2015 START Symposium
Counterterrorism Panel

- Tracking Attitudes within American Subcultures
  Presented by Sophia Moskalenko
- Dynamics of Terrorism and Counterterrorism Campaigns
  Presented by Joseph Young
- Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg: Terrorist Plots
  Presented by Martha Crenshaw
Tracking Attitudes within American Subcultures

Sophia Moskalenko
START Symposium
10/15/2015

This research was supported by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate’s Office of University Programs through START. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations presented here are solely the authors’ and are not representative of DHS or the United States Government.
Tracking Attitudes within American Subculture

A three-year research project explored the efficacy and utility of internet polling to access opinions and attitudes of U.S. Muslims

- Internet polling provides a cheaper and faster response than traditional dial-up polling
- Useful for assessing reactions to unfolding political events
- Useful when longer-term changes require repeated assessment to observe trends
Methods

• Knowledge Networks collected data from either Panel or Off-Panel participants
• Wave 1: July 4, 2013 through July 28, 2013; N=206
• Wave 2: July 8, 2014 through July 23, 2014; N=203
• Wave 3: Sept. 23, 2014 through Nov. 4, 2014; N=208
• About 30 questions asked opinions about Muslim experience in the USA, and attitudes to radical thoughts and actions
Demographics indicate comparable samples over three waves

Table 1. Demographic data for participants in survey Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Sept-Nov 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>128 (62%)F/78(38%)M</td>
<td>105(52%)F/98(48%)M</td>
<td>86(41%)F/122(59%)M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) Age</td>
<td>36 (13)</td>
<td>37 (14)</td>
<td>36 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>111(53%)</td>
<td>118 (58%)</td>
<td>97(47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Education</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>36% White</td>
<td>38% White</td>
<td>34% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35% Other non-Hispanic</td>
<td>26% Other non-Hispanic</td>
<td>24% Other non-Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17% Black</td>
<td>18% Black</td>
<td>18% Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% Hispanic</td>
<td>13% Hispanic</td>
<td>18% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Means (SDs) of survey questions in Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3. Line numbers with different subscripts are significantly different (p<.05). The questions, including the Likert response scale and the percent of each sample participants who responded in each category, are in the Appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people say that Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries would be better off if all these countries joined together in a 'United States of Islam' stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. Have you ever heard of this idea?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether or not you have heard of this idea before now, do you personally agree with this idea?</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do YOU PERSONALLY feel that this kind of violence [suicide bombing] is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do you think most U.S. Muslims feel about this question?</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the United States is fighting a war on terrorism or a war against Islam?</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do you think most U.S. Muslims feel about this question?</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Al Qaeda?*</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do you think most U.S. Muslims feel about Al Qaeda?</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In wave 3 only, some questions were dropped in order to make possible inclusion of questions about ISIL and Syrian conflict. As a result, only panel participants in Wave 3 (N=73) answered asterisked questions.
Results

Means of six questions in Waves 1, 2, and 3 with significant difference between waves
Results

Standard Deviations of six questions in Wave 1, 2, and 3
WAVE 2: How do you feel about U.S. Muslims going to Syria to fight against Bashar Al Assad?

- I’ve never thought about it 126 (62%)
- I would not do it myself, but I would not condemn anyone who did 44 (22%)
- It’s morally justified to go to fight in Syria 14(7%)
- Joining the jihad in Syria is required for any Muslim who can do it 12(3%)
WAVE 3: From what you know, what is your opinion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)?

- Very favorable: 14 (8%)
- Somewhat favorable: 13 (7%)
- Neither favorable nor unfavorable: 23 (13%)
- Somewhat unfavorable: 16 (9%)
- Very unfavorable: (115, 64%)
Conclusions

• General trend of decreased radicalization over time
  - Are U.S. Muslims turned off by ISIS atrocities?

• Variability of responses was increasing with each new wave of the survey
  - We believe that a small subgroup of U.S. Muslims continue to endorse radical beliefs, or may even have grown more radical over time, while most U.S. Muslims are decreasing endorsement of radical beliefs

• The three surveys demonstrated the advantages of using the kind of quick turnaround Internet panel polling that we have used here
  - Pew research agrees with this conclusion

• A fourth year continuation of CSTAB 2.12 will use PI expertise with repeated and innovative survey items to produce two surveys of U.S. Muslims, to be fielded in 2016-17
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Dynamics of Terrorism and Counterterrorism Campaigns

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What to do with ISIS?

Control of Terrain in Syria: September 14, 2015

KEY
- Regime Control
- Hezbollah Control
- JN Control
- Rebel Control
- ISIS Control
- ISIS, JN, Rebel Control
- YPG Control
Counterterrorism

• ISIS: the most pressing problem?
• How do we know what to do based on the past/previous policies?
• Need for a group-level policy?
Scientific Study of Counterterrorism

• Past: mostly case and comparison work
• Recently: country-specific quantitative
• Ackerman and LaFree (2009) call for cross-national evidence on CT efficacy
Research Questions

• What **features** or **behaviors** of **organizations** make them more or less likely to be targeted with some CT or COIN strategies and not others?

• Why do some CT or COIN efforts reduce violence where others do not?
A Focus on Orgs

• Big Allied and Dangerous Insurgent dataset
  – Asal et al. (2015)
  – All code-able orgs 1998-2012
    • UCDP (Themner and Wallensteen 2011)
    • GTD (LaFree and Dugan 2007)
    • POICN (Ackerman and Pinson 2014)
  • Groups removed if they were
    – Inactive 1998-2012
    – Generic
    – Insufficient evidence
    – Legitimate, nonviolent party
BAAD 2-I (in progress)

- 613 groups over 96 countries
- Group Organizational Makeup
  - Base of Operations, Size, Age, ideology, control of territory, leadership structure, financing, political involvement, social service provision, Government COIN strategy
- Group Affiliations
  - Allies, rivals, intergroup violence, targeting states, state sponsorship, founding groups, and splinters/factions
Current Analysis - Insurgent (BAAD2-I)

• BAAD2-I includes information on:
  – All code-able organizations, at least one year in the Uppsala Conflict Database Program (UCDP) dataset (Themnér and Wallensteen 2011)
  – During the period 1998-2012

• Wide diversity in COIN
  – Some orgs not targeted at all or very rarely
  – Others were targeted with a single approach every year
Government Strategies

• Carrot (Rewards)
  – Peace talks, negotiations, ceasefires, etc.

• Stick (Punishments)
  – Police work, investigating crimes, arresting members, bringing cases to courts, any military actions

• Mixed
  – When a state uses both strategies at the same time
Distribution of Gov. Strategies, 1998-2012

- No CT government action in that year
- Carrot
- Mixed
- Stick
### The ten organizations targeted the most for each strategy, 1998-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stick</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Carrot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Sayyaf Group</td>
<td>Communist Party Of The Philippines, Marxist-Leninist</td>
<td>Kachin Independence Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qa'ida</td>
<td>Movement For Democracy In Liberia</td>
<td>Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement</td>
<td>United Tajik Opposition</td>
<td>Somali Reconciliation And Restoration Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen National Union</td>
<td>Democratic Karen Buddhist Army Brigade 5</td>
<td>Convention Of Patriots For Justice And Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Front Of Tripura</td>
<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</td>
<td>Democratic Front For The Liberation Of Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian Islamic Jihad</td>
<td>Cocoyes</td>
<td>Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Front For The Liberation Of Palestine</td>
<td>Free Syrian Army</td>
<td>Allied Democratic Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Irish Republican Army</td>
<td>Patriotic Movement Of Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Al-Gama'At Al-Islamiyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shining Path (SL)</td>
<td>Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo Liberation Army</td>
<td>Armed Forces For A Federal Republic</td>
<td>Harakat Ras Kamboni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why groups are targeted with certain policies?

- Groups that control territory or operate in non-democracies -> **Carrot** policy
- Larger groups with more rivals -> **Mixed** approach
- Smaller, deadly groups with many allies -> **Stick** policy
Impact of CT strategy on organizational lethality

• Groups targeted with **Mixed** and **Stick** are subsequently more lethal

• Groups that hold territory are more lethal
  – Need to examine impact of CT strategy on territorial control
Conclusion

• Initial results, much more to do
  – Sensitivity testing
  – Insurgents vs. terrorist groups (ISIS?)
• Stick breed violence, what to do with ISIS?
• Examine long term effect of strategies
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Failed, Foiled, Completed, Successful Plots

• Jihadist
• Violent
• February, 1993-July, 2015
• Against or in U.S. Homeland
• 101 plots (compare to 231 combined non-US: EU, NATO, Australia, NZ)
Data Coded for Plots

**Characteristics**: Targets, Methods, Weapons, Stages of Completion

**Outcomes**: Failed, Foiled, Completed, and Successful
- If failed or foiled, how?

**Perpetrators**: Number (179 US estimate), Identity, Residence, Citizenship, Foreign Fighters, Training Abroad, Lone Wolves, Links to Organizations
US: Some Findings

• 82% of U.S. plots foiled
  – 81% by authorities, 17% by public
  – 54% discovered by authorities at earliest plot stage
    (communication of intent)
  – Surveillance and informants most common foil methods
  – Compare to 55% non-US plots foiled

• Estimated 3 foreign fighters (5 plots), but ~25% (of 145) trained abroad

• Two thirds of plots not linked to known organization

• ~25% linked to AQAP but downturn since early 2000s
More Findings

• Most perpetrators US residents (75%), majority in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and California
• Almost half held US citizenship
• ~60% plots involve one perpetrator, but informant present in almost half
• Most targets in New York (25), DC (11), Virginia (8), Florida (6), Texas (6), California (5), Illinois (5)
• Military and police targets trending up (more plots vs. military than any other category)
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