

START Bulletin

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The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods, and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics, and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information on START, please visit <http://www.start.umd.edu/>.

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START Highlights

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one



START launched the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs) data portal, providing users with detailed information on 856 organizations that have been known to engage in terrorism around the world (<http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/>).

two



Sophia Moskalenko of Bryn Mawr College has been selected for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program to continue her START work with Clark McCauley on mechanisms and indicators of political radicalization, and Hamilton Bean of the University of Colorado was selected for a DHS Dissertation Award for his research, "The Institutionalization of Homeland Security Information Sharing." START researcher Lisa Keränen is on Hamilton's dissertation committee.

three



Arie Kruglanski of the University of Maryland has been awarded a one-year grant from The DHS Science and Technology International Programs Office to partner with the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Israel to study the relationships among public opinion, counterterrorism efforts, and terrorist activity.

four



START Director Gary LaFree traveled overseas to present findings from START researchers to officials from the Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Griffith University's Policing and Security Centre (http://www.start.umd.edu/media/start_in_the_news/newsItem.asp?id=67).

five



START researchers Linda Bourque (UCLA) and Dennis Mileti (University of Colorado) briefed an audience of officials from throughout DHS on the results of the National Household Preparedness Survey directed by Bourque and Mileti and supported by START as well as the National Science Foundation. An initial report from the survey will be released in the coming months.



Data files for START's Global Terrorism Database are now available to the public through the Terrorism and Preparedness Data Resource Center, accessible at www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd.

START Consortium 2008 Annual Meeting



(Click image to enlarge.)

September 18-20, 2008

September 2008 marked the fourth annual gathering of START researchers in College Park, MD. Representatives from more than 95% of START projects were in attendance for the three-day meeting, consisting of short research presentations, START headquarters and DHS updates, and student sessions. In all, more than 125 attendees participated in this year's meeting.

The meeting began with a student session on Thursday morning, followed by updates from START headquarters on:

- START's Strategic Plan
- START headquarters management
- New outreach and integration initiatives
- The movement from Working Groups to Focus Areas and Research Clusters (see graphic)
- Education programs & new efforts, including Curriculum Development Grants and a Syllabi Repository

Later that day, in an effort to encourage collaboration across focus areas, attendees were separated into small groups to introduce other START researchers to their work. Friday, researchers presented quick 3-minute, one-slide presentations on their projects. The session included updates on projects that have been underway for several years, as well as introductions to projects in their very early stages. The meeting came to a close on Saturday after discussion of ideas for collaboration between research focus areas and a career development panel for students.

Throughout the meeting, student and fellow posters were on display. This year, START held its first annual student poster competition, which granted two best poster awards to students, one each at the undergraduate and graduate levels (see poster contest article on next page for more details).



Breakout session of the START researchers and students.



Richart Legault presenting START's data resources.

START Annual Meeting Poster Contest



Jason Belcher presents his poster.

“I really enjoyed the opportunity to present at the START Annual Conference. It was my first presentation at a professional conference, and I feel that I really benefitted from the experience. It was challenging and exciting to discuss my work with so many experts in the field, and I walked away with very useful feedback that continues to shape my current research.”

Jason Belcher

This September, START sponsored the first annual Student Poster Contest at this year’s Annual Meeting. Students competed for awards for the best graduate and undergraduate posters. Congratulations are due to the winners, Jeff Gruenewald and Jason Belcher, for their outstanding posters. Gruenewald won in the Graduate Poster Division with his poster titled, “Ideologically Motivated Homicide Incidents and Participants in the United States, 1990-2007.” He is a START Pre-doctoral Fellow at Michigan State University, mentored by START researchers Steven Chermak and Joshua Freilich.

Jason Belcher took home the prize in the Undergraduate Poster Division with his poster titled, “The Spatial Concentration and Patterns of Terrorism in Colombia (1977-1997): A Geographic Analysis of the FARC and Other Left-Wing Terrorists.” Belcher is a student at the University of Maryland, mentored by Brandon Behlendorf and Gary LaFree. Belcher and Gruenewald each received awards of \$250 for their excellent work.

Runners-up for the Graduate Division were Rebecca Carter’s “Religion in the Lived Experience of Disasters” and James Hendrickson’s “Just ‘A Bunch of Guys’? Testing the Sageman Theory of the Etiology of Terrorism.” In the Undergraduate Division, runners-up were Catherine Kramer’s “Relationship Between the Level of Gender Equality and Female Participation in Terrorist Groups” and Sterling Raetz’s “Geographic Profiling of Crimes Committed by Domestic Right-Wing Extremist Groups in the United States, 1990-2006.”

START would like to thank the panel of judges from START’s Executive Committee and researchers for their participation in the contest.



Gary LaFree presenting award to Jeff Gruenewald.

Homeland Security Federal Semester: START Collaborates with Undergraduate Studies Course

Federal Semester is a unique academic opportunity provided by the University of Maryland Office of Undergraduate Studies to give students a background in federal policy and offer them a professional experience in the field. The 2008-2009 program marks the first Homeland Security Federal Semester and collaboration with START.

This competitive program draws together Maryland students of junior and senior standing from a variety of disciplines to explore the field of federal policy. Upon entering federal semester, students select a theme of interest to pursue. In this way, they have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue, and therefore, specialize within the homeland security field.

START's Assistant Director for Education, Katherine Worboys, comments on START's involvement in the program:

"We here at START were excited to work with Undergraduate Studies on the Homeland Security Federal Semester because it gave us the opportunity to significantly expand our educational offerings. The Homeland Security Federal Semester is designed to draw on START expertise on the study of terrorism and responses to terrorism, while also bringing in START colleagues from the federal government, offering students a much more hands-on approach to the study of homeland security than had previously been possible. Federal Semester students have the opportunity to study homeland security policy with a veteran policy-maker, the opportunity to fulfill a federal homeland security policy internship, and, perhaps most excitingly, the chance to participate in the federal government first Quadrennial Homeland Security Review through work with the program's first instructor, Magdalena Bajll."

Over the course of one year, students complete a seminar, internship, and supplemental coursework for the program. A number of START courses are part of the supplemental course list:

- BSOS 330** Terrorist Motivations and Behaviors
- BSOS 331** Responses to Terrorism
- BSOS 332** The Practice of Terrorism Studies
- BSOS 388** Terrorist Tactics and Innovation
- BSOS 388** Terrorism Analysis for Intelligence Analysts
- BSOS 388** Counterterrorism in the European Union (Study Abroad)

A number of students in START's Terrorism Studies Minor Program are enrolled in the Federal Semester program. One of them, Sabrina Hammouda, comments:

"A great part of the program has been the speakers that come in. We have had [speakers from] the private and public sectors.... It really helps you get a feel for what it's like working in homeland security in different professional communities (public vs private). It has been a great way to understand the policymaking process and see the difficulty in operationalizing homeland security policy as well as understanding all the players that are involved in homeland security."

For more information on Federal Semester, see www.federalsemester.umd.edu.

For more information on START's educational programs, see www.start.umd.edu/education/.

"It really helps you get a feel for what it's like working in homeland security in different professional communities."

Sabrina Hammouda



New Project Highlights Growing Partnership Between START and DHS

START has developed a new project in partnership with DHS, "Anatomizing the Behavior of Radiological and Nuclear Non-State Adversaries," to examine the characteristics, decision-making, and behavior of the potential perpetrators of radiological and nuclear (RN) attacks.

Research has previously been conducted in the areas of the vulnerability of weapons-usable materials, the technical capabilities required to construct RN weapons, and preparations for dealing with the consequences of a radiological or nuclear attack. However, study of the perpetrators' behavior has received far less attention. START is uniquely positioned to explore this area since its mission is to apply the methods of the social and behavioral sciences to better understand the dynamics of terrorism.

START has assembled a multi-disciplinary team to undertake this research. START has partnered with Noblis, SUNY-Albany, the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies on this project. The research team

expects to broaden the understanding of the adversaries' behavior, including the pathways to acquisition that different adversaries might favor as well as their targeting and other tactical preferences. By identifying relevant characteristics of RN adversaries, the researchers may be able to develop a set of indicators that can be applied to actors who have not yet evidenced the capability or motivations for using RN weapons.

The project will be conducted in three phases:

1. Adversary Identification
2. Analysis of Adversary Behavior
3. Comparison, Synthesis and Integration into Existing Assessments

Data for each phase will be drawn from open sources, including a wide variety of primary source materials (such as perpetrator statements and trial transcripts) and secondary source materials (news articles, journal articles and books). Quantitative analysis will utilize existing datasets, modified as necessary. These databases include:

- a. The Global Terrorism Database (housed at START)
- b. Monterey WMD Terrorism Database
- c. Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior Database
- d. Correlates of War
- e. POLITY III
- f. IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database (ITD)
- g. Los Alamos Nuclear Trafficking Database

This project will have wide-ranging impact. From an academic standpoint, it will fill a void in current understanding of the threat of radiological and nuclear terrorism and how specific constellations of attributes are related to targeting and other adversary behaviors. The risk of RN terrorism will also be more completely defined by including in the risk equation more detailed specifications of the threat component, together with the vulnerability and consequence elements of risk. The research will therefore assist policymakers in efficiently addressing the threat. Most importantly, the project will enhance the capability of homeland security practitioners to protect the United States by providing a sound basis for emulating the methods and tactics of the postulated adversary.

What are the tendencies of these actors for intent, acquisition, weaponization, transport and delivery of nuclear or radiological materials and/or weapons?

Who are the most likely radiological or nuclear non-state threat actors?



START Recent Publications

More START Publications available at:
<http://www.start.umd.edu/publications/>

Journal Articles

Asal, Victor, and Paul G. Harwood. 2008. "Search Engines: Terrorism's Killer App." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31:641-654.

Borque, Linda. 2008. "Correlates of School Disaster Preparedness: Main Effects of Funding and a Coordinator Role." *Natural Hazards Review* 9:49-59.

Flanigan, Shawn. 2008. "Nonprofit Service Provision by Insurgent Organizations – The Cases of Hizballah and the Tamil Tigers." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31:499-519.

Hafez, Mohammed. 2008. "Radicalization in the Persian Gulf: Assessing the Potential of Islamist Militancy in Saudi Arabia and Yemen." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 1:1-19.

Legault, Richard. 2008. "Reporting Error in Household Gun Ownership in the 2000 General Social Survey." *Crime & Delinquency (Feb 2008)* 0:1-26.

Liao, Ke and Diansheng Guo. 2008. "A Clustering-based Approach to a Capacitate Facility Location Problem." *Transactions in GIS* 12:323-339.

Norris, Fran. 2008. "Longitudinal Linkages between Perceived Social Support and Psychological Distress: A Test of Sequential Model of Social Causation and Social Selection." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 21:274-281.

Norris, Fran. 2008. "Financial and Social Circumstances, the Incidence and Course of PTSD in Mississippi during the First Two Years after Hurricane Katrina." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 21:357-368.

Pfefferbaum, Betty, J. Brian Houston, Karen Wyche, Richard Van Horn, Gilbert Reyes, Haekyung Jeon-Slaughter and Carol North. 2008. "Children Displaced by Hurricane Katrina: A Focus Group Study." *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 13:303-318.

Smith, Brent. 2008. "A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike." *NIJ Journal* 260:2-6.

Wyche, Karen. 2008. "First Responders and Community Resilience." *Newsletter of the Child & Family Disaster Research Training & Education Initiative* 4:7-8.

Book Chapters, Books & Reports

Chermak, Steven M., and Joshua D. Freilich. 2008. "Citizen militias." In *Encyclopedia of Social Problems*. Washington, DC: Sage.

Crenshaw, Martha. 2008. "New vs. Old Terrorism: A Critical Appraisal." In *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Pfefferbaum, Betty and Karen Wyche. 2008. "Factors in the Development of Community Resilience to Disasters." In *Intervention and Resilience After Mass Trauma*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Legault, Richard. 2008. *Trends in American Gun Ownership*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Online Articles

Kull, Steven and Clay Ramsay. 2008. *Muslims Positive About Globalization*, Trade. WorldPublicOpinion.org.

Kull, Steven and Clay Ramsay. 2008. *Iraqi Public Opinion on the Presence of US Troops*. WorldPublicOpinion.org.

Kull, Steven and Clay Ramsay. 2008. *International Poll: Most Publics--including Americans--Oppose Taking Sides in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. WorldPublicOpinion.org.