Gary LaFree, START Director:

The big event here today is our first annual meeting. We’re the fourth of the Department of Homeland Security Centers of Excellence that have been funded. We received funding three or four months ago. We've actually just started to become operational. We’ll have an office and a staff, we hope, by the end of the month. And because we were asked to be extremely interdisciplinary we have pretty much have all of the social and behavioral sciences represented in our group. We also have something like 25 university affiliates from around the United States, from Israel, from Europe.

We've been a virtual association to some extent. Many of us have had prior contact but the entire group had not been together before this week. So we have the great fortune really of having all of the group members here in town for a conference which started yesterday and will continue through tomorrow.

When Neil Tickner suggested that we might set up this press conference, I thought the best way to go would be to invite the three people who are running our working groups to attend as well. We have a working group structure that basically looks at terrorism sort of as a developmental process.

So we've got a group of people working on, where terrorist groups come from, what psychological factors are related to why someone joins a terrorist group, how do terrorist groups form? Just as importantly, why do some situations that involve, for example, grievances not result in terrorist groups? And Dr. Arie Kruglanski, a psychologist here at the University of Maryland, is in charge of that group.

Once a group forms, we’re very interested in what allows it to persist and allows it to continue on. We’re very interested in why terrorist groups go out of business, what allows them to go out of business rapidly in some cases. So in terms of questions dealing with persistence of terrorist groups, why do they change their patterns over time, and those sorts of issues, we’ve got Professor Clark McCauley, University of Pennsylvania and Bryn Mawr College psychologist, who is in charge of that working group.

And finally, once there is an attack – and you know we’re preparing the public for an attack – what sorts of strategies are best for preserving life, for evacuating people, for communicating effectively with the public, for building a more risk-resilient public? And
in charge of that set of areas and interests we have Dr. Kathleen Tierney, who is at the University of Colorado where she directs the National Hazards Research Laboratory.

So that’s our sort of team here today. We have a wealth of other people close by around the room as well, but I thought these three could very much represent the center and its activities. So questions, I suppose.

Journalist’s Question:

What are you doing that no one has ever done before?

Gary LaFree:

Clark, do you want to handle that? I think a lot actually.

Clark McCauley, START Working Group Leader:

Well, one piece of unique selling proposition I think that we represent is the beginnings of a new more integrated and interdisciplinary subculture in the study of terrorism. There have been quite a number, even long before 9/11, who were studying terrorism. And they have been generally scattered both geographically, in terms of discipline, their products in terms of publications have been scattered in books and journals and many different discipline journals.

So it has made for a very unintegrated and in some ways non-accumulating understanding of terrorism. And so one of the great advantages of this kind of interdisciplinary emphasis that Gary was just describing to you is the opportunity to try to begin a new subculture of people who do know one another, do know one another’s work, who are collaborating with one another in ways across disciplines that we hope and expect will bring products that we haven't had before.

Arie Kruglanski, START Co-Director:

I’d like to add to that. There has been a spate of research activity on the topic of terrorism since 9-11. I think about five thousand books have been published on the topic. Almost a day doesn’t go by where a new book doesn’t appear. Our mission to some extent is to organize it, systematize all that knowledge, to understand what knowledge exists and where gaps in knowledge exist that we need to pursue.

Terrorism has been studied for the last 30 years, but it is continually changing. It’s a very dynamic process. We want to trace the developments – what has been known and to what extent it applies to the present and the future.

Gary LaFree:
I suppose I'd just add one additional thing. My colleagues have sort of made this point already, but there are lots of fields ... my background is in criminology for example. And you'd think criminologists would have done a lot of work on terrorism research and security issues but in fact they have not. There has been actually very little work that so far has come out of criminology. To some extent that’s true for many of the fields represented at the conference.

And so a lot I think about our application was based on taking what we already know in related areas in terms of data, in terms of methodologies, and applying them to this very important problem. And I think a lot of the research we’re planning takes advantage of the fact that we know a lot about related areas, and we’re trying to apply what we know from those areas in a more effective way.

Kathleen Tierney, START Working Group Leader:

There's another very important component of the center that has to do with the education of the next generation of researchers, educators, practitioners and policymakers. As a really integral part of our research plan in all three of our working groups, we will be working closely with students at the graduate level, masters and Ph.D. level, and also with undergraduates. We will be developing model curricula. We will be developing a certificate program.

We are also providing support for up to 20 students every year, fellowship support, in addition to the graduate students and undergraduates that we’re supporting, so that students have travel money to come here and visit, to visit the other member institutions within the consortium, and help with their own research.

We will in future years make this annual meeting a summit for students who are doing work in the area to come and share their ideas with one another, and also meet some of the leading researchers in the field. Additionally we will be offering a home for Homeland Security scholars that are funded through the Department of Homeland Security, especially those from the social sciences, and already this year we are making contact with some of those DHS undergraduate and graduate scholars.

So educating the next generation is a very important part of what we’re doing, and through a center like this, an integrated center like this, we can integrate not only the research efforts but also the research and educational efforts.

Journalist’s Question:

Can you talk about some of the research you have planned or any of the projects you mentioned?

Gary LaFree:
START PRESS BRIEFING – JUNE 9, 2005

Would it make sense to ask each group to mention one or two? We have something like, we are planning I think this year about 25 separate research projects so we have quite an active agenda. Well how about some examples …

Kathleen Tierney:

I just want to sort of clarify something, or maybe get some ideas going in your own minds. We hear people saying in shorthand terms, this center is to study the mind of the terrorist. Definitely we’re looking at the psychology and the social psychology of terrorism, but we are not just about the mind of the terrorist. We are about things like the broader social, political and economic factors that give rise to terrorism.

The factors that are associated with groups – groups I’m talking about, not individuals, but groups – espousing a violent ideology, versus a non-violent ideology, what makes groups use violent tactics at one point in time and drop them in another.

Looking at our own societal context, what are the social factors that are associated with the vulnerability of our population, not only psychological but also social factors that make particular groups more vulnerable than others. What are the social factors and cultural factors that enter into the way in which members of our society, different groups in our diverse society, perceive risk, where do they get their information about terrorism-related risk, what are the social factors that are involved in preparedness and response to terrorist events and other extreme events.

So it would be, in other words incorrect … we have geographers working on the spatial dimensions of vulnerability, spatial dimensions in spread of terrorism. It would be incorrect to only say that we’re looking at quote unquote the mind of terrorists. We’re much broader than that, with disciplines ranging from anthropology to geography to psychology, social psychology, to psychiatry, to risk analysis, and so on.

Gary LaFree:

Maybe it would be useful to give a few specific examples of these 25 projects. I’ll offer one that I’m involved in. We … one of the things we’ll be doing in the center this year is analyzing the database on terrorist events – about 70 thousand terrorist strikes from all over the planet going back to 1970, and we’re using the database in a variety of ways. This year we’ll be looking for example, at terrorist groups that suddenly go out of existence. It’s a very interesting category that hasn’t been looked at much in the literature yet.

We’re also very interested in groups that suddenly ramp up the number of strikes, trying to figure out why that’s the case. We’ll be combining these data with one of the things that I think we really bring to the table is in … and Clark McCauley can talk in more detail than this. But if you want to understand terrorism, you can’t just concentrate on the terrorist strike. You want to know about all those cases that could have resulted in a terrorist strike but didn’t.
So we’re going to be not only looking at terrorist strikes, but at other groups that have grievances around the world, and why do some of those turn into violent terrorist strikes and some of them do not? What sorts of things predict that? So one of my roles in terms of the research end of this center is going to be analyzing these data in a number of I hope interesting ways.

Arie Kruglanski:

An important aspect that we’ll be studying is terrorist motivations. Everybody is asking the question, why do they hate us so much? The issue of motivation is much more complex than that. It relates to the objective conditions that Kathleen already mentioned, poverty, oppression – these are the objective conditions the context of which terrorists organizations may spring, but not necessarily.

So how do these objective conditions translate into ideologies and into the decision to employ terrorist means? How individual motivations prompt people to be ready to be recruited to terrorism? How the groups determine their objectives and determine the degree to which these objectives serve the larger (unint.). So we’ll be studying issues of ideology, issues of strategy, issues of tactics and to that end, we’ll employ different methodologies.

We’ll be looking at pronouncements of terrorist leaders, and their Web sites, content analyzing what they are telling their audiences, their publics. We’ll be interviewing some prior terrorist leaders. We’ll be looking at what they write. We’ll be conducting surveys in populations that constitute sentiment pools from which new records can be drawn.

We’ll be employing all of these to understand the motivational component, because after all, terrorist activities are motivated activity and it’s important to understand what underlies it, what goes, (unint.) what means are deemed appropriate for carrying out these objectives.

Journalist’s Question:

Can you give me an example of some organizations that were originally non-violent and have subsequently become so, or vice versa? And if you can, do you have any measured responses as to why that might be? One or two cases?

Gary LaFree:

We certainly have some cases …

Clark McCauley:

But it doesn’t quite fit the bill he’s asking about. One of our projects has to do with the study of a radical Islamic group, which has for 40 odd years now not been violent. This
is Hizbut-Tahrir – and that’s H-I-Z-B-U-T [hyphen] T-A-H-R-I-R, and was founded in Palestine basically 40 odd years ago, but it now reaches through all of central Asia through Europe, and has a big headquarters operation in London. It exists even in this country. As a matter of fact they had study group on the University of Maryland campus, we understand not too long ago.

So what's interesting about this group is it’s a radical Islamic group, radical in the sense they want to go back to the Caliphate. That’s their political party and that’s their program. They want to rejoin all of the Islamic countries again under one political leadership, which is basically a theocracy.

So in that program of course, they join many militant and terrorist Islamic groups. But what's interesting about these people is, they have been against violence. As a matter of fact they condemned the attack on the World Trade Center as being un-Islamic, against the Koran.

So you can see that it’s very interesting to have a case in which the militancy is dissociated from the political and religious program. So if we can understand more about this group, then we might be able to understand how we could encourage groups who share the political vision to share the peacefulness of this group, or at the very least, or worst, we could begin to prepare for the possibility that Hizbut too might turn to violence.

Well under what conditions might that happen? Because it’s a very widespread group, it has considerable resources, it has an underground cellular structure and in most of the Islamic countries where it’s banned. Well it’s not banned in most of Europe. So a very interesting case to understand.

Another case kind of a case study extended, being accomplished by Martha Crenshaw, and she's basically identified 500 major terrorist groups since the 1960s, and of those, how many have attacked the US ever? About 30. So surely it’s going to be interesting to learn, as she’s going to learn why it is that the 30 are different from the 500. What was different about their circumstances, about their ideology, about the state response to their early activities? What made the difference for these 30? Well you can see from the US point of view that would be a very interesting thing to know about.

And perhaps still another example at the same time represented by the investigator who is unfortunately not able to be here today, one of the very few Donatello de la Porta (ph.). That’s D-E-L-A, -P-O-R-T-A. And she has a lot of experience studying Italian terrorist groups back in the 70s, red brigades and so on and so forth. She’s very unusual in taking a social movement approach to studying terrorism.

Once you think about terrorists in the way Gary was suggesting a minute ago is, it’s a political competition and you’ve got understand how some social movements and some causes make the transition to terrorism and others don’t; we’ve got to understand why some do and some don’t. But she’s going to attack that problem with review of groups
back as far as the 70s, looking at the rhetoric that they used, either to justify or to turn away from violence. Because people don’t kill other human beings without talking about it. They produce a justification …

Kathleen Tierney:

They produce moral and ethical justification …

Clark McCauley:

… a moral justification, that’s right. And we can look forward I think to the beginnings of a kind of science of the rhetoric, the moral rhetoric by which one justifies killing other human beings especially in the civilian human beings for political causes – the kind of rhetoric that can motivate and justify terrorism. So she’s going to be comparing rhetorics of different groups from different periods of time, looking for the common denominator for this kind of rhetoric, which can perhaps be useful as kind of a warning signal. If you know what to look for in the rhetoric you can see the trajectory, the moral trajectory that can end in terrorism.

Arie Kruglanski:

In addition to moral trajectory there's also the instrumental trajectory, groups employ terrorism to the extent that they believe it to be efficient. So for example, the leader of Hesbolla and Aswalla felt that terrorism is very efficient, it draws the Americans, the French, the Israelis out of Lebanon, and that encourage the use of terrorism as a means.

Osama bin Laden tends to believe that the West is degenerate and weak and will crumble under terrorist attacks. So it’s this kind of justifications, in addition to the moral rhetoric, there is instrumental rhetoric that suggests terrorism is a good means to attain one’s goals.

In general it’s a means, as ( unint.) once quoted, war is continuation of diplomacy both other means. So is terrorism. It’s a political tactic that is deemed effective, sometimes inevitable, sometimes exclusive, that is at the disposal of the group.

We have in this country and in others this idea of slippery slope. The groups that start with protests and demonstrations are drawn to terrorism when they exhaust their efficacies, the perceived efficacy, of those moral, peaceful means. And groups in general, terrorist groups in general in many cases oscillate between political means and terrorism. They sometimes withhold or arrest terrorist activities when alternative diplomatic means become available. Hamas, for example, for a while, arrested terrorist activities when the possibility of proceeding with the roadmap became available. So it’s politics by other means as deemed efficient and morally justifiable.

Gary LaFree:
START PRESS BRIEFING – JUNE 9, 2005

Because some of you may not be familiar with the structure of the center if you haven't been spending a lot of time with these Centers of Excellence, I might just say something real quickly about that. We’ve been working with Homeland Security on this now for about six months, I suppose, intensively, and actually as I've gotten more into it, I think Homeland Security has actually a very smart strategy with this, and I’ll explain why.

How does Homeland Security get access to science, essentially, and training and education? Well, they essentially have the national labs to work in this area. But this new program that we’re under, University Programs, I think is quite a cunning way to go about it, because in some ways, we have been set up as a center of centers. We have something like 50 or 60 people involved in this, but for example, by paying something like … I don’t know what we’re paying, but not much of Kathleen’s salary … we have access to the lab that she directs.

Kathleen Tierney:
The Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado is a 30 year old center that developed around natural hazards issues that increasingly goes into the Homeland Security area. And we exist to build bridges between researchers, practitioners, and the policy community. And there are other centers as well. You can almost think of us as the center of centers around the country.

Gary LaFree:
So basically for a relatively modest amount of money, we have networked with some of the best people in the research area around the whole country. They're bringing their resources to the table as well. So I think the longer I'm part of this group, the more I think it was actually a very smart move from a budget standpoint.

Journalist’s Question:
Do you have access to the classified information with your research?

Gary LaFree:
Right now we specifically do not have … in fact one of the early … when we were first contemplating this project, we had thought about locating the center in a classified area out by the metro station, because we were dealing with exactly with that problem. DHS and university program section has very strongly resisted us going that way; in fact they want us to be working in the unclassified area.

Now this of course, is an area that will I'm sure continue to draw policy attention over time, but right now, we’re in the center of campus. Our office here is going to be right on the Mall. We have students from all over certainly the country and even all over the world with us – totally working on open sources right now.
How effective can you be without access to classified information?

Gary LaFree:

Well, there's pros and cons of course. Actually the longer … I can speak about our database. We know that this database is probably seven times larger than any other database that's out there. It was collected primarily by ex-Air Force OIS intelligence guys basically, after they had retired from the Air Force.

Journalist’s Question:

OSI?

Gary LaFree:

Sorry, yes, OSI. And you know, the more I get into this, I don't think … I think we've had quite a bit of contact now with DOD sources, CIA sources. I think we actually even in the classified areas probably have one the largest databases out there. The great advantage that we have being open source, is we can communicate with the best scientists around the world. We don't have to worry about their nationality. We can share information; we can make information available.

And I think the way that this right now seems to be working out is agencies that do classified work, including Homeland Security, can look at what we've done, compare us to what they're doing, and now reach their own judgments. I think we do not want to become a branch of Homeland Security. We’re a university group. And so we want to do what universities do best, which is turn out high quality objective research, and train the next generation of researchers.

And so, we sort of want to keep a little bit of distance in fact between us and Homeland Security, and I think they are in agreement with that as well right now, that there are advantages. They don’t need another national lab, they’ve got a bunch of national labs. They don’t need another branch of Homeland Security. They see us, I think, in a separate category.

Clark McCauley:

There's a couple of advantages that might be worth remarking. One is that there's a real advantage to not be attached, you know, mouth firmly placed over the fire hose of the daily rush of classified cables. People who have lived lives like that find it very difficult - I mean, I've talked to some of them – very difficult to stand back enough, to get the perspective to help interpret this flood of information that’s coming in all the time. So there is a sense in which at least to some degree and in some ways, less can be more.

And another, which is a variant of what Gary was suggesting, is that in some ways it’s useful I think for the security agencies to be able to try to evaluate what they're getting
out of their huge investment in classified information. How can they do that? Well, they can see how far ahead do we get inside the classified buildings, compared to what these people can do out there with open source stuff.

So it’s a way of keeping track of and evaluating the value of their own investment, in this huge intelligence gathering classified information effort. So my guess is, what little conversation I've had with some security people about this, sometimes we get to feel pretty good about this. ‘Oh yeah, well if they only knew what we knew about this.’ And sometimes they don’t get to feel so good about this. ‘Well, gee actually you know we hadn't even ever thought of that,’ but they're saying out there in the unclassified world. And it doesn’t look like any of our classification stuff did us any good on this topic at all. So I think they're in a position to learn some things about how best to use classified information, from this kind of comparison that becomes available, thanks to the Center.

Journalist’s Question:

So are you guys are essentially suggesting that you can do just as well with open source information?

Clark McCauley:

I'm saying sometimes … I'm saying it can go either way, but you can learn something from it either way. You can learn, from their point of view, you can learn where are the angles, what are the topics, what are the concerns or the issues or what's the timeline problem that you can really make a dent, extra dent, in by having the classified stuff, and what’s the stuff maybe we’re not really getting much out of our classified investments. So if I were they, I'd be trying to take a profit out of that comparison and I think they do.

Kathleen Tierney:

I think we need to also back up here a moment and ask ourselves, what is it that we’re talking about here, what is it that we’re studying, and what role would classified information potentially have in that? For example, as Gary mentioned, Gary has developed a database with over 70 thousand events in it. He did that through collaboration with people who were collecting that data.

Then that event based data can be matched up with other publicly available data on the social and political characteristics of the societies in which those events took place, could be matched up with GIS data on the spatial location of where those events took place, can be matched up with census data on the populations in those areas, can be matched up with other databases on ethnic minorities mobilization in those areas.

Now none of this information is classified. What we’re doing here is we’re integrating together different data sources in order to be able to ask some fundamental questions about the origins and dynamics of terrorism. We are, in other words, marshalling a wide variety of data – be that survey data, be that census data, be that data on political features
of different countries, economic features and social features, information on … we have one project for example on the impact of policy actions, laws and regulations on subsequent terrorist attacks, on the timing, on the frequency of terrorist attacks.

It’s all publicly available data. What you need are smart people putting those data together in new ways. Not necessarily classified information per se, now there may be obviously aspects of the terrorism issue where classified data are essential. But to answer the kinds of questions that we’re trying to answer, um, publicly available data and data that we collect ourselves should help us come up with those sorts of answers.

For example, in … in my working group we’re really dealing with societal dimensions of terrorism here in the US. We are planning on conducting a household survey on a random representative sample of households in the United States, to find out their perception of the terrorist threat, where are they getting their information, what are they doing in terms of acting on that information, what are their points of view on public policy that has been developed in the terrorism area.

How do those points of view differ as a function of where people live, as a function of their household characteristics, as a function of people’s socioeconomic characteristics, as a function of other characteristics such as ethnicity, such as experience with trauma and terrorist events, experiencing other forms of victimization that people might have experienced in their lives.

This original data that we’re collecting from members of the U.S. public to … so that we can better understand where the public stands right now, with respect to what it knows, how prepared the public is, how much they understand about different terrorism related threats, where they're getting their information, as I said.

These are … this is not the kind of research that you need a clearance in order to be able to conduct, and yet it’s very important to our understanding of where our society is right now with respect to the terrorist threat.

Clark McCauley:

And some of it’s just conceptual work. I mean, how many times have you read the importance of hate and understanding the protracted and difficult kinds of inter-group conflicts of terrorism? And how many times have you read about humiliation as a factor, as a motive, in inter-group conflicts and especially terrorism? Well so obviously it ought to be worth somebody’s while to ask the question, well, what is hate? What do we know about that? Does hate mean anything different from strong anger, or is it some combination of hate and fear, or is it, as I think myself, the kind of extreme negative identification which can be the occasion of experiencing many emotions depending on what happens to the (unint.) target.

But just conceptually, if you're going to think hate is important, you’ve got to get into the uncovering what is this to be meant and how it’s to be measured, how it exerts effects on
people’s behavior, and likewise for humiliation. And actually at this moment, I can tell you, there is very little research on either--empirical research--on either hate or humiliation. So these are important areas that need to be developed.

Or to take another emotion issue, what does it mean to be afraid of terrorism? I mean, after all, it’s what terrorism is about, to terrify people, right? So fear is now part of the big impact that we have to be ready to deal with. Well, it turns out, I got some research of my own to show this, so I’ll tell it to you quite confidently, turns out you’ve got to distinguish between two kinds of fear. There’s personal fear – fear that me and mine are going to get hurt – that’s one thing, and then there's fear about threats to the group you care about, which for Americans, you could say is Americans in general.

Well you have to measure these separately, and when you do, it turns out they are not very well correlated. There are a lot of people who are very afraid about threats to America as a whole but who do not feel personally threatened at all. And there's a lot of people vice versa.

And it turns out to be really important to distinguish these, because personal threat has to do with personal behavior in response to a threat. But inter-group threat, threat the group you care about, that’s hitched up to politics. That’s what makes a difference in whether people are willing to think about different kinds of policies.

In the research we were doing in Israel for instance it makes the difference between being willing to think about some kind of a compromised solution with the Palestinians, a two state solution, or not. You'll see the biggest inter-group threat, the biggest Palestinian threat to Israelis as a group, they are the least willing to think about the possibility.

So here's a distinction you see, a distinction in understanding what it means to be threatened, what it means to be afraid, which has important practical implications for policy and understanding people’s response to threats. So this kind of conceptual development is part of what the field needs and part of what we can do and want to do. And you can see that kind of issue, it doesn’t require a security clearance to think those kinds of thoughts.

Journalist’s Question:

There's discussion or comments before and some of my research is showing that resilience, and you brought this up at the top of the conversation. Are you all basically satisfied that another mass casualty event is going to be happening sometime say in the next couple of years or so, and if you agree with that proposition, how important is it that the (unint.), the public become resilient?

Clark McCauley:

Well you're the expert on resilience but I’ll just step out into the heat of the day and say I'm not expecting a big one in the next couple years, because the strategy that al Qaeda is
using at the moment and what’s left of it and its little franchises around the world, it’s working great. The current strategy is to build between Islamic people and the left – and how do they do that?

They attack all these soft targets all around the world – all the way from Morocco to Thailand and the Philippines. They attack people like NGOs and missionaries and business people and tourists. And they're doing a great job. It’s very cheap for them, they get great results out of every hit, the targets are soft, and it makes fewer and fewer Westerners willing to go to these places.

The wall that they want, this clash of civilizations that they see between Islam and the West. They're creating that wall with great success, so why would they take-- this is my interpretation. Why would they take scarce resources and put them into something as doubtful as trying to get through the increasing security for another big attack in the U.S.? I can’t see why they would do it.

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Gary LaFree:

Did you want to comment on resilience?

Kathleen Tierney:

Um, yes. I think in the work that we’re doing, we’re interested not only in getting a better understanding of the vulnerability of U.S. populations, which the communities are the most vulnerable, which subpopulations are the most vulnerable. But also, the flipside of vulnerability, which is resilience. How do you build within a population--first of all what is resilience? But secondly, how do you build resilience within the population? How do you enable people to cope very well with crisis events when they happen, and also bounce back afterwards? How do you build communities that are the same way? How--what are the factors associated with economic resilience, with social resilience?

If we can look at--if we can develop metrics for resilience, we can compare areas in terms of their resilience, and their vulnerability, and also hopefully get a handle on how to raise the level of resilience, in less resilient communities or subpopulations.

Journalist’s Question:

Has DHS talked about this? I haven't seen anything, any press release or anything of the sort, with the idea of preparing the public for something like this. Obviously it’s a downer, but it’s clear it needs to be discussed (unint).

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Kathleen Tierney:

Well actually you know, when each of these Centers was funded … I don't know how much you know about the grant process, but DHS puts out what's called a broad agency announcement, and they say we want people to write proposals that address these issues –
the first center has to do with economics, risk and economic analysis of terrorism, then on food security and other topics.

When they put out the call for proposals for this Center, they explicitly said, we're interested in vulnerability and resilience, risk perception, risk communication, and preparedness among different units of analysis, and we took that to mean, household preparedness, community preparedness. And that is what we wrote a proposal to say we were going to do. So we are doing this in response to DHS’s own expressed interest in these topics.

Journalist’s Question:

Any idea when any kind of conclusion might be reached, such that the newswires or mass media organizations can discussion this sort of or say here are some initial conclusions that have been drawn as result of what's been done?

Gary LaFree:

Well certainly a year from now we will have a whole series of projects ready and we will have a much bigger event next year…

Kathleen Tierney:

I would just mention that in this area of vulnerability and resilience, this isn't something where we’re starting from square one. People have been working in this area for a very, very long time, with respect for example, to natural disaster events, technological disasters, terrorist attacks like Oklahoma City, and the World Trade Center. Some of these very people are the people who are working with us, the most knowledgeable people in the country in terms of vulnerability and resilience on the psychosocial and social dimensions.

Arie Kruglanski:

I just want to add a comment on the issue of the likelihood of attack, and the likelihood of a spectacular attack. That’s one of the things we’ll be studying – what kind of targets are of interest to terrorists? For example, al Qaeda was initially committed to spectacular events of the kind that occurred 9/11 and then mass casualties.

But al Qaeda of today is not the same as al Qaeda of before 9/11, it’s dispersed, some people talk about it not being an organization anymore, but rather a spirit of al Qaeda. And there are many localized groups that could take initiative on their own, based-- moved by the spirit of al Qaeda, which they understand to mean inflicting damage on Americans.
So even today in the news, there was an arrest in California of a couple of people, who, one of whom was trained in Pakistan I think in al Qaeda camp, and his intention was to target hospitals and schools.

Kathleen Tierney:

Alleged intentions.

Arie Kruglanski:

Alleged intentions, of course. But this kind of gives you the feeling that their objectives and targets are fluid, are dynamic, and whereas before we expected, given the magnitude of attacks this can change, has the dynamics of unfold.

Gary LaFree:

I think we have to get back to the meeting, but I actually wanted to take an opportunity to introduce someone you'll I think meet in the future. Ramona Harper is our first full-time employee on the project, and she will be our Executive Director here. She has been on the job for all of three days.

Journalist’s Question:

Can I ask you this quickly…Who’s the consumer here? I mean, Obviously this is being funded by DHS…but how is what you produce relate to…DHS, how does it work?

Kathleen Tierney:

Ah, this is another of the good sides of not working in the classified world.

Gary LaFree:

We will be … partly a big part of what we’re doing is DHS is telling us, again, do what we do best. So we will be producing research articles, university style articles for the main journals that we’re looking at. We also though will have a tremendous outreach potential. Right before we came to this room, for example, one of our colleagues, Monica Shoch-Spana for example, has done a lot of work in terms of emergency preparedness, and communicating with first responders and so on, we’re probably going to be doing some training for all of the state level DHS centers that are now organized in every state, including this one. So we’re going to be doing a combination. Our reports will all go to Homeland Security, but we also will be producing standard academic reports for our community.

Kathleen Tierney:
As well as going out and speaking on these topics when we’re asked to, and a very large consumer of what we’re producing is the next generation of scholars here. We have to educate the quote unquote workforce in academia and in our agencies, and in our first response agencies.

Clark McCauley:

Plus you’ll get a laugh out of the idea that I occasionally try to op. ed. Piece, but sold maybe two or three over a period of many years of trying. But just to let you know, that it does occur to us from time to time to try to reach a broader audience than a journal article gets to.

Journalist’s Question:

Do you have a Web page idea in mind where you will sort of state what you’re working on…?

Gary LaFree:

We will have extensive Web page. I think I mentioned we've had a budget for two weeks, and we’re working on a Web site. We will probably launch our Web site in about two weeks. That’s our hope, right, Ramona? We’re hoping. But it’s very much a work in progress. But yes, in this day and age, plus the fact that we are such a virtual outfit. We have individuals all over the place, plus we want to tap their resources and…

Kathleen Tierney:

That’s what we’ll do. When we get the Web site up, we’ll also have links with our different member institutions, their centers and their resources. So when you go to the START Web site, you will … that will be a portal that will get you out to what others are doing. Whether that’s at UCLA, UC Irvine, Colorado, South Carolina, Penn, or other affiliates.

Journalist’s Question:

Would you or any of the other Centers have anything to do with the so-called DHS think tanks…?

Gary LaFree:

We will … we are evolving along those lines. We've got actually right now I think we’ve got more demands than we can meet, to tell you the truth. Between DHS’s various arms or institutes, the national labs, our outreach to other researchers in other countries. So we’re trying to keep our eye on the prize. We’re also planning a series of projects that we are committed to finish this first year. But as time goes on, the answer is yes, of
course, we will be linked to their think tank, to their institute and to the other centers that they're creating.

Kathleen Tierney:

And there will be more centers coming down the line. The next center actually is going to have to do again with preparedness, with a special emphasis on the first response community and how we know when communities, organizations and first responders are prepared.

Journalist’s Question:

And did you happen to know what that center is likely to be named or awarded? I know it’s probably not really your territory.

Kathleen Tierney:

Probably within the next few weeks, you know, subject to the review process.

Clark McCauley:

The few weeks between the time when we thought we were about to get that contract from the time it was actually, that was more like several months, so I wouldn’t put any heavy money on this.

Kathleen Tierney:

But center five certainly will be designated before the end of the summer.

Journalist:

Speaking of money, you are getting any help from private individuals or others who believe in what you're doing and people who are academics or ex-Army generals or anybody else who …

Gary LaFree:

In a financial sense?

Journalist:

Exactly.

Gary LaFree:

Not at this stage, no.
Journalist:

Is that something that you would like to see happen or it might, you know …

Gary LaFree:

Well, it’s possible. Certainly we will have other funding sources, no doubt, down the line. There's no doubt about that. Whether some of those will come through foundations remains to be seen.

Journalist:

But basically it would be DHS and doing the grant funding, right?

Gary LaFree:

Right.

Journalist:

Well is any of the research you’re doing a natural fit for partnership with the private sector?

Gary LaFree:

There could be, but I think it would be more likely places like CDC, National Institute of Justice, RAND, some of the research houses.

FS:

National Science Foundation.

Gary LaFree:

National Science Foundation.

Clark McCauley:

I think some of the individual research projects could be expanded and projected in ways that would be attractive…amongst the foundation, private foundations. So it isn't just government money that we could be looking for. Some of the issues we’re concerned about fit into the mandate of different agencies, different foundations.

So for instance one that I happen to work for, so what makes me think this thought is the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation in New York City. And they give grants to support research on problem with human dominance, aggression and violence. Well, guess what,
that’s not divorced from the kinds of issues that we care about, so I'm thinking that some of the projects that I'm working on, and some of the students that I've got interested in those projects, they could be trying to leverage out from the DHS support and get some support from HFG or other such foundations. So we actually have a little …

[Everyone talking at once]

It’s in our agenda, you might say think about how we’re going to try to expand from and leverage from the DHS support so that we can get more done. Which seems like a large amount of money that went to this project. But when you parcel it out amongst as many different people and projects and places, it’s far from munificent, and we’re going to end up needing, to be effective, we’re going to need to leverage that.

Gary LaFree:

And I guess the Carnegie Foundation is actually funding a small part of the weapon of mass destruction study and the possibility of additional funding as well.

Journalist:

Thank you very much.

Journalist:

Can I ask one more? Have you had any intention of recruiting people from the Middle East, Arab to Arab Americans as you’ve probably read the CIA had decided that they're going to be more affirmative in the recruitment area, because they haven't had too many people who have been helpful in this regard, hence we’ve got problems with intelligence stuff. Are you going to try to recruit people who are from these regions?

Clark McCauley:

I think the quick answer is yes. In fact the presentation we’re missing right now is from the Center for the Study of … Advanced Study of Languages. And one of the things they're interested in doing with us, I think working on better connections to that part of the world as well as other parts of the world as well – Southeast Asia as well I think would be interesting.

Gary LaFree:

We actually have some modest connections there already, but we would I'm sure like more in the future.

Journalist: Thank you very much.