Community Awareness Briefing: Foreign Fighter Focus

Slide 1: Community Awareness Briefing

Scene Setter: *The presentation's goal is to inform the audience how violent extremists get their message out (including by the internet), and how government and communities can work together to prevent youth from being tricked by this recruitment. We present the information to help communities understand the phenomenon of radicalization and mobilization, but we can only hope to get to a discussion on solutions through audience participation. We encourage the audience to stop the briefer at any point to ask questions, raise points, or do whatever to help the group arrive at the best way to work on this problem before another person is lost to violent extremism.*

Slide 2: Why Are We Here?

Scene Setter: *In this slide, we talk about how we are here to raise awareness of how violent extremist groups ensnare vulnerable individuals to commit violent or illegal acts, thereby negatively impacting the lives of these individuals, their families and communities. The 2011 Domestic Countering Violent Extremism Strategy emphasizes that communities are invaluable partners in prevention, and government's role is to empower and catalyze communities to take action We have seen there is often a time period, before law enforcement gets involved, in which parents, friends, community/religious leaders, and teachers see signs of someone being radicalized to violence, creating a window of opportunity for them to act to protect their communities.*

Key Points:
We have been invited by (Law Enforcement / Community Leaders) to provide an awareness briefing to enable you to understand the threat from violent extremism
- We want ensure you understand the threat from violent extremism, in all its forms--
- We are going to review case studies to show you how individuals buy into committing violent action
- And we are going to discuss ways we, the U.S. Government, and you, the Community, can work together to truly mitigate against this threat
- We want to emphasize that our intention is definitely not to have you "spy" on your neighbors and report back to us. You are in no means "agents of the government." Our intention is to empower communities such as yourselves by imparting you all with information in the hopes that it prevents radicalization and mobilization to violence.
- *Overall Pitch*: Often the most vulnerable in our communities, our youth, get ensnared in dangerous groups, which can then destroy families and ultimately, negatively impact our society

We need your help
- The USG has traditional roles it uses to address the threat from VE, but they only go so far and only address so much of the violent extremism spectrum of activity
  - These roles include local U.S. District Attorneys, FBI Field Offices, local police, and representatives from DHS and NCTC
  - However, often these government representatives only get involved after things have gone wrong; i.e. something illegal has occurred. This might include after the individual is recruited and radicalized and takes a step in furtherance of their violent or criminal act— that's when the government plays a role.

1

- Communities, however, have the ability to get involved at a much earlier stage during which there is a window of opportunity to prevent an individual from progressing down the path towards committing illegal acts. In this arena, it is communities who are the most important actors, not the government. And if communities are successful in this prevention phase, then there will no longer even be a need for the government to get involved at all.
- In the end, local communities are the most powerful asset we have in the struggle against violent extremism. We cannot address this threat without your help.
  - We've crunched the data on this. In the more than 80 percent of cases involving homegrown violent extremists, people in the community—whether peers or family members or authority figures or even strangers—had observed warning signs a person was becoming radicalized to violence.[1]
  - Many of these warning signs were ignored, however. [2]
  - Studies have shown that in the vast majority of cases, people who see troubling signs do not act upon this information, becoming passive bystanders.[3]
  - This happens in a variety of social situations, everything from witnessing bullying to witnessing prejudice, and social science has called this passive witnessing the "Bystander Effect".[4]
  - However, just like has been done in anti-bullying campaigns, we want to empower you all to become what's called "active bystanders." This means overcoming the subtle pressures that can cause passive behavior, such as diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance.[5]
  - With this presentation, we hope to impart to you a personal sense of responsibility for protecting your communities, including your youth, and to empower you with knowledge by raising your awareness of the signs of radicalization and possible responses.
- You, the Community, are in a much better position to see early on when a threat may be materializing
- We hope this presentation will leave with a better understanding of the threat, why it's important, and what **you** can do to help.

Slide 3: <u>Why Are We Here?</u> (video)

Scene Setter: *In this slide, we emphasize that we are here to protect <u>our</u> children, and the video we show of a mother grieving over the attempt of her son to join ISIL is meant to portray how violent extremists are exploiting our communities and our youth.*

Background:
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) mother (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (USPER) made a statement to the media after her son was charged with material support to ISIL.[6]

_____

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

2

- "We have a message for ISIS, Mr. Baghdadi and his fellow social media recruiters. Leave our children alone!"[7]

Slide 4: <u>Violent Extremism</u>

<u>Scene Setter:</u> *In this slide, we provide background on violent extremism, which comes in all forms, whether it is neo-Nazis, sovereign citizens, etc. We explain that the absolutist mindset appeals to adolescents searching for meaning and identity. It is very important to demonstrate to the audience that the government understands there is a range of threats and ensure them that our government's concern is not solely on al-Qaeda or ISIL-inspired terrorism. In terms of relating to the audience, it is important to continue to portray, <u>within reason</u>, some of the youth involved as victims of recruiting.*

<u>Key Points:</u>
Definition: Violent extremism refers to violence committed in the name of ideology to further a political agenda

Violent extremism takes many forms
- Violent Extremism takes many forms, from international terrorist organizations to domestic terrorist groups.
- It is important to remember, among others:
    - The 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing;
    - Gangs such as MS-13, terrorizing communities across the country
    - Neo-Nazis and white supremacists;
    - Issue-driven violent extremists such as the Animal Liberation Front; Earth Liberation Front
- In fact, we recognize that there are a range of threats to our nation including from non-al-Qaeda inspired extremist groups.
- Today we're going to talk briefly about how violent extremism groups use similar techniques to recruit individuals. Then, we're going to discuss one form of violent extremism, inspired by al-Qaeda and recently expanded by ISIL. We do so because there are a concerning number of individuals leaving their homes in countries around the world, including ours, to join ISIL.

<u>Background:</u>
(b) (3), (b) (7)(E) between 2000 and 2013, the vast majority of attacks in the homeland were carried out by environmental and animal rights violent extremist groups.[8]

Known Perpetrators Attacks 2000-2013[9]
- Unaffiliated Individual(s)   64
- Earth Liberation Front   60
- Animal Liberation Front   42
- Anti-Abortion Activists   15
- Coalition to Save the Preserves   8
- Al-Qaida   4

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

- Neo-Nazi Group   2
- Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade 2
- White Extremists   2
- Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula   1
- Anarchists   1
- The Justice Department   1
- Ku Klux Klan   1
- Minutemen American Defense   1
- Revenge of the Trees   1
- Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan   1
- Veterans for Non-Religious Memorials   1

Meanwhile, DHS recently surveyed several hundred police officers, asking them what they perceived to be the biggest terrorist threat. The report, released in July, found that the greatest fear was from "sovereign citizens" - loosely-affiliated individuals who reject most laws at federal, state and local levels.[10]

- Individuals belonging to the sovereign citizen movement have been responsible for a spate of cop killings in recent years.
- The DHS report also cites militia groups, racist skinheads, neo-Nazis and both animal rights and environmentalist violent extremists as ranking highly among law enforcement's fears.

Slide 5: Case Study: ▮▮▮(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)▮▮▮ (USPER)

Scene Setter: *With this slide, we provide a case study* ▮(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)▮▮▮

We focus on ▮(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)▮ *(USPER) because of his extensive online activity* ▮(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)▮▮

▮▮▮▮▮▮(b) (7)(C)▮▮▮▮▮▮

Key Points:

The case of ▮(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)▮ is an example of non-al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism that shares similarities with al-Qaeda in recruitment, use of the internet, and absolutist beliefs. ▮(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)▮ was part of a radical group that saw the federal government as their primary enemy.[11]

- ▮(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)▮▮▮

▮(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)▮
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Background:

Internet:

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Operational activities:

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 6: Screen shot of (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) Propaganda on (b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E) [17]

Scene Setter: *This slide is meant to convey how easy it is to find material online for any type of violent extremist messages,* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 7: All Violent Extremist Groups

Scene Setter: *This slide is meant to continue the theme about how all forms of violent extremism are similar, but focusing specifically on their tactics of recruitment and how they entice individuals to join their cause.*

Key Points:
Similarities between violent extremist groups
Regardless of ideology, all violent extremism share similar (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 8: Why Would Someone Join a Violent Extremist Group?

Scene Setter: *This slide is meant to inform the audience of the radicalization to violence process.*

Background:[18]
The presenter should be familiar with the radicalization and mobilization process when giving this presentation. The following can serve as a baseline foundation from which to speak:

- **Definition**: Radicalization refers to the process by which individuals come to accept a violent extremist narrative and conclude that non state violence and their participation in it is necessary and justified to affect political or societal change.

- **Radicalization** is not a linear process. It involves the interplay of personal, group, community, sociopolitical, and ideological factors. No single factor accounts for why one individual radicalizes while another does not.

(b) (3) (A)

6

- It's important to note two caveats: (1) no single factor leads to radicalization and (2) a person may have some or all of these factors and <u>not</u> become violent. Violence occurs when the individual mobilizes to action.

- **Definition**: <u>Mobilization</u> refers to the process by which radicalized individuals take action to prepare for or engage in violence or material support for violence to advance their cause.

  - Some of the factors that come into play during the mobilization process are: (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

  - (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 9: <u>Forming the Black and White Narrative</u>

Scene Setter: *This slide outlines the six elements of any violent extremist narrative, and highlights how they apply to Al-Qa'ida's narrative. Also highlighted are ways to weaken the narrative by deconstructing one or more of its elements.*

<u>**Key Points:**</u>
Violent extremist ideologies typically are made up of six core assertions that violent extremists use to rhetorically justify violence and spur people to action. (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)
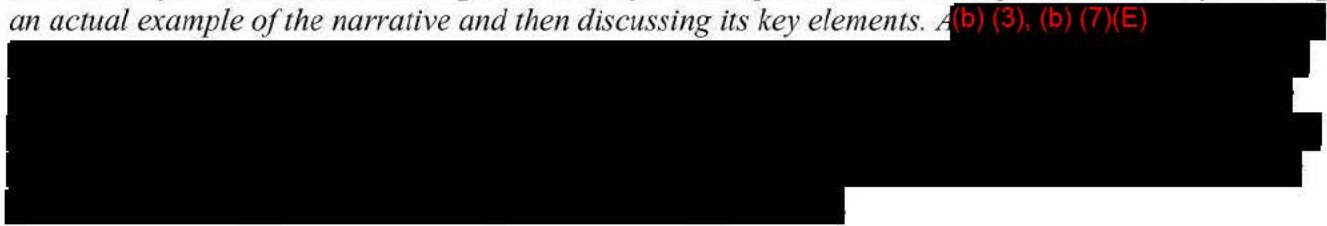
<u>**Background:**</u>

7

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

[black redaction box]

Slide 10: <u>Example of the Narrative</u> (video)

<u>Scene Setter:</u> For this slide, we show a video to illustrate Al-Qaeda's black and white narrative and how it calls for violent action. The goal is to reinforce the points made in the previous slide by showing an actual example of the narrative and then discussing its key elements. A (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

[black redaction box]

<u>Key Points:</u>

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

[black redaction box]

_____

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

[black redaction box]

8

(b) (3)

(b) (3)

(b) (

Slide 11: <u>Foreign Fighters: Then</u>

<u>**Scene Setter:**</u> *In this slide, we introduce the fact that the foreign fighter threat is not something new to the US, but in fact this has happened before* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

<u>Key Points:</u>

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

According to various sources, at least half a dozen have been reported killed while at least ten have been indicted on terrorism-related charges.

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ███████████████ ████████████████████████

████████████████

████████████████████████ ████████████████████████
██
██
██

██ ████████████████████████ ████████████████████████
██
████████████████████

██ ████████████████████████ ████████████████████████
██
██
████████████████████████

██ ████████████████████████ ████████████████████████
██
██

Slide 12: <u>Recent Trends</u>

<u>Scene Setter:</u> *In this slide, we talk about foreign fighters now. We bring up the issue of teenagers (under 18) around the world who have left their homes* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████████████ *—and travelled to Iraq and Syria to join terrorism organizations. We'll talk about their stories and the realities of what happened once they get there, including how some regret their decisions but are unable to go back home.* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ██████████████████
████████████████████████

<u>Key Points:</u>
(b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████ ████████████████

██████ ██████ ██
██████████ ██████ ██
██████████ ██
██ ██
██████ ██
████ ██
████ ██

10

(b)(3)

[REDACTED]

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

[REDACTED]

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

[REDACTED]

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)
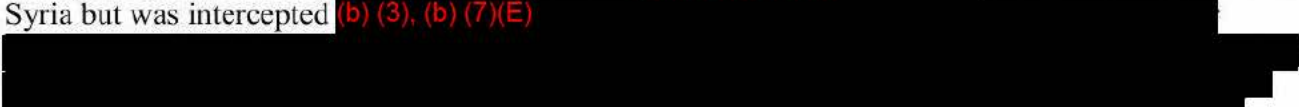
[REDACTED]

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Threat from failed travel

- Lastly, not pictured here, is the disturbing case of (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) who wanted to travel to Syria but was intercepted (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 13: <u>Example of the ISIL Narrative</u> (video)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

12

Scene Setter: In this slide, we present an ISIL propaganda video that has gone viral and features the
(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) r. The intention is to show how ISIL is
(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Key Points:
Let's return back to the case of (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Background:
Some themes to highlight that are in the video:
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Slide 14: Attempted Travel to Syria / Iraq

Scene Setter: In this slide, we shift to focus exclusively on ISIL and how it has become the newest
foreign fighter problem. Using case studies of Americans who have traveled abroad, we highlight the
similarities and differences between (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) and now.

Key Points:
- More than 150 Americans have tried to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight, along with thousands
  from other parts of the world—teenagers, young people, those who are most vulnerable.[45]
- The al-Qa'ida linked Al Nusra Front and ISIL are two of the designated terrorist organizations
  that are actively recruiting foreign fighters using the internet in Syria and Iraq.[46]
- They have a sophisticated, pervasive, targeted recruitment campaign online.[47]

Foreign Fighters from US to Syria/Iraq:

*Note: The following individuals are undergoing various stages of prosecution and are all presumed
innocent until proven guilty.*

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (7)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

13

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Slide 15: <u>Exploitation of the</u> ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ((Pictures)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

Scene Setter: *In this slide, we focus on another motivation of individuals enticed to travel to Syria/Iraq to fight,* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████████████████████████████████
██

Key Points:
- Especially in the beginning when the majority of foreign fighters were going to Syria, the main motivator was (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ███████████████████████████████████
██

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ██
██

(b) (3),
(b) (7)(E) ██
██
█ ██

Slide 16: <u>Exploitation of ████████████</u> (Pictures)

Scene Setter: *In this slide, we focus on* (b) (3), (b) (7) *as a motivation for individuals who go abroad to fight in Syria/Iraq.* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████████████████████
██

Key Points:
- (b) (3), (b) (7) is a big motivator for individuals going abroad. There is growing number of individual who are going to Syria /Iraq (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ██████████████████
██
██

Slide 17: <u>The Media as a Weapon</u>

Scene Setter: *This slide and the picture[59] it shows are meant to reinforce that terrorist organizations, like ISIL see media* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████████. *During the next couple slides we explore this theme extensively, focusing on the ubiquitous nature of violent extremist propaganda and information online. We talk about sophisticated strategy and techniques used by these groups to rapidly expand the reach of their messages through* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ████████████████████████████
██

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E) ██████████████████████████████████████
██
██
██
██

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Key Points:
Democratization of social media

(b)(3),(b)(7)(E)

Slide 18: ISIL: Evolution of Messaging

Scene Setter: *In this slide, we transition to focus on ISIL for the rest of the presentation. We highlight the main similarities and differences between the AQ and ISIL narratives/worldviews and use of media.* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Key Points:
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

16

- (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) ███████████████████████████

Background

Main themes of ISIL's Narrative and how they differ from Al-Qa'ida: [63]

(b)(3) ███████████████ — ████████████████████
███████████████████

(b)(7)(E) ████████████ — ██████████████████
████████████████████

████████████████ — █████████████████████
████████████████████████████████

█████████████ — ████████████████████████
███████████████████

Slide 19: ISIL's Use of Social Media

Scene Setter: *This slide provides an overview of how ISIL uses social media to propagate their message.*

Key Points:

The use of social media by violent extremists has intensified in the past year with the rise of ISIL. (b)(3), (b)(7) ██

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E) ████████████████████████████
██
██

17

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Last Words (video)

Scene Setter: *In this slide we show* ■ *video to highlight, using his own words, why he went to Syria to join ISIL. The intention is to emphasize how normal he seems* (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Key Points:

Here are clips from a video of (b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) discussing why he left America and joined a terrorist group.[75]

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

20

Slide 25: <u>How does this happen?</u>

<u>Scene Setter:</u> *At this point in the briefing, we remind the group that we came seeking their help to solve a problem that was threatening their children. We revisit the stages of the previously discussed case(s) and ask, "What could have been done at this point?" We try to get the audience to offer potential solutions or discuss their thought on how to address the problem. If the discussion begins to lag, we offer examples of intervention programs being piloted by American Muslim groups (which demonstrate some possible approaches to fill the space between parenting and law enforcement where the possibility of successful intervention is the highest.*

<u>**Key Points:**</u>

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

How did this happen? And what, if anything, could have prevented this?[76]

Let's go through his trajectory, from the time he was a young angsty teenager, like any other kid, (b) (3), (b) (7)(E) to the point where he decided to travel to Syria and join ISIL. In that timeframe, he showcased numerous vulnerabilities that could have been addressed by a variety of peers, authority figures, school counselors, and others.

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

[text redacted]

Slide 26: <u>Community Responses</u>

<u>Scene Setter:</u> *For this section we discuss some of the ways communities are organizing prevention programs in the hopes of stopping youth like* [redacted] *from radicalizing to violence. The article pictured describes the efforts in Minneapolis of law enforcement and communities who have come together to create intervention programs.*

<u>Key Points:</u>
We can learn from intervention approaches in other situations, such as gang prevention. CVE intervention aims to use the same principles and we can make real progress by adapting the kinds of programs we are using in non-counterterrorism areas for our needs. Some examples of successful programs include:

- Montgomery County, MD, where communities and law enforcement are collaborating to bring together faith-based leaders, as well as education and mental health officials to help at-risk youth.

(b) (3) (A), (b) (7)(E)

[text redacted]

- Also, the Muslim Public Affairs Council released their Safe Spaces Initiative, which is essentially a guide for community centers on how to deal with violent extremism in their communities using a phased approach of prevention, intervention, and ejection.

Slide 27: <u>What can you do?</u>

Scene Setter: *For this section we discuss the recently completed study on the role of bystanders (family, peers, authority figures, and strangers) in the process of intervention. We place particular emphasis on the high percentages of those who were in a position to see something. Our goal is to demonstrate the importance of those who are most likely to see behavior that indicates the beginnings of a problem, and their opportunity to help. We stress that by the time a youth makes it to the point where his behavior attracts the attention of government or law enforcement, he/she is often too far go in their radicalization to violence process to be easily dissuaded. We emphasize the opportunities of communities to protect their children. We acknowledge the community's reluctance to involve law enforcement or "official" channels stressing that the most effective intervention may come from the community-led networks, or other informal networks of parents, schools and communities to solve these problems before young people approach the line of criminal activity.*