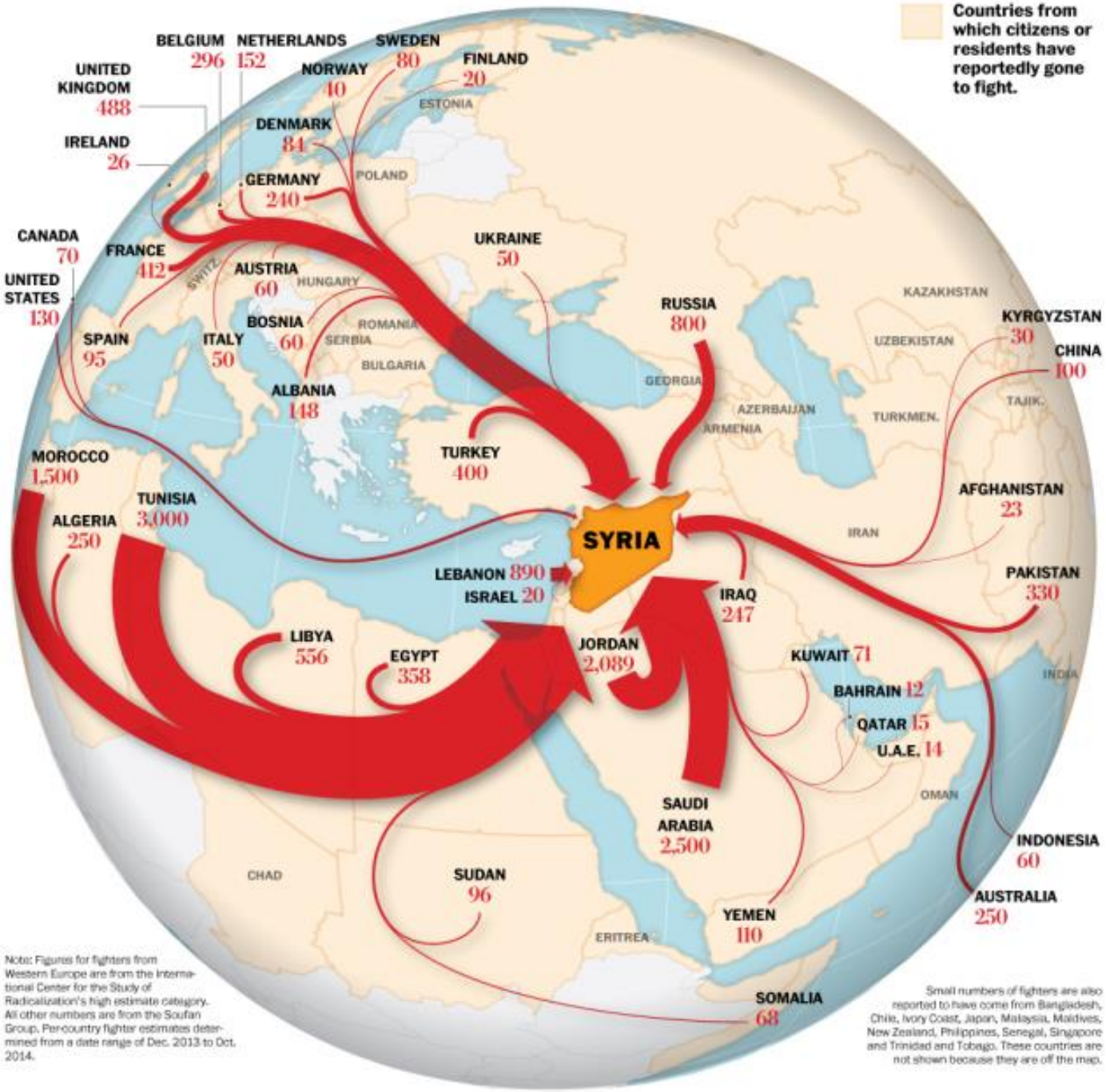
Foreign Fighters



Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

- Syria has emerged as most attractive theater for US violent extremists
- Approximately **200** US persons have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to participate in the conflict
  - **Thirty-two US persons arrested** on terrorism-related charges for fighting in Syria or attempting to do so; one Syria returnee also arrested for terrorism-related charges
  - At least **four** US persons killed in Syria, including one suicide bomber and two killed in opposition infighting


Countries from which citizens or residents have reportedly gone to fight.
BELGIUM 296
NETHERLANDS 152
SWEDEN 80
FINLAND 20
NORWAY 40
UNITED KINGDOM 488
IRELAND 26
DENMARK 84
GERMANY 240
CANADA 70
FRANCE 412
UNITED STATES 130
AUSTRIA 60
SPAIN 95
ITALY 50
BOSNIA 60
ALBANIA 148
UKRAINE 50
RUSSIA 800
KYRGYZSTAN 30
CHINA 100
TURKEY 400
MOROCCO 1,500
TUNISIA 3,000
ALGERIA 250
SYRIA
AFGHANISTAN 23
PAKISTAN 330
LEBANON 890
ISRAEL 20
IRAQ 247
LIBYA 556
EGYPT 358
JORDAN 2,089
KUWAIT 71
BAHRAIN 12
QATAR 15
U.A.E. 14
SAUDI ARABIA 2,500
INDONESIA 60
AUSTRALIA 250
SUDAN 96
YEMEN 110
SOMALIA 68
ESTONIA
POLAND
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
SERBIA
BULGARIA
KAZAKHSTAN
UZBEKISTAN
GEORGIA
AZERBAIJAN
ARMENIA
TURKMEN.
TAJIK.
IRAN
INDIA
OMAN
CHAD
ERITREA
Note: Figures for fighters from Western Europe are from the International Center for the Study of Radicalization's high estimate category. All other numbers are from the Soufan Group. Per-country fighter estimates determined from a date range of Dec. 2013 to Oct. 2014.
Small numbers of fighters are also reported to have come from Bangladesh, Chile, Ivory Coast, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Philippines, Senegal, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago. These countries are not shown because they are off the map.

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

- Motivational Pathways:
- **Support Violent Extremist Causes:**
    - Individuals who adhered to Al-Qa'ida's worldview
    - Probably would travel to other conflict zones

2. **Solidarity with Syrian Opposition:**
    - Perceived duty to help protect fellow Sunnis
    - Some probably influenced by authorities who support the opposition, but do not embrace violent extremism
    - Probably would not travel to other conflict zones

3. **Possible Nationalist Reasons:**
    - Ethnic Syrians
    - Some intended to link up with secular-oriented groups

Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

- Motivational Pathways:
- **4. Sense of Adventure:**
    - Experience thrill of fighting
    - No strong ideological pull
    - Could still connect with extremist groups

5. Pro-Assad Regime:

- Motivated to support regime and/or Lebanese Hezbollah

How are FOREIGN FIGHTERS being recruited?

SAMSUNG
20:37
CHECHCLEARR
254
986
236
Edit your profile
israfil

ISIL's Use of Social Media

- Tailored messaging to Americans in English

- Sophisticated use of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Kik, Ask.fm, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Flickr, Snapchat

Abu Fulan al-Muhajir @Fulan2weet
Bilad al-Sham
A stranger. Currently fighting in Syria, to make the word of Allah the highest!

673 answers | 673 likes | 0 gifts

+ Follow

Make a gift

Ask me a question

300

Ask

answers

Report RSS

R the bathrooms clean

Yes. But they don't become clean by themselves. We need to clean them

2 days ago

4 people like this

How can I convince my family please help me

daawa. Talk to them. Tell them to imagine them being in Syria and nobody wanted to help them

2 days ago

3 people like this

are martyrdom operations allowed in islam

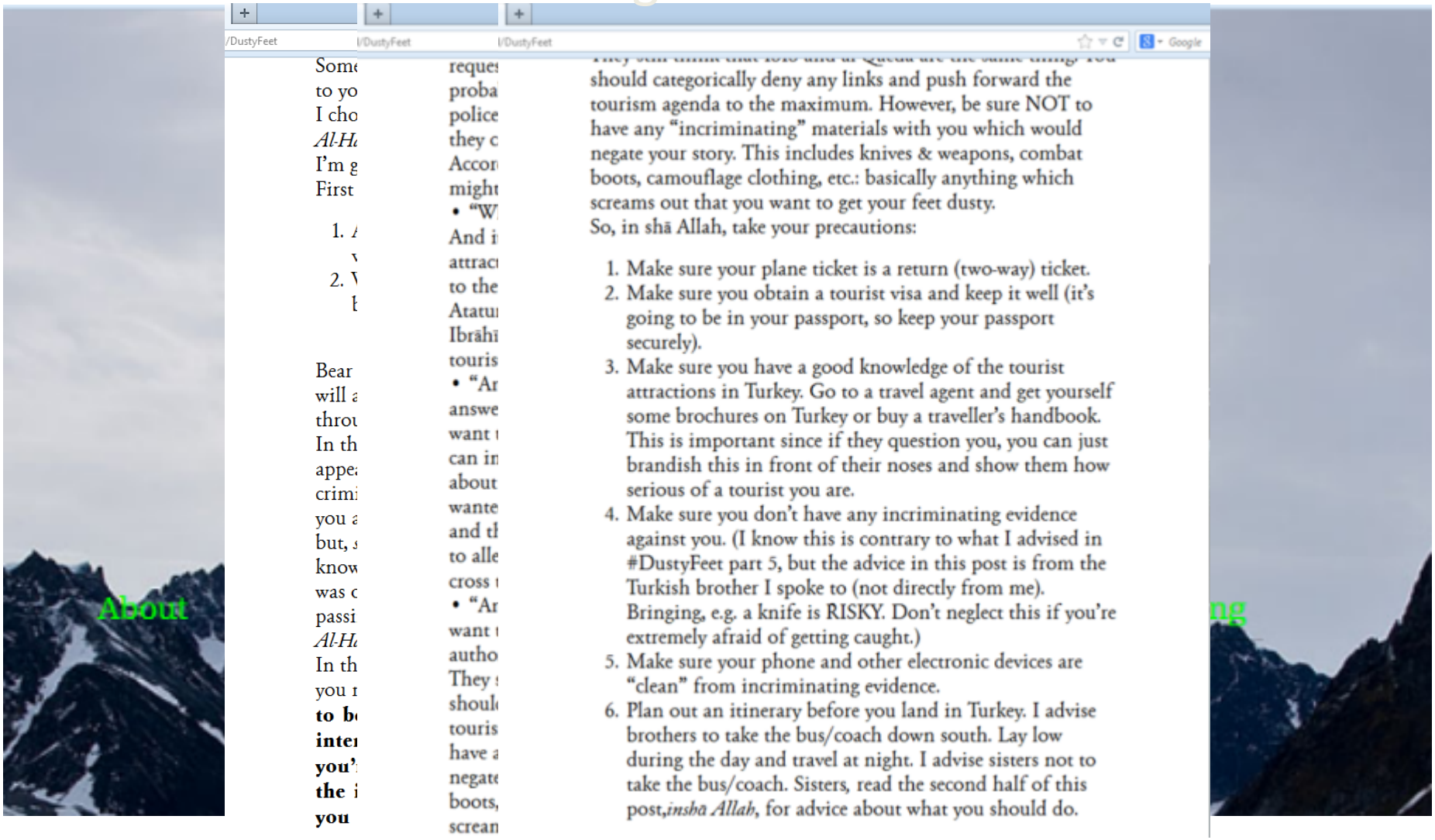
Yes. But of course there are certain conditions

2 days ago

1 person likes this

Operational Instructions Online

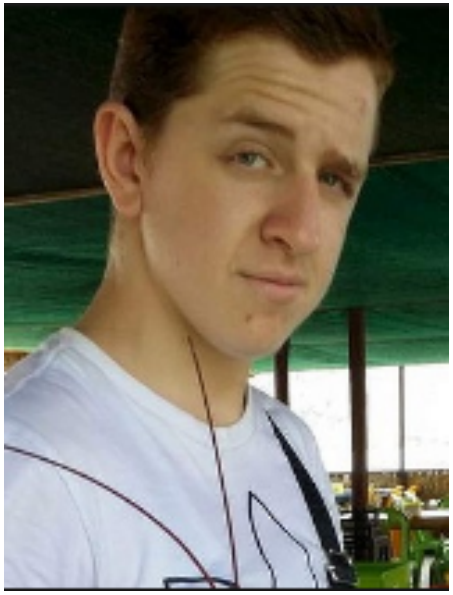
Blogs: Tumblr



should categorically deny any links and push forward the tourism agenda to the maximum. However, be sure NOT to have any "incriminating" materials with you which would negate your story. This includes knives & weapons, combat boots, camouflage clothing, etc.: basically anything which screams out that you want to get your feet dusty.
So, in shā Allah, take your precautions:

1. Make sure your plane ticket is a return (two-way) ticket.
2. Make sure you obtain a tourist visa and keep it well (it's going to be in your passport, so keep your passport securely).
3. Make sure you have a good knowledge of the tourist attractions in Turkey. Go to a travel agent and get yourself some brochures on Turkey or buy a traveller's handbook. This is important since if they question you, you can just brandish this in front of their noses and show them how serious of a tourist you are.
4. Make sure you don't have any incriminating evidence against you. (I know this is contrary to what I advised in #DustyFeet part 5, but the advice in this post is from the Turkish brother I spoke to (not directly from me). Bringing, e.g. a knife is RISKY. Don't neglect this if you're extremely afraid of getting caught.)
5. Make sure your phone and other electronic devices are "clean" from incriminating evidence.
6. Plan out an itinerary before you land in Turkey. I advise brothers to take the bus/coach down south. Lay low during the day and travel at night. I advise sisters not to take the bus/coach. Sisters, read the second half of this post, *inshā Allah*, for advice about what you should do.

Who’s Going?



Understanding the Threat:

Foreign Fighters

What Happens Next…

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Defining Domestic Terrorism

- **TITLE VIII: A person engages in domestic terrorism if they**:
  - Commit an act "dangerous to human life" (and)
  - In violation of the criminal laws of the U.S. (and)
  - If the act is intended to:
    - Intimidate/coerce a civilian population; OR
    - Influence the policy of a government by intimidation/ coercion; OR
    - Affect government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping
  - That occurs in w/in U.S. territory

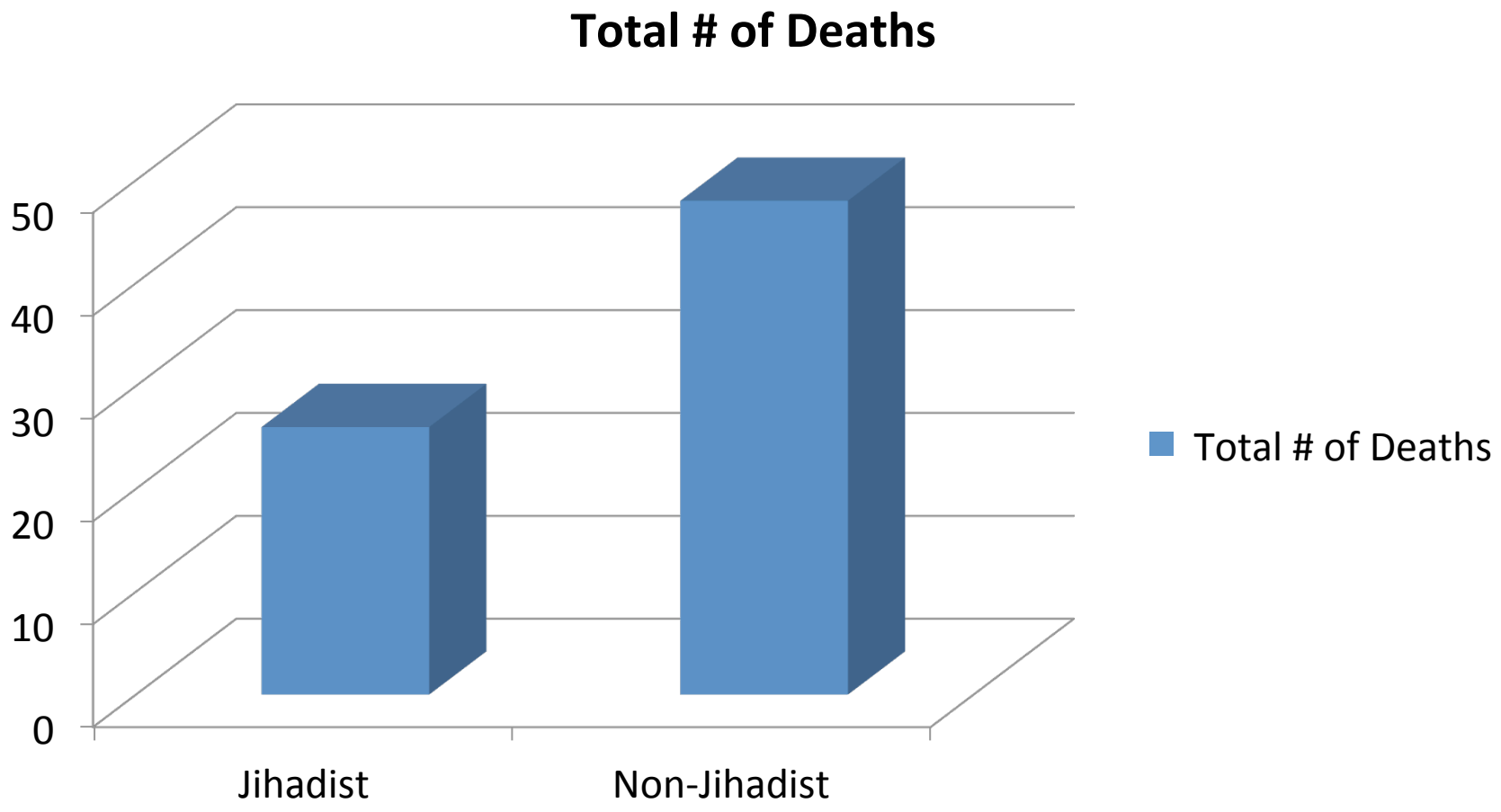
Shooting | Shooting resulting in fatality | Close call/scare

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

PATRIOT ACT

- **NOT APPLYING THE DEFINITION**
  - A 2003 study for the US army quoted a source that counted 109 definitions of terrorism that covered 22 different definitional elements.
  - Does it matter?
    - **Overuse?**
    - **Underuse?**
    - **Legal implications**
    - **Political motive?**
    - **Lone wolf?**
    - **State vs. non-state**
    - **Who is a civilian?**

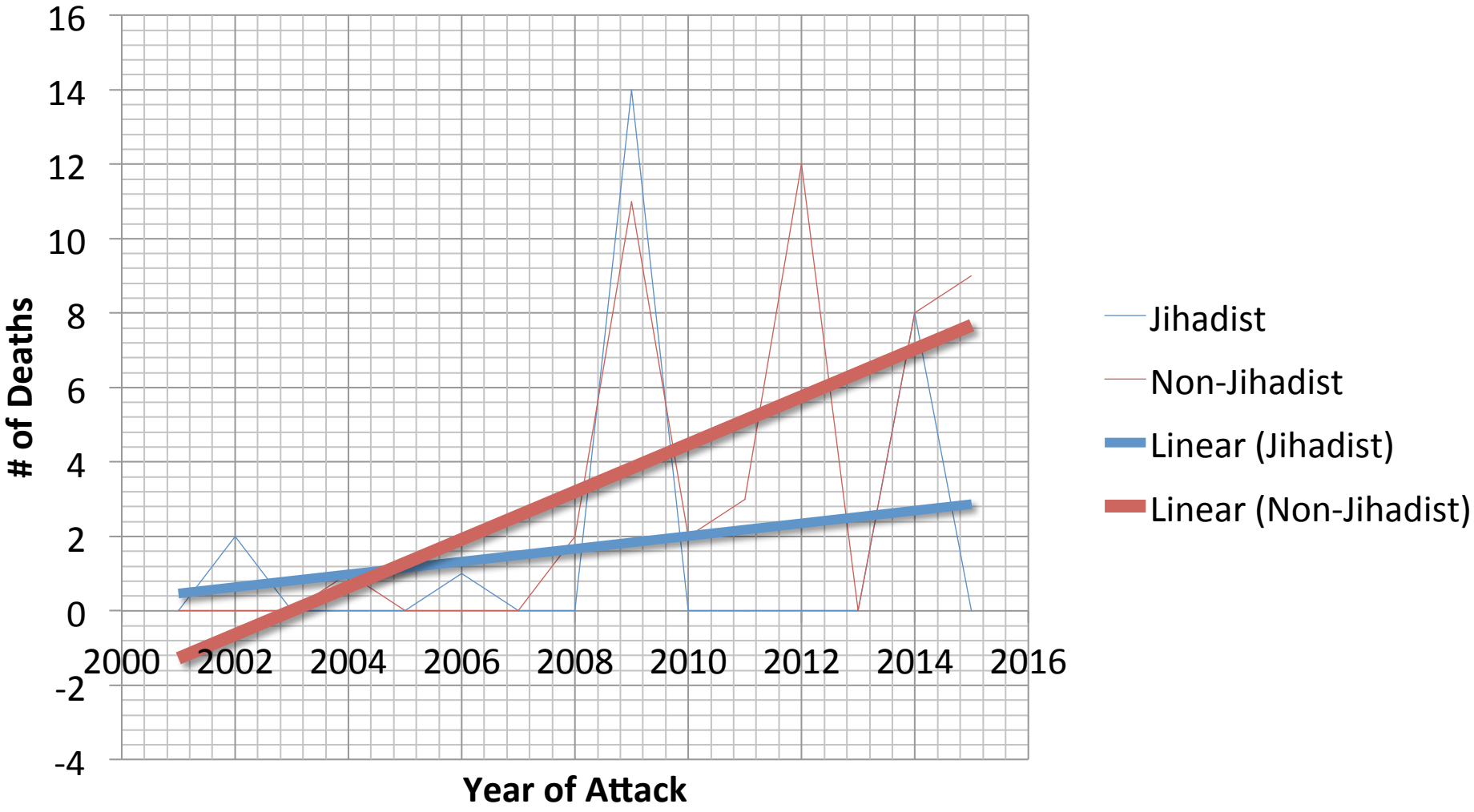
Meanwhile… since 9/11



Non-jihadist actions have taken more lives than jihadist actions

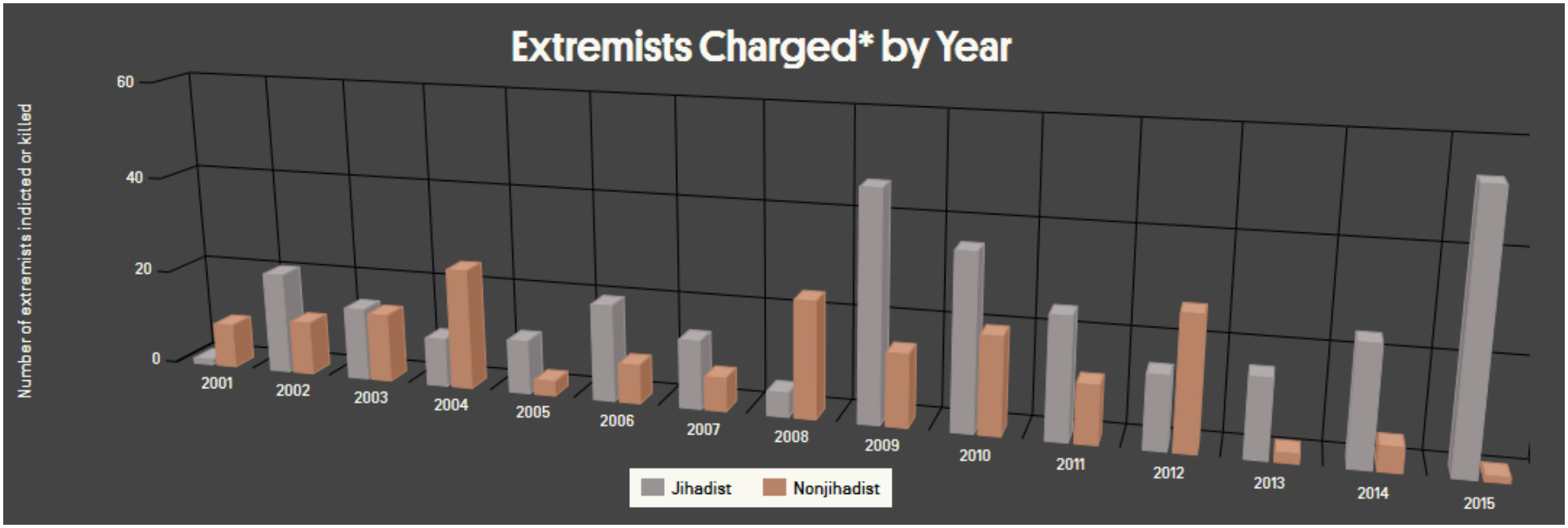
New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014

Plot Name	# Killed	Plot Name	# Killed
2014 Washington and New Jersey Killing Spree	4	2015 Charleston Church Shooting	9
2014 Oklahoma Beheading	1	2014 Tallahassee Police Ambush	1
2013 Boston Marathon Bombing	4	2014 Las Vegas Police Ambush	3
2009 Little Rock Shooting	1	2014 Kansas Jewish Center Shooting	3
2009 Fort Hood Shooting	13	2014 Blooming Grove Police Shooting	1
2006 Seattle Jewish Federation Shooting	1	2012 Tri-State Killing Spree	4
2002 Los Angeles Airport Shooting	2	2012 St. John's Parish Police Ambush	2
		2012 Sikh Temple Shooting	6
		2011 FEAR Militia	3
		2010 Carlisle, PA Murder	1
		2010 Austin, TX Plane Attack	1
		2009 Pittsburgh Police Shootings	3
		2009 Holocaust Museum Shooting	1
		2009 George Tiller Assassination	1
		2009 Ft. Walton, FL Shooting	2
		2009 Flores Murders, Pima County, AZ	2
		2009 Brockton, MA Murders	2
		2008 Knoxville, TN Church Shooting	2



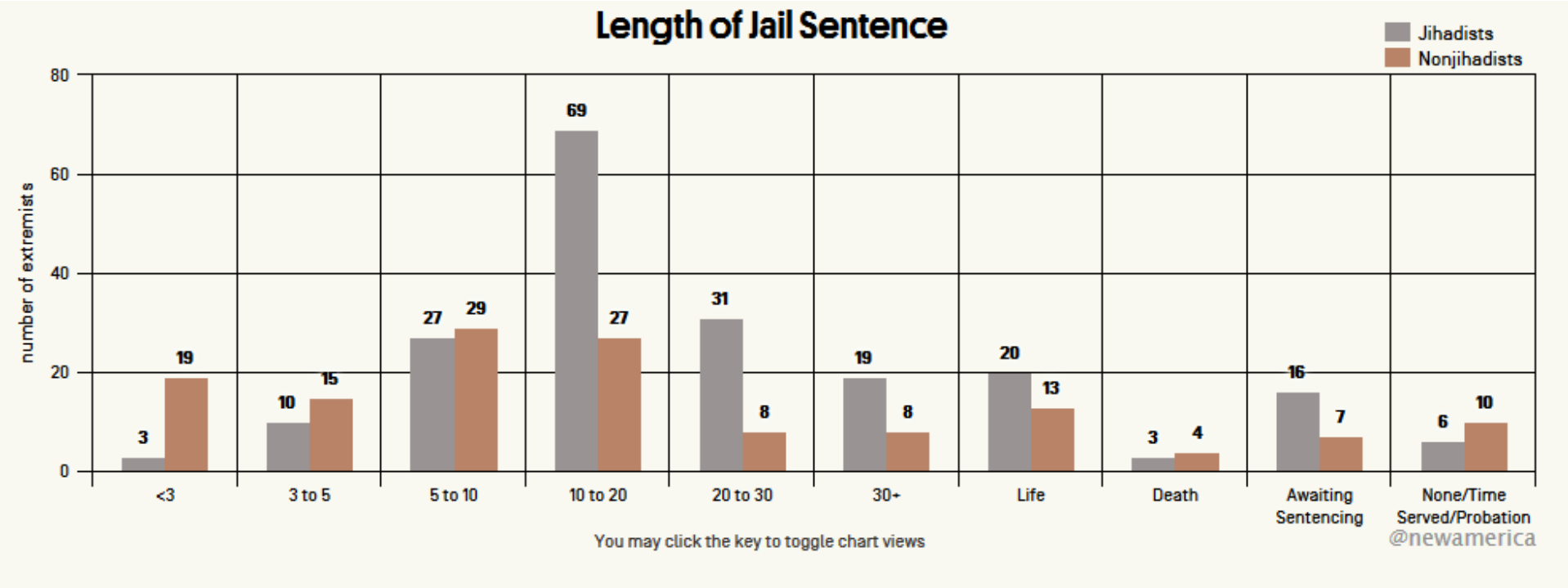
The number of deaths from non-jihadist actions is *rising faster*

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014



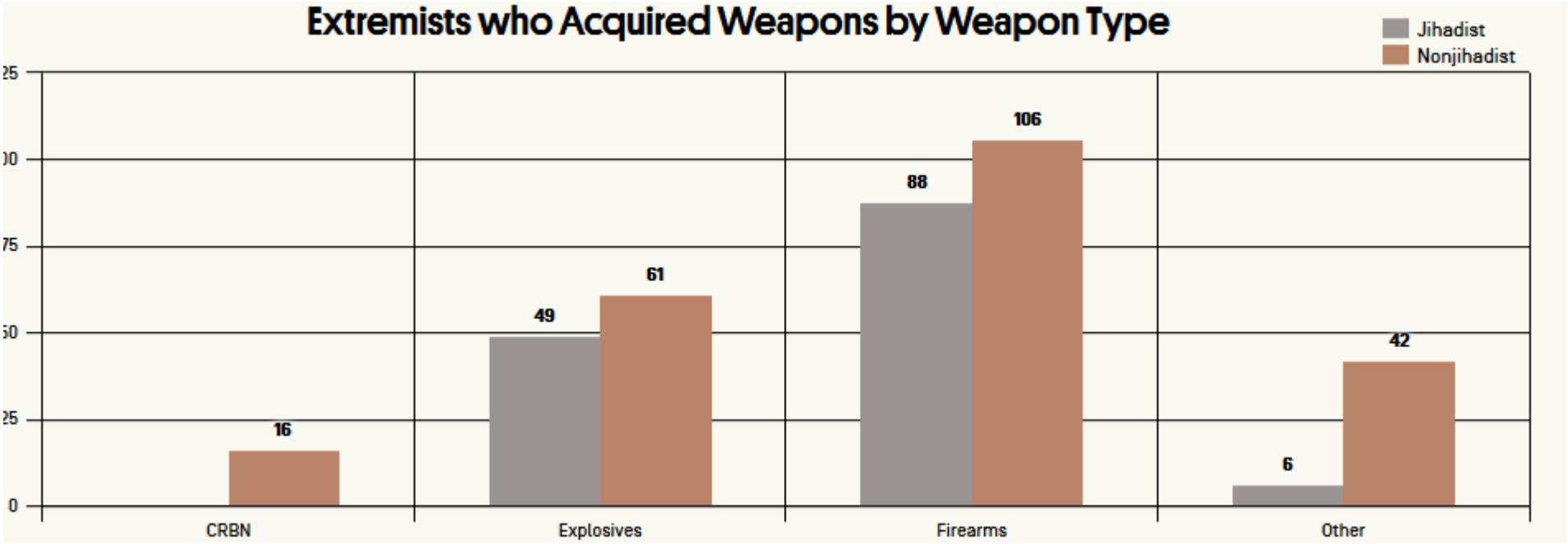
But the number of non-jihadist actors being charged per year is dropping

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014



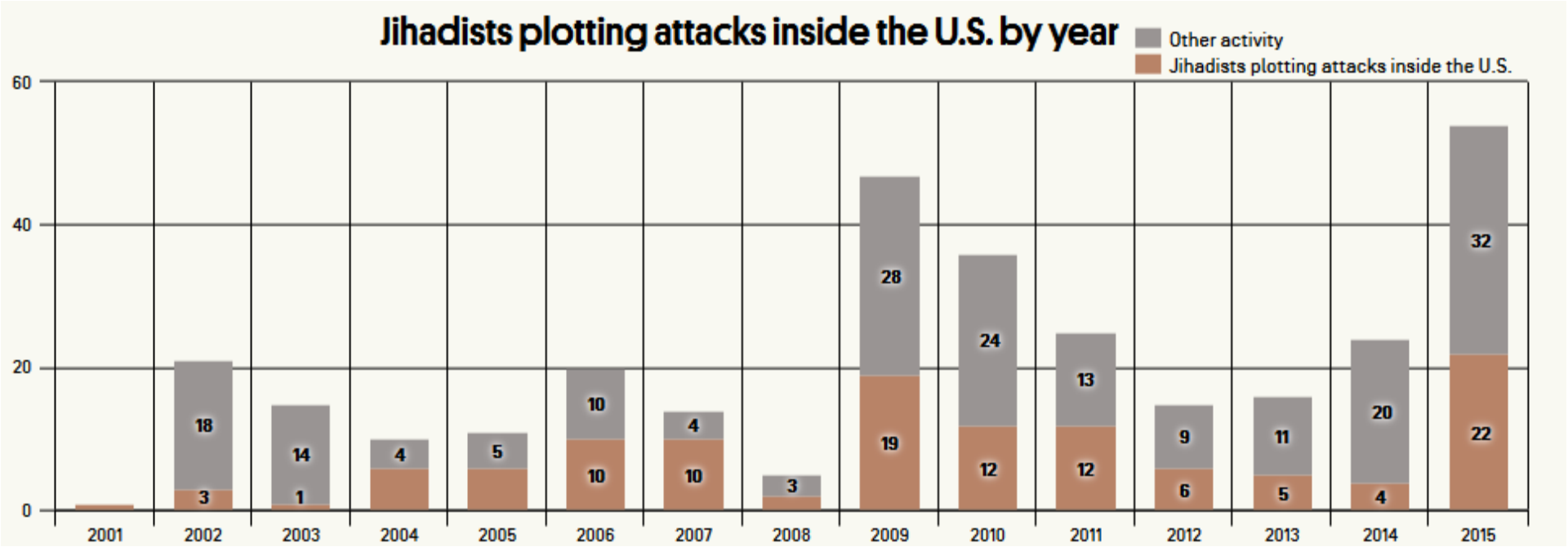
While length of non-jihadist jail sentences is falling

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014



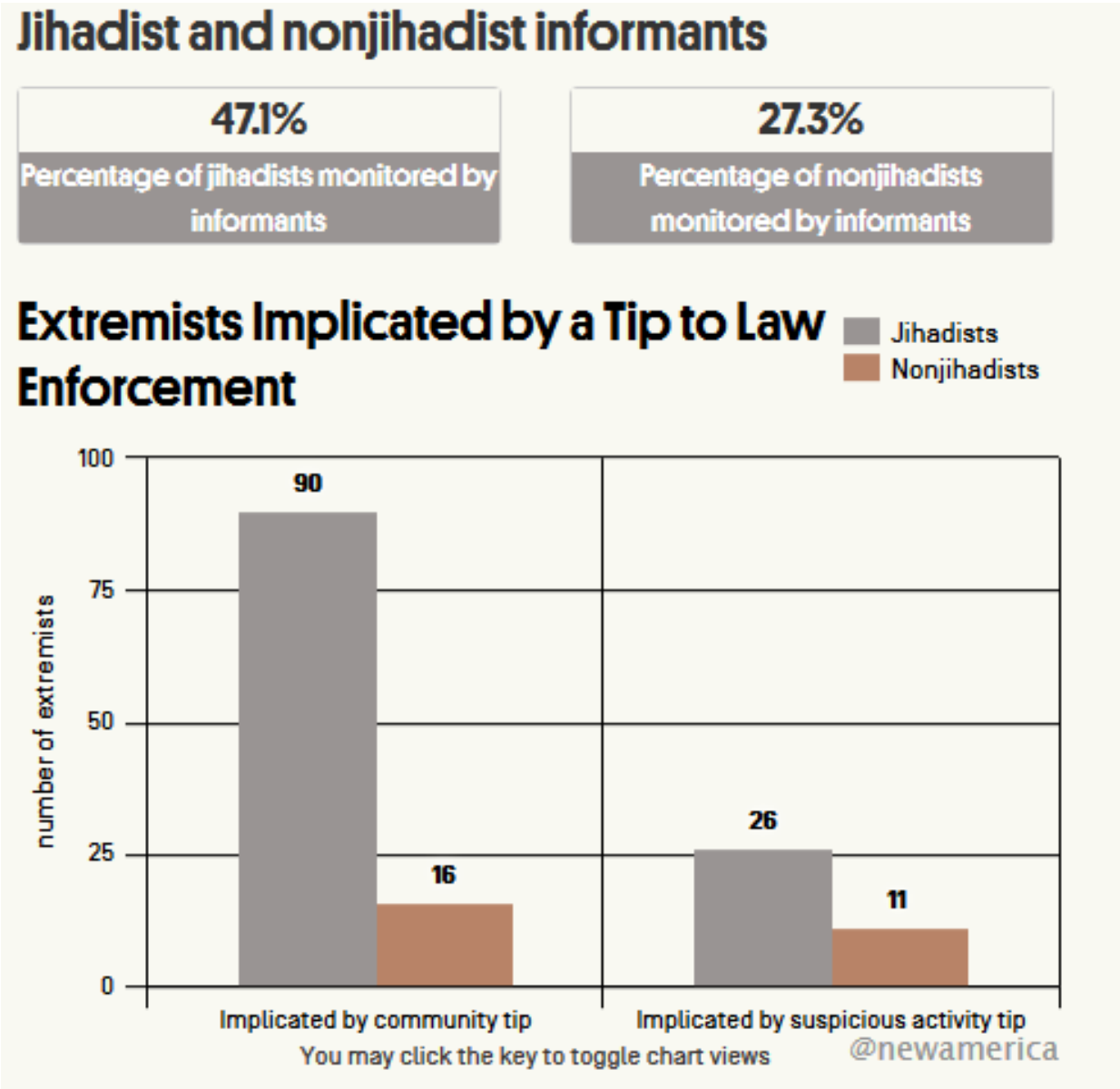
And non-jihadist violent extremists are acquiring more dangerous weapons

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014



Plotting more attacks

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014



Fewer of which are reported via informants or tips to law enforcement

New America Foundation, Homegrown Extremism Study 2014

Law Enforcement Agrees

- 382 law enforcement agencies
- 74% non-Jihadist related anti-government violent extremism as top priority.
- 39% ISIS/Al-Qa'ida inspired.
- Only 3% identified the threat from Jihadist extremists as severe

“Militias, neo-Nazis and sovereign citizens are the biggest threat we face in regard to extremism”

“I rank the right-wing threat higher because it is an emerging threat that we don’t have as good of a grip on, even with our intelligence unit, as we do with the Al Shabab/Al Qai’da/ISIS issue, which we have been dealing with for some time.”

“The ‘sovereign citizen’ anti-government threat has really taken off”

Media View

Race	Report[a] (%)	TV Perp.[b] (%)	Percentage Point Differential[c]	95% Confidence Interval (%)
Muslim	6	81	+75[d]	±19
Not Muslim	94	19	−75[d]	±19

Note : $\chi 2 = 4.26$ (1, $N = 14$). $p < .05$.

a Percentage of Muslims who committed terrorist acts according to the FBI: http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terrorism-2002-2005.

b Percentage of Muslims who appeared as terrorists on network and cable news.

c Difference between the television percentage and the report rate percentage for each group (TV % − Report %).

d Percentage point differential outside the confidence interval.

- **American Muslims (or stereotype) portrayed as terrorists: 81% of the time. They actually comprise 6% of the accused and charged terrorists.**
- **Non-Muslims portrayed as terrorists : 19% of the time. They actually comprise 94% of terrorists in American society.**

- Does this scheme make us more secure?
- HELPS ISIS narrative

A pattern of terrorism that is repetitive, rising in ambition, and neglected by the public can signal a coming strategic surprise—this was true of Al Qa'ida during the late nineteen-nineties, and it looks to be true of domestic racist terrorism today.

- How do we explain this?
  - Existential threat
  - Media
    - Guard Dog theory

How do we deal with these tough issues?

- Consistently apply statutory definitions
- Address entrenched media stereotypes
- Empower local law enforcement strategies
- Respect for civil rights and civil liberties
- Addressing grievances
- Holistic approach
- Engaging with communities effectively

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Responding to the Threat:

How do we build safe and resilient communities?

Responding to the Threat:

SIP

- Counter violent extremist propaganda
- Enhance federal community engagement
- Develop greater law enforcement and government CVE expertise

Myth vs Reality

Action & Adventure	Harsh Environment. Western fighters used to better living conditions
Embraced by the people	Syrian people don't want foreigners' help
Making a Difference	Used for undesirable tasks: suicide bombing, mechanical repair, cleaning
Defeating al-Assad	Not fighting al-Assad, rather fighting and targeting other Muslims/ minorities
One Global Community	There is much in-fighting among terrorist groups

Responding to the Threat:

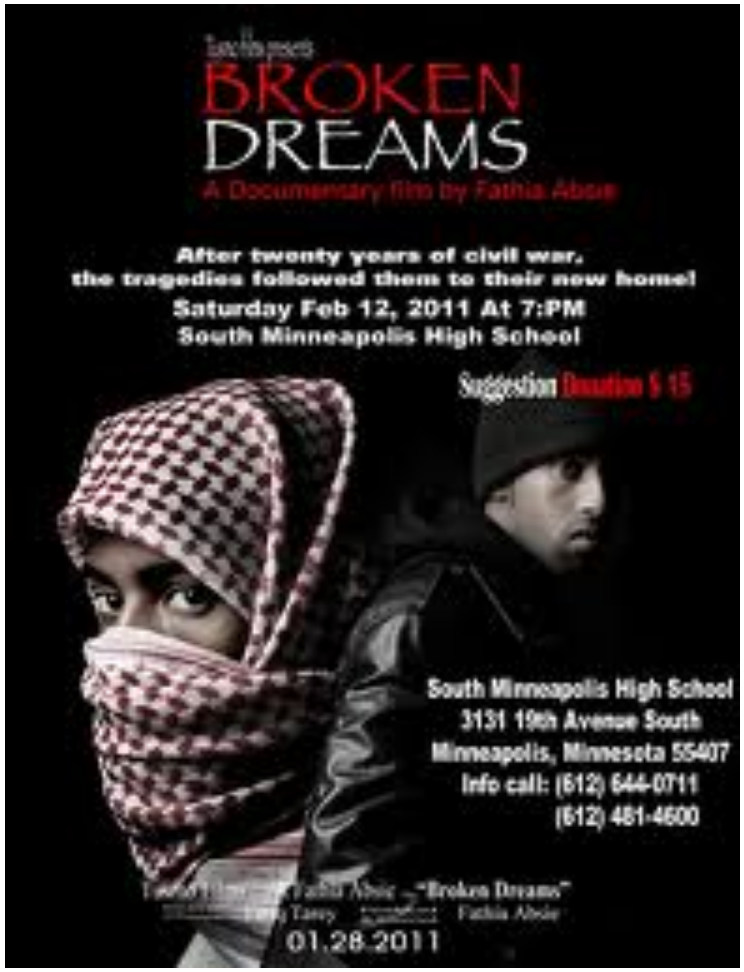
Countering the Narrative

Responding to the Threat:

Countering the Narrative

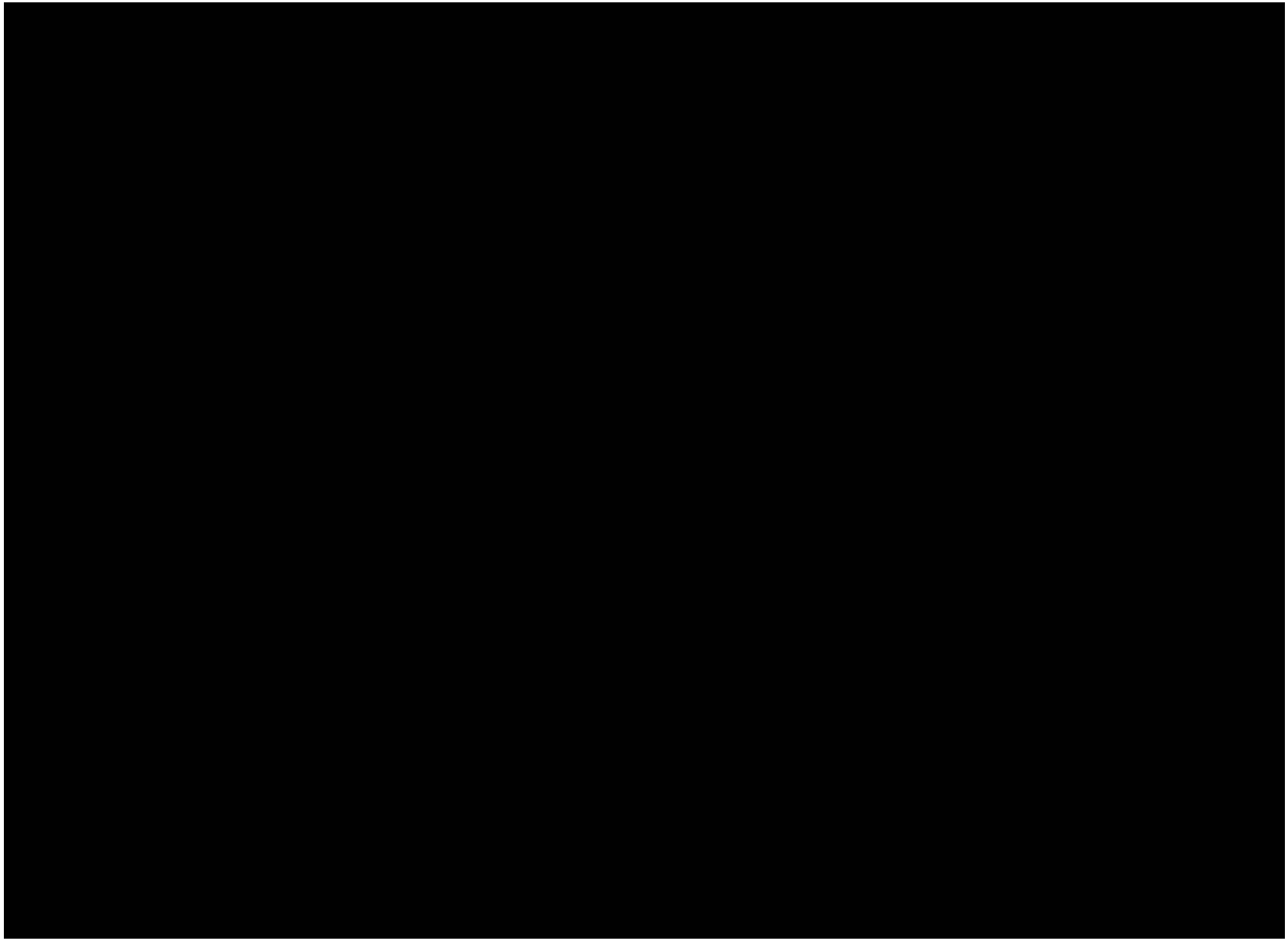
Responding to the Threat:

Countering the Narrative



Responding to the Threat:

Countering the Narrative



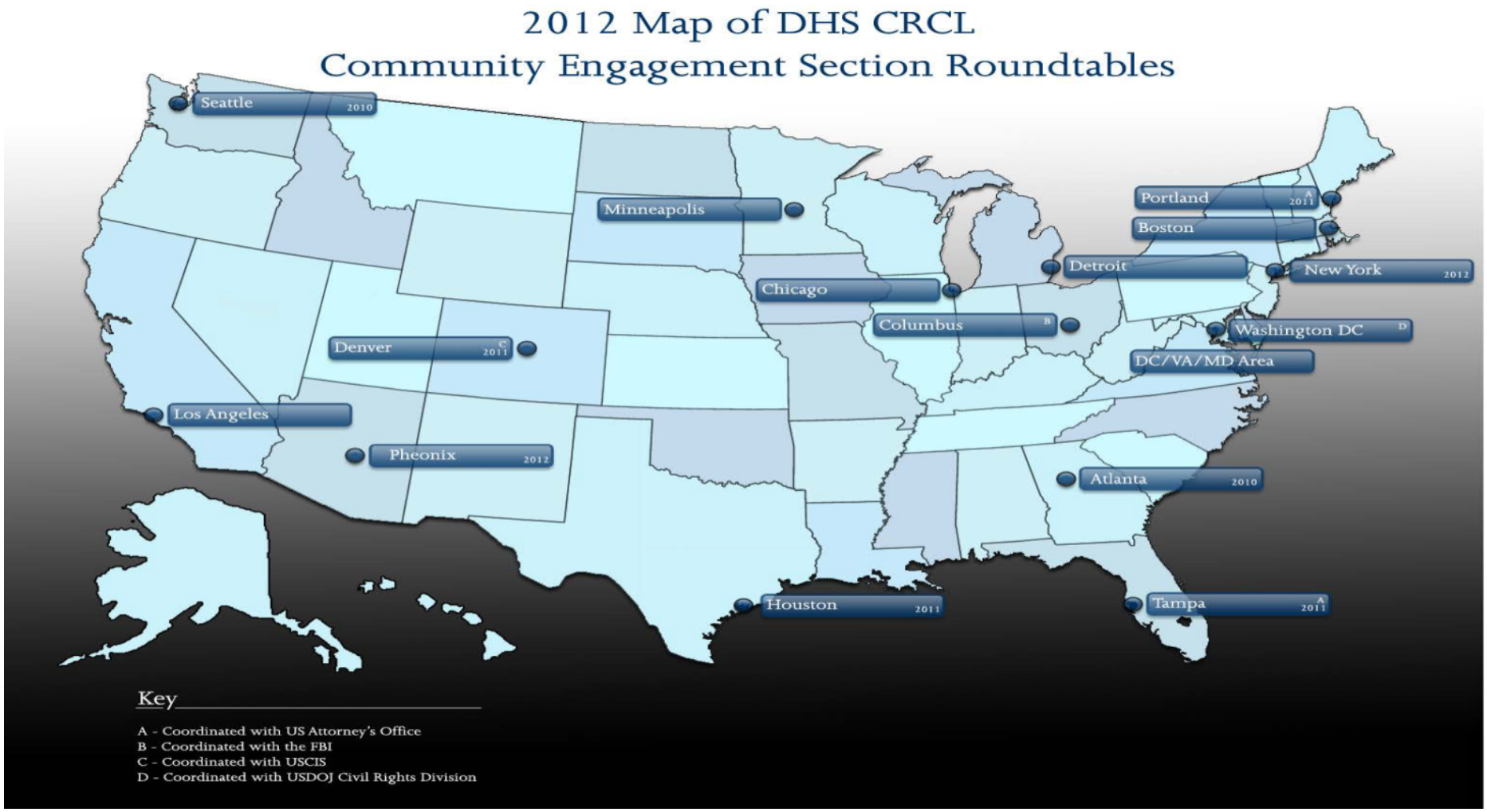
“Find Heaven”- Daniyal Noorani
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3U7KsJHdO0

[redacted]

ONE 95

Responding to the Threat:

Strengthening Comm. Relationships



CRCL

Office for Civil Rights & Civil Liberties

ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE

January 13, 2011

Los Angeles Field Office

Enforcement and Removal Operations

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COMMUNITY EVENTS

Responding to the Threat:

Strengthening Comm. Relationships

Responding to the Threat:

Strengthening Comm. Relationships

Responding to the Threat:

Strengthening Comm. Relationships

- Roundtables, Policy Meetings
- Incident Community Coordination Call
- Complaints and Oversight
- Training and Cultural Competency
- Intelligence Oversight
- Fiscal Support of CVE Programs

Responding to the Threat:

Strengthening Comm. Relationships

Responding to the Threat:

Engagement Best Practices

- Provide avenues for grievance redress
- Obtain feedback on government policies
- Deepen channels of communication
- Create community awareness
- Enable community efforts

BEST PRACTICE:

DO NO HARM

- "Do no harm," protect civil rights and civil liberties.
- Engagement ≠
  - gathering intelligence
  - criminal investigations;
  - or platform to engage in racial, ethnic, or religious profiling.
- INSTEAD promote honest, transparent relationships.
  - WHY?

BEST PRACTICE:

GO LOCAL

- True understanding of community concerns happens at the local level - the less layers between the government and communities, the more accurate the information regarding their concerns.

- Working locally helps to “co-create” partnerships and community-narratives on a host of issues, including CVE.

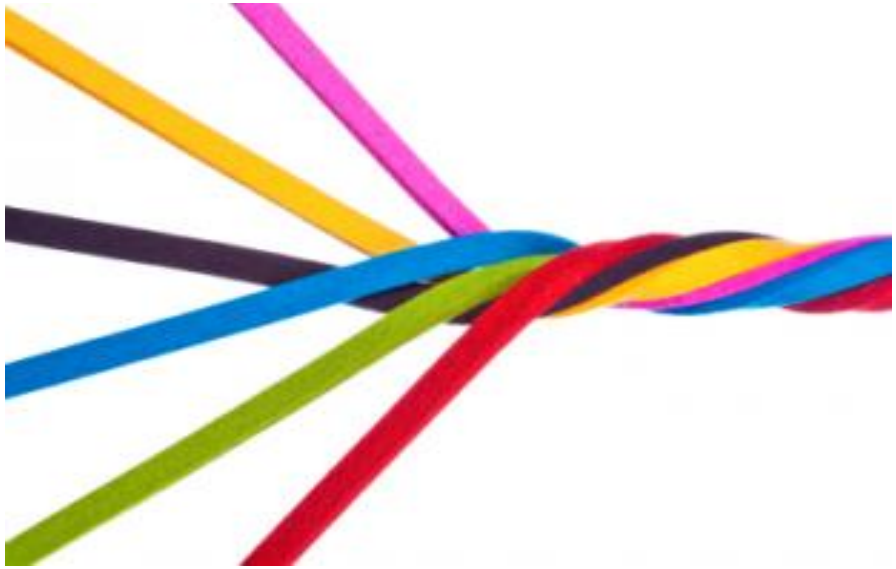
BEST PRACTICE:

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PEOPLE

- Each community, whether faith-based or organized around another interest, looks and functions differently.
- Key nodes of a community may not always be found in organizational form.
- Critical stakeholders may not function within an established organization but prove to be invaluable partners.
- Spend time finding credible, connected community organizations as well as unaffiliated individuals.

BEST PRACTICE:

INVOLVE GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



- The Department of Homeland Security endeavors to include other government agencies in it's regular community engagement roundtables.

- Communities often mistake one government agency for the government in general, or for another government agency entirely - having additional agencies or ministries at the table assists in helping communities reach the right partners immediately.

BEST PRACTICE:

BE THERE IN PERSON

- Sensitive conversations require the entire spectrum of human communication to be productive - including body language, voice inflection and responses from peers and colleagues.
- Being physically present shows how much you value the engagement and ensures the right parties are present.

BEST PRACTICE:

COMMUNITY SETS THE AGENDA

- The community knows it's issues better than the government.
- Taking part in setting the agenda ensures community participation and buy-in. Community knows they have a stake in the process.
- Allows hidden issues to surface - provides government with unique access to issues otherwise unheard by government policymakers in DC.

BEST PRACTICE:

MEASURE SUCCESS

- DHS endeavors to measure how accurately they meet expected outcomes (i.e. were the questions posed in the first few slides answered).
- Measurements should be precise, repetitive (end of each engagement), tracked and used for future training purposes.

BEST PRACTICE:

BE CONSISTENT

- Follow-up is key. Repetitive and regular engagement increases confidence that problems will be resolved and grievances will be heard.
- Consistent engagement initiatives encourage communities to use the roundtable process to resolve concerns rather than resorting to other methods for redress.

BEST PRACTICE:

DIVERSIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

- Communities from different faith-based backgrounds nonetheless wrestle with the same problems

- Inviting diverse stakeholders (e.g. Christian, Muslim, Jewish etc.) to the same table is efficient, inclusive and effective.

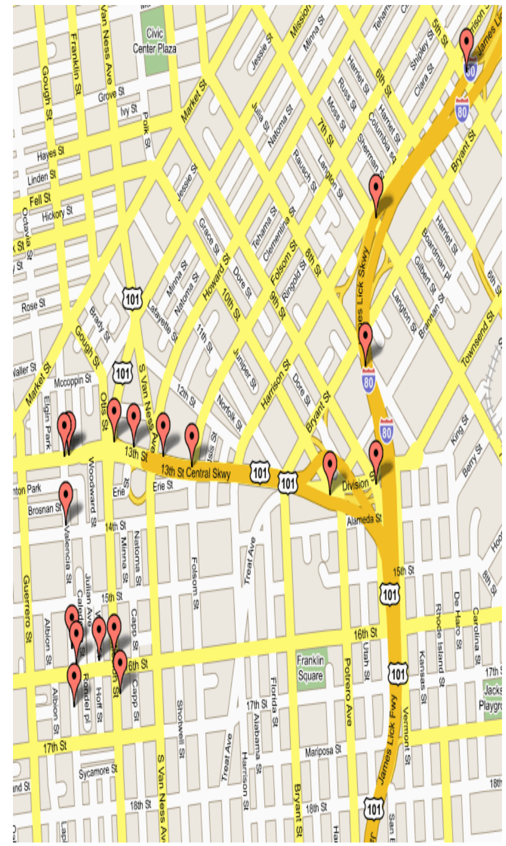
- One group that is often ignored are young adults. They often experience a large number of problems but lack the means/tools to resolve them or bring them to the attention of the government.

- Diverse opinions and audiences lessen “echo chamber” mentality.

BEST PRACTICE:

DIVERSIFY THE LOCATION

- Alternate between government and community facilities to increase trust and build rapport (both within and between community organizations and the government).
- Conduct tours of government facilities such as airports, detention centers, fusion centers, immigration officers where naturalization ceremonies occur.



BEST PRACTICE:

EMPLOY MULTIPLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

- Social media can be a helpful tool to solicit feedback and respond to community concerns.

- Pair remote communications (teleconference, email etc.) with physical engagement.

- Rapid-fire communications in the aftermath of an event, ICCT - don't be afraid to experiment as the situation warrants.

- Support infrastructure to share information: DHS created the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) to share information with stakeholders.

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Responding to the Threat:

Challenges & Criticisms

- Open Marketplace of Ideas
  - Vs. classified information.
- Challenges
  - Constitutionally protected activity
  - Establishment clause limitations
  - Feedback from community organizations and NGO's
  - Difficult to explain and lack of buy-in
  - Who speaks for the community?
  - Lack of financial resources
  - Lack of lead agency
  - Focus on single community
  - Not big enough of a problem (Somali youth)
  - Security agencies as lead for engagement
    - Traitors and helpers

“You want to talk about resilience?” Ms. Sarsour said. “Build the capacity in my organization, in other organizations that are not here at the table. Every single day we wake up using chump change to take responsibility for our community.”

Responding to the Threat:

Countering the Narrative

Further Information

Ehsan Zaffar
United States Department of Homeland Security
Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
ehsan.zaffar@dhs.gov

Ehsan Zaffar
George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management/George Mason Department of Criminology
zaffar@gwu.edu/ezaffar@gmu.edu