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COUNTERTERRORISM DIVISION

NATIONAL JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCE



# CVEO BULLETIN



December 2013

*(U) This bulletin highlights the significant developments within the Countering Violent Extremism Office (CVEO) in recent weeks, encompassing CVE-related initiatives, activities, outreach, and open source items of interest. It provides investigative and analytical insight, highlights FBI efforts to mitigate the impact of violent extremism, documents the community's efforts to aid our law enforcement partners in addressing this emerging issue, and provides tools to foster effective outreach within the community.*

## (U//~~FOUO~~) CVEO INITIATIVES

### NCTC Hosts National CVE Conference

(U) The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) hosted a two-day national CVE conference, *CVE Post Boston: Role of Social Media and Community Engagement* in November in McLean, Virginia. The conference provided an opportunity for CVE practitioners to network, share best practices, and to identify opportunities for future collaborative efforts. The audience consisted of intelligence community members, state and local law enforcement, United States attorneys, civil rights specialists, military personnel, researchers and academics, and community outreach specialists. The conference covered five key areas, including online radicalization, the U.S. Government's role in countering online radicalization, private sector intervention, community engagement, and OCONUS engagement initiatives. Throughout the conference, speakers and panelists reinforced an overarching message about the importance of family awareness and community engagement in preventing violent extremism. The CVE practitioners agreed that collaborative engagement efforts with private organizations, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and law enforcement entities will achieve success in curbing this emerging issue. The conference also focused on implementing a counter narrative on the Internet or through social media, which highlights the realities of engaging in extremism and the real motives behind recruitment. These are viewed as effective tools in deterring interest in violent extremism and might limit recruitment opportunities. Keynote speakers included Acting DHS Secretary Rand Beers, Deputy Attorney General James Cole, NCTC Director Matthew Olsen, NCTC's Director of Strategic Operational Planning Vice Admiral Michael LeFever, and Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes.

## (U//~~FOUO~~) CVEO COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

### Minnesota Tackles Recruitment through Somali Partnerships



(U) The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) began deploying a CVE strategy, which resulted from an international terrorist organization targeting Somali youth for radicalization and recruitment within its community. The CVE strategy addressed the issues of radicalization and recruitment using the following framework:

- Homegrown terrorism is a real threat to all communities.

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- It's necessary to build an effective network through community trust and community-oriented policing.
- A vigilant public must assist law enforcement efforts.

(U) HCSO's holistic program is a multi-pronged effort including information sharing, suspicious activity reporting, strong community outreach, community-oriented policing, and officer training. These components resulted in relevant and timely information to its street patrols, using suspicious activity reporting by law enforcement and citizens, and created an information-sharing network that ensures critical flows of information. The sheriff's office used these same mechanisms successfully during the implementation of its gang model to combat violence. HCSO committed resources to become leaders in information sharing, analysis, intelligence-driven policing, and built a purposeful relationship with the Somali community. The added resources have already paid dividends, resulting in a force-multiplier effect which aided in identifying potential risks, increased opportunities for disruption, and increased suspicious activity reporting by the community to report crimes and possible terrorist activity. HCSO relied on parents, friends, teachers, coaches and faith-based leaders to observe and report on activities related to crime and terrorism. The established relationship with the Somali community manifested in increased trust, facilitated knowledge about the community, and assisted in understanding crucial behaviors and activities. The HCSO's Somali Community Outreach initiative was lauded for its success and recognized as a best practice. The tenets of the outreach initiative include the following:

1. Building trust between law enforcement and community leaders
2. Identifying strategies for overcoming cultural and language barriers for key communications
3. Sharing lessons learned within the community and promoting integration
4. Recruiting Somali citizens for law enforcement positions and a community advisory board

(U) The Somali community views HCSO's commitment as a success in dealing with this threat to its community. One noticeable change is the visibility the Somali community is afforded with law enforcement. The HCSO has championed community interaction through community events, providing platforms to air grievances and attending round table events with community leaders. HCSO has also established a Somali-American Elder Roundtable to ensure open lines of communication, but also to raise and discuss issues unique to that community.

(U) HCSO will advance its program through in-house training on Somali cultural awareness, contracting Somali community leaders to act as civilian liaison representatives, and enhancing its language programs. These enhancements will expand the already successful program and be viewed as an effective and proven strategy to deal with the threat to the Somali community from terrorist organizations.

## **NIJ Grants Promote CVE Research**

(U) The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Program on Transnational Issues, directs a research grants program that examines radicalization leading to violent extremism across a range of political, social, and religious ideologies. NIJ grants directly support the administration's *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* and the corresponding *Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)*, through advanced research on online radicalization, lone wolf terrorism, disengagement, and non-al-Qa'ida radicalization. Since 2002, NIJ championed violent extremism research to better understand domestic radicalization and advance evidence-based strategies for effective intervention and prevention. These research grants, which go to educational institutions, public agencies, nonprofit and profit organizations, faith-based organizations, or individuals, aim to prevent or counter violent extremism through increased insight into the catalysts to radicalization. During FYs 2012 and 2013, the NIJ awarded grants on the following research proposals:

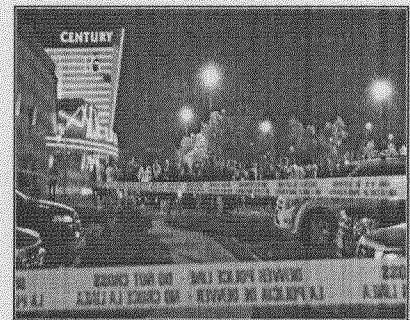
1. Identity and Framing Theory, Precursor Activities, and the Radicalization Process
2. The Role of Social Networks in the Evolution of Al Qaeda-inspired Violent Extremism in the United States.
3. Understanding Pathways to and away from Violent Radicalization among Resettled Somali Refugees
4. Community Policing Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism
5. Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies
6. Empirical Assessment of Domestic Radicalization
7. Transnational Crimes Among Somali-Americans: Convergences of Radicalization and Trafficking
8. A Comparative Analysis of Violent Radicalization Across Three Offender Types with Implications for Criminal Justice Training and Education
9. Evaluating the Federal CVE Initiative
10. Prisoner Recollections: The Role of Internet Use and Real-life Networks in the Early Radicalization of Islamist Terrorist Offenders
11. Sequencing Terrorists' Precursor Behaviors: A Crime Specific Analysis
12. Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted, U.S. Community-based, Muslim-led CVE Program

(U) A thumbnail and intended scope of the research grants can be found on the CVEO website and the LEEP CVEO Special Interest Group. NIJ will continue to monitor progress on these research proposals and solicit additional research topics during FY 2014. The CVEO will collaborate with NIJ to identify possible areas of research, radicalization mechanisms, or intelligence gaps. NIJ-funded research will refine CVEO's analytical, investigative, and community outreach activities by providing empirical evidence on the domestic catalysts to radicalization and help formulate an effective response to combat these variables.

## (U//~~FOUO~~) OPEN SOURCE ROUNDUP

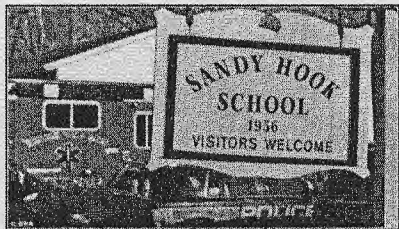
### Psychologists Assess Mass Killing Motivations

(U) A recent *Wall Street Journal* article detailed the observations and conclusions of several notable psychologists on the motivations triggering mass killings, commonly referred to as "massacre or rampage shootings." Oftentimes, mass killings, like those experienced at Columbine; Virginia Tech; Aurora, Colorado; and Newtown, Connecticut, are defined by excessive loss of life and the resulting tragedy inflicted on innocent communities. In response, mental health researchers have evaluated these tragic events using several variables including psychology of the perpetrator, offenders' relationship to victims, and the offender's modus operandi. Mental health professionals concluded that rampage shooters exhibit a definite behavior pattern, which includes the following:



- Shooter engages in a program of murder and suicide
- Shooter is almost always male
- Shooter models himself after commandos
- Shooter possesses a fascination with weaponry, warfare, military or survivalist culture
- Shooter possesses fascination with other mass killing events or perpetrators
- Shooter possesses no prior history to violence
- Shooter conducts attacks in areas heavily populated by people
- Shooter is heavily armed
- Shooter might begin rampage by targeting specific victims, then progresses to indiscriminate killings

- Shooter generally has no escape plan
- Rampage ends with shooter killing himself or being killed by law enforcement



(U) There's a common myth that mass killers simply "snap," resulting in an impaired psychologically induced attack. Researchers opine that mass killers plan their actions meticulously for months in advance, thus refuting the myth. Mass killers are not impulsive but obsessive, highly organized, and rarely exhibit insane or schizophrenic tendencies. Most mass killers typically possess personality disorders, including grandiosity, resentment, self-righteousness, and a heightened sense of entitlement. Survivors of mass killing events have often described the shooters as not enraged, but

cold, calculating and systematic in their actions and movements.

(U) A 2009 study on massacre killers, entitled "*Serial Murderers and Their Victims*" described a mass killing event as a form of theatre, in which the offender commits a single and final act in which violence becomes a medium to make a statement about life. The shooter creates a narrative about how the world has forced him to act, and the final step is crafting the story for others to tell through warnings, taunting victims, or written manifestos. The shooter believes the violent act will ultimately produce the desired effect in the public consciousness and denies the course of justice, giving the shooter ultimate and final control.

(U) Psychologists concluded that several steps can undermine the shooters intended or desired outcome and could discourage future mass killings. These steps would deprive a killer of an audience and effectively deter a future mass killer who is considering initiating a similar violent act:

- Never publish a shooter's propaganda.
- Hide their names and faces.
- Don't report on biography or speculate on motive.
- Minimize specifics or gory details.
- Show no photos or videos of the event.
- Talk about the victims but minimize images of grieving families.
- Decrease the saturation to make them less ordinary.
- Change the narrative by highlighting mass shooters who reconsidered a violent act.



Source: Wall Street Journal Internet website; November 2013; *What Mass Killers Want -- And How to Stop Them*; accessed via the Internet on November 18, 2013.

## AFRICOM Teams with Somali Partners on CVE Efforts



(U) The United States African Command (AFRICOM) is working with its African counterparts to counter the effects of violent extremism within the region. AFRICOM has teamed with the Department of State, the Somali government, and the Somali National Army to provide mentors and teams to share intelligence, increase effectiveness, and build the army's capacity, resulting in increased resilience against violent extremism. This was evident in the wake of the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya, which according to AFRICOM officials, was partly due to the effective strategy undertaken by the Somali government and AFRICOM

to stop the negative impact of terrorist organizations within the region. African officials believe the mall was a soft target for Al-Shabaab, as many other potential targets have been solidified as a result of the joint

partnership. AFRICOM cited the following components to their effective strategy, which includes a long-term whole-of-government approach, military operations, economic development, improved governance programs, and adhering to the rule of law. AFRICOM has coordinated their strategy with international and interagency partners, nongovernmental organizations, and individual African nations to achieve the success of their program.

**Source:** Department of Defense Internet website; November 2013; *AFRICOM Helps Partners Stand Up to Violent Extremism*; accessed via the Internet on November 12, 2013.

## (U//~~FOUO~~) RESOURCES

### **FBI Confirms Persistent Threats from Pro-life Extremists**

(U//~~FOUO~~) The FBI assesses with high confidence that arson is a reoccurring tactic for pro-life extremists who seek to impede reproductive health care facility (RHCF) operations. The FBI documented 13 arsons nationally since 2007 with the most serious of these resulting in complete destruction of the American Family Planning Clinic in Pensacola, Florida, on January 1, 2012. Pro-life extremists typically act alone or in small cells to achieve the goal of forestalling or ending abortion services. Although pro-life extremist violence is rarely lethal, in May 2009, a pro-life extremist murdered an abortion provider in Wichita, Kansas. The most common crimes committed by pro-life extremists include threats against RHCF staff and patients, vandalism, and theft or disabling of crucial equipment. Some individuals also attempt to prevent RHCF access in violation of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act. The FBI assesses with high confidence that, because of the generally leaderless nature of the pro-life extremist movement, lone actors and small cells continue to pose the greatest threat of violence. It also remains likely pro-life extremists will continue to use arson sporadically as a means to disrupt abortion services. Although in these instances the attacks resulted in minor damage, arson always carries with it the possibility of severe destruction or death.

### **Terrorist Psychology Affects CVE Messaging**

(U) In September, Professor John Horgan spoke at the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) seminar at the U.S. Department of State on the *"Terrorist Psychology and Implications for CVE Messaging."* Professor Horgan cited a societal norm to embrace the *radicalism-leads-to-terrorism model*, but in most cases, this is not the path taken by individuals. Most individuals, once indoctrinated into a cause, possess doubts and are not deeply committed as widely speculated. In fact, a deeply committed terrorist is not the norm but merely a myth and many become disillusioned with their chosen path. Professor Horgan and his associates conducted a study on 73 individuals who left either an illicit or non-illicit organization and categorized the factors leading to their desire to leave. Overwhelmingly, the main contributing factor was disillusionment, followed by fear of being caught, burnout, psychological distress/coping, or regret for their actions. Oftentimes, these "push" factors will result in disengagement from terrorism, albeit in a gradual or incremental manner and not a sudden break. Professor Horgan contends that once an individual disengages, the threat of recidivism is reduced greatly if the individual finds a new relationship, a new role or identity in life, or becomes socially embedded. If this occurs, the radical views will weaken and wither over time. Horgan opines that the most important factors in a successful disengagement are social bonds, close family supervision, stipends, and separation from the terrorist network and its associates. Social bonds are more predictive than ideology and will strengthen the resolve to remain disconnected from extremist activities. Horgan's study explains the I.E.D. model of terrorist psychology, which involves Involvement, Engagement, and Disengagement, when a counter extremism message could be an effective deterrent or act as a catalyst to an individual's departure from extremism. Since disillusionment plays a key role in disengagement, a popular and effective tool is publicizing the testimonies of former disillusioned terrorists, which aids in demystifying the terrorism experience and undermines the rhetorical claims made through social media by terrorist organizations seeking recruits for their cause.