

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.*

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Data collection	July 2013	July 2014	Sept-Nov 2014
Number of participants	206	203	208
Gender	128 (62%)F/ 78(38%)M	105(52%)F/ 98(48%)M	86(41%)F/ 122(59%)M
Mean (SD) Age	36 (13)	37 (14)	36 (11)
Married	111(53%)	118 (58%)	97(47%)
Median Education	Some College	Some College	Some College
Race/Ethnicity	36% White 35% Other non-Hispanic 17% Black 8% Hispanic	38% White 26% Other non-Hispanic 18% Black 13% Hispanic	34% White 24% Other non-Hispanic 18% Black 18% Hispanic

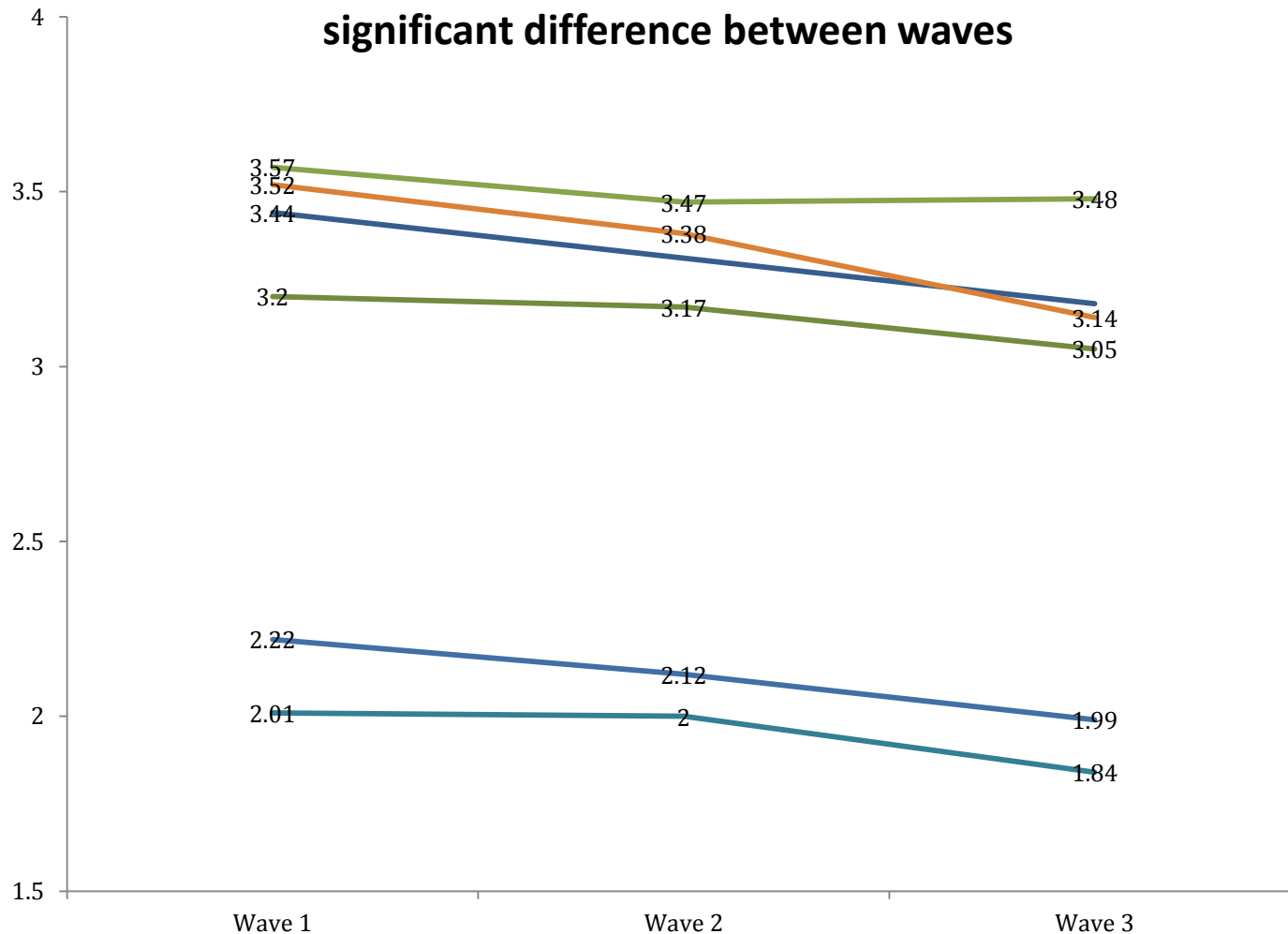
Table 2. Means (SDs) of survey questions in Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3. Line numbers with different subscripts are significantly different ($p < .05$). The questions, including the Likert response scale and the percent of each sample participants who responded in each category, are in the Appendix.

	Wave 1 N=206	Wave 2 N=203	Wave 3 N=208*
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?	1.91 (.59)	1.83 (.67)	1.81 (.69)
Whether or not you have heard of this idea before now, do you personally agree with this idea?	1.62 (.49)	1.60 (.49)	1.58 (.50)
Do YOU PERSONALLY feel that this kind of violence [suicide bombing] is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?	3.44 ^a (.93)	3.31 ^b (1.01)	3.18 ^b (1.15)
Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do you think most U.S. Muslims feel about this question?	3.20 ^a (1.02)	3.17 ^{ab} (1.05)	3.05 ^b (1.11)
Do you feel the United States is fighting a war on terrorism or a war against Islam?	2.01 ^a (.86)	2.00 ^a (.89)	1.84 ^b (.89)
Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do you think most U.S. Muslims feel about this question?	2.22 ^a (.80)	2.12 ^{ab} (.87)	1.99 ^b (.91)
Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Al Qaeda?*	3.57 ^a (.80)	3.47 ^b (.90)	3.48 ^a (.91)
Thinking now NOT about yourself but about others, how do think most U.S. Muslims feel about Al Qaeda?	3.52 ^a (.73)	3.38 ^b (.92)	3.14 ^c (1.11)

*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.

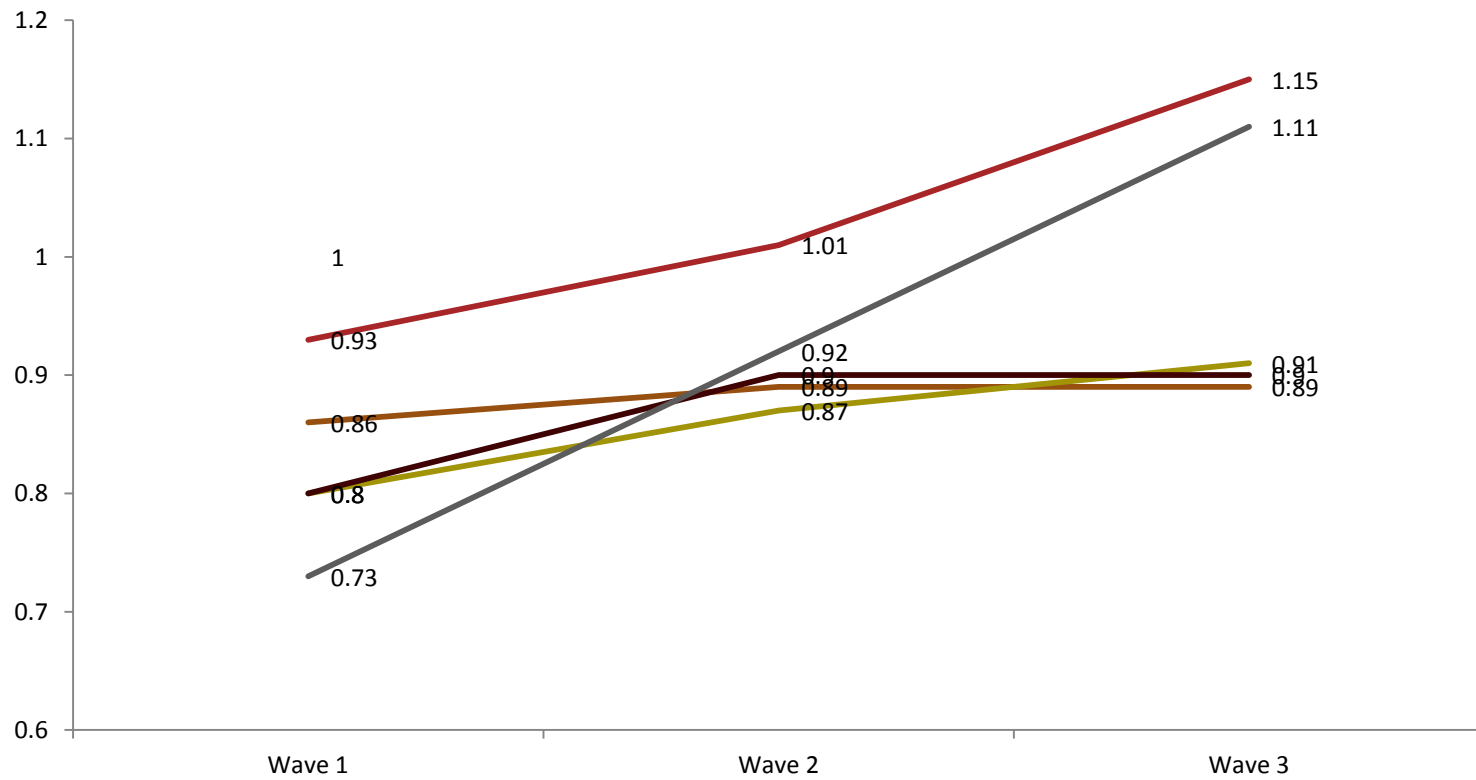
Results

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

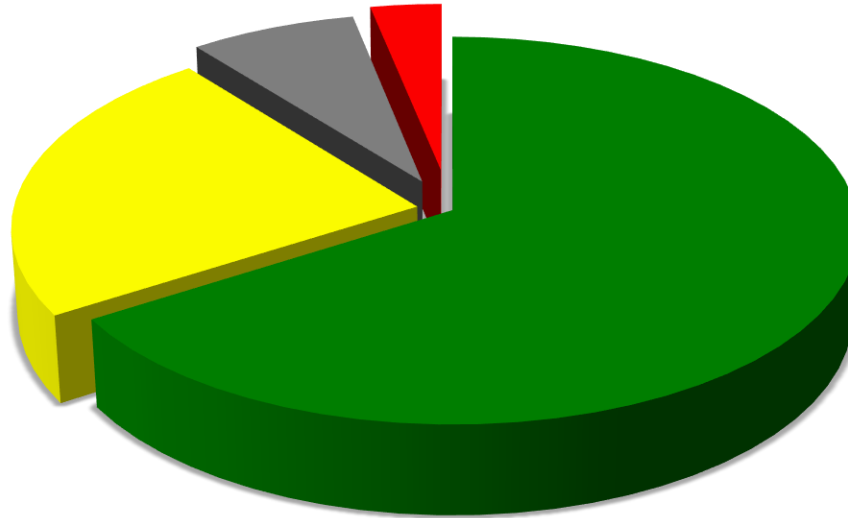


Results

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?



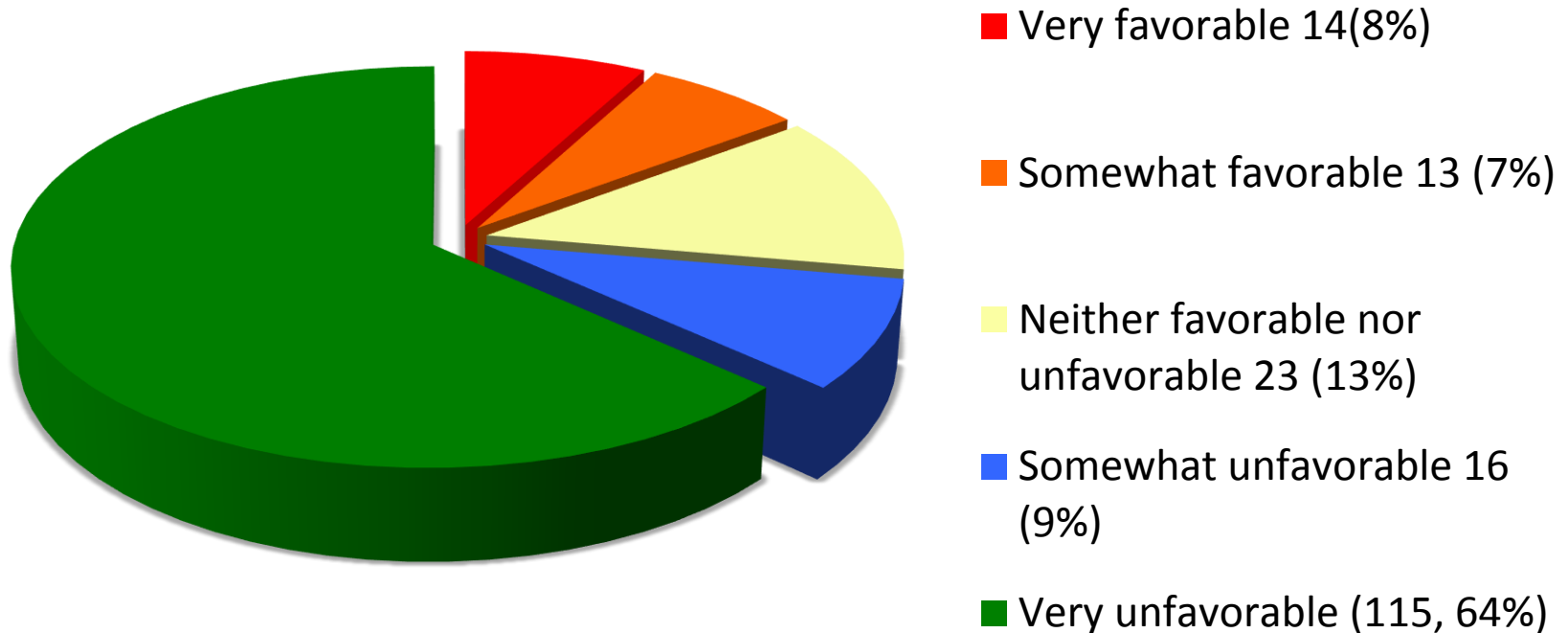
■ I've never thought about it 126 (62%)

■ 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)?



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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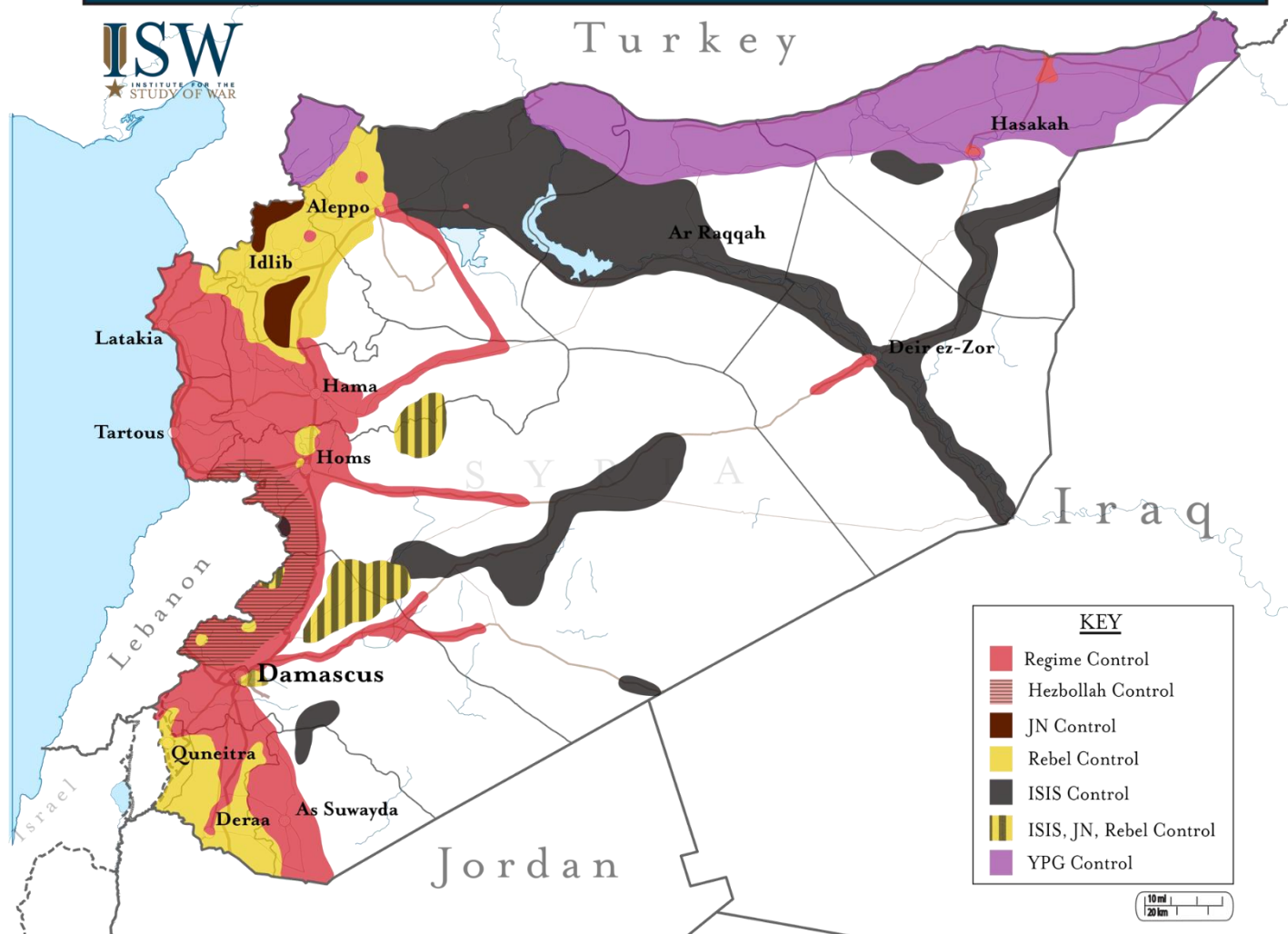
Dynamics of Terrorism and Counterterrorism Campaigns

Joseph Young
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What to do with ISIS?

Control of Terrain in Syria: September 14, 2015



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

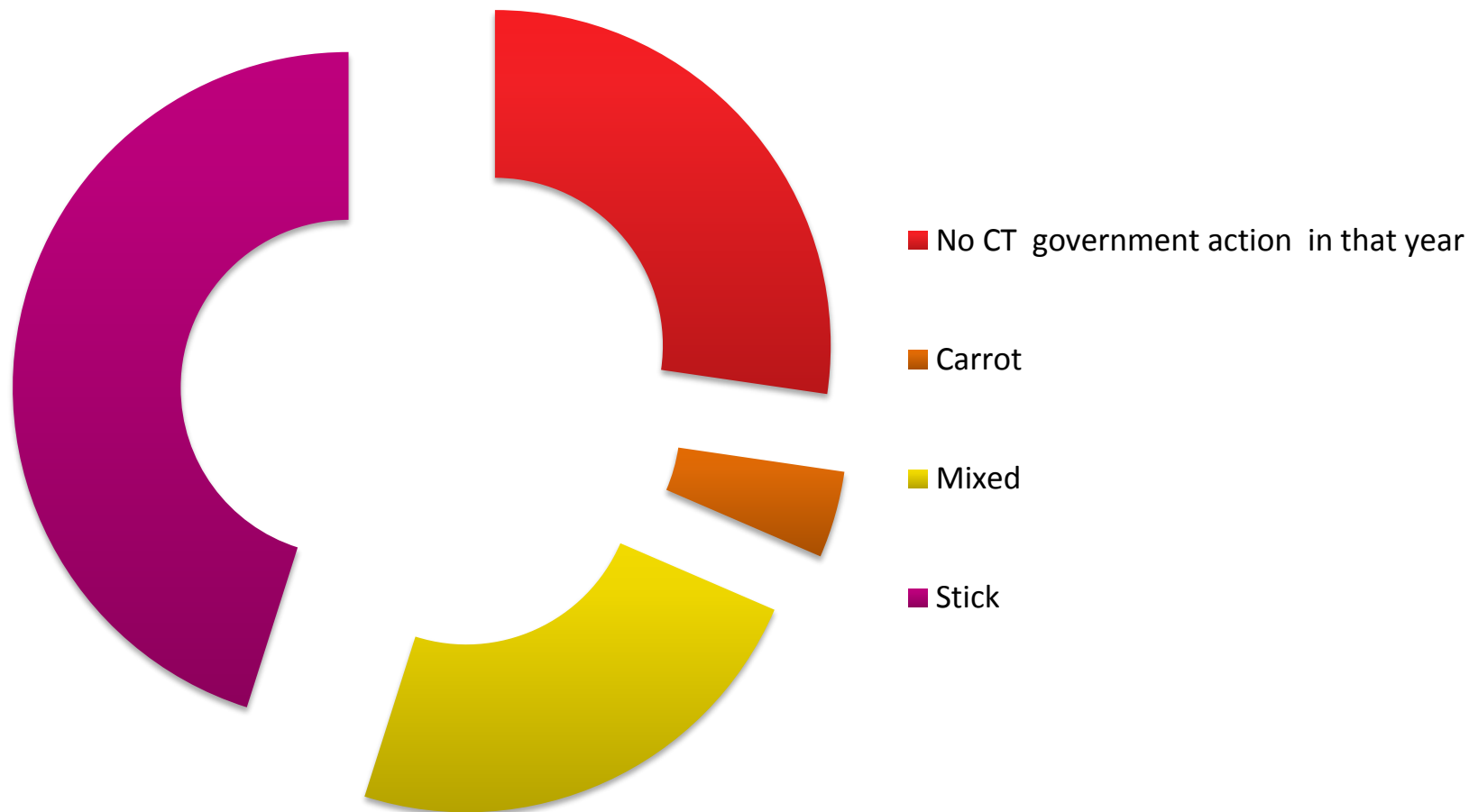
Current Analysis - Insurgent (BAAD2-I)

- 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



The ten organizations targeted the most for each strategy, 1998-2012

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

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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Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg: Terrorist Plots

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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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