•Greetings and thanks

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## ISIL: History and Background

- AQI, established in 2004 by Abu Mus'ab al Zarqawi
- Targeted Iraqi and Coalition forces using car bombs, suicide attacks, IEDs, assassinations, and hostage executions
- 2010: Led by Abu Bakr al Bagdadi
- 2012-2013
  - ISIL declared its presence in Syria
  - Split with al-Qa'ida affiliated al-Nusrah Front

| Group Name | Years in Use |
|---|---|
| Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers (known as AQI) | 2004- 2006 |
| Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) | 2006- 2013 |
| Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) | 2013- Present |
| Islamic State (IS) | 2014- Present |

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Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden

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## ISIL Use of Social Media and the Internet

- Operates **the most sophisticated** and robust **propaganda machine** of any Sunni extremist group

- Use of English messaging **tailored to Americans** to use salient issues to recruit

- Active on all types of social media
  - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Kik, Ask.fm, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Flickr, Snapchat, Telegram, Viber, Tango, and justpast.it

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- Issues include:
  - Veterans affairs
  - Racism
  - Islamophobia

Below is a breakdown of all the social media websites listed on this slide:
**Facebook:** Social networking site that enables users to connect with contacts through posting pictures, statuses, and reposting articles. It has both private and public messaging capabilities but does not encrypt messages like some of the others on this list.
**Whatsapp:** Cross-platform mobile messaging app that does not charge users. Utilizes internet connections to send video, picture, and text messages in private and group messages.
**Kik:** Smartphone cross-platform messenger app developed in Ontario, Canada that also includes a built in browser. Has over 150 million registered users.
**YouTube:** Video hosting website with public messaging capabilities.
**Instagram:** Photo editing and sharing app that allows users to use photo filters to edit their pictures before sharing them on the Instagram website and other social media websites both privately and publically. The app has over 400 million users. (The app is owned now by Facebook.)
**Surespot:** Messenger app that uses end to end encoding software to encode messages that cannot be read without users sharing a "key" with their intended recipient.
**Snapchat:** A private and public image sharing app that allows users to specify the time a recipient can view a picture, or snap, and message before it disappears. An estimated 50 million people use the app with a median age of 18 years old.
**Tango:** Cross-platform mobile messaging app that allows users to send text and picture messages as well as complete video and voice calls using their cellular network. Also enables users to "find friends" by GPS location reporting in the "people nearby" feature. Users can follow "channels" to browse content.
**Telegram:** Cross-platform messenger app developed in Germany that enables users to message contacts whom which they have shared their contact information. Users can chat with individuals or groups and send messages that will self-destruct after a specified time. The app contains enhanced security measures which make messages and senders less easy to track. In September 2015 it reported 12 billion messages were being sent daily.
**Tumblr:** Public and private microblog platform and social networking website with over 260 million different blogs. Users can post multimedia and follow other user's blogs and posts.
**Flickr:** Online photo management and sharing app that lets users upload an unlimited number of photos and either share privately or publically through email, RSS feeds, and the Flickr website. Operates on smartphones as well as computers and has over 92 million registered members.
**Viber:** A multi-platform messaging app that enables users to use text and photo messaging as well as location-sharing and calls with other Viber users. This app is popular for its encrypted system that lets users send messages without threat of outside monitoring. It has more than 400 million users who are primarily based in the Middle East, Europe, and South America.
**Ask.fm:** An online social network that enables users to post questions to each other and then answer them in both an anonymous and attributed manner. As of March 2015 the website had 150 million monthly users.
**Twitter:** A popular social media website that lets users publically and privately share posts of 140 characters or less as well as short videos, called "vines". The website has 316 million active monthly users and an average of 500 million tweets are sent per day in over 35 languages.
**Justpaste.it:** A website that enables users to paste pictures and text and distribute the link. This easy-to-use website supports pictures, text, and video and can be accessed on phone or computer.

https://pando.com/2013/11/29/forget-snapchat-and-whatsapp-for-a-second-kik-is-the-dark-horse-of-the-internet/
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http://venturebeat.com/2014/07/30/viber-now-has-400m-users-many-are-using-the-service-to-survive-in-the-war-torn-middle-east/
http://safety.ask.fm/ask-fm-guide-for-law-enforcement-requests/
http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/31249209/askfm-owners-considered-shutting-down-social-network
https://about.twitter.com/company

*This slide is meant to provide an overview of how ISIL uses social media to propagate their message.*

Legal: The intent of this slide is to demonstrate how readily available social media outlets are being used for terrorist purposes. DSOP has deemed these USPERs necessary to understand the information. NCTC Legal concurs.

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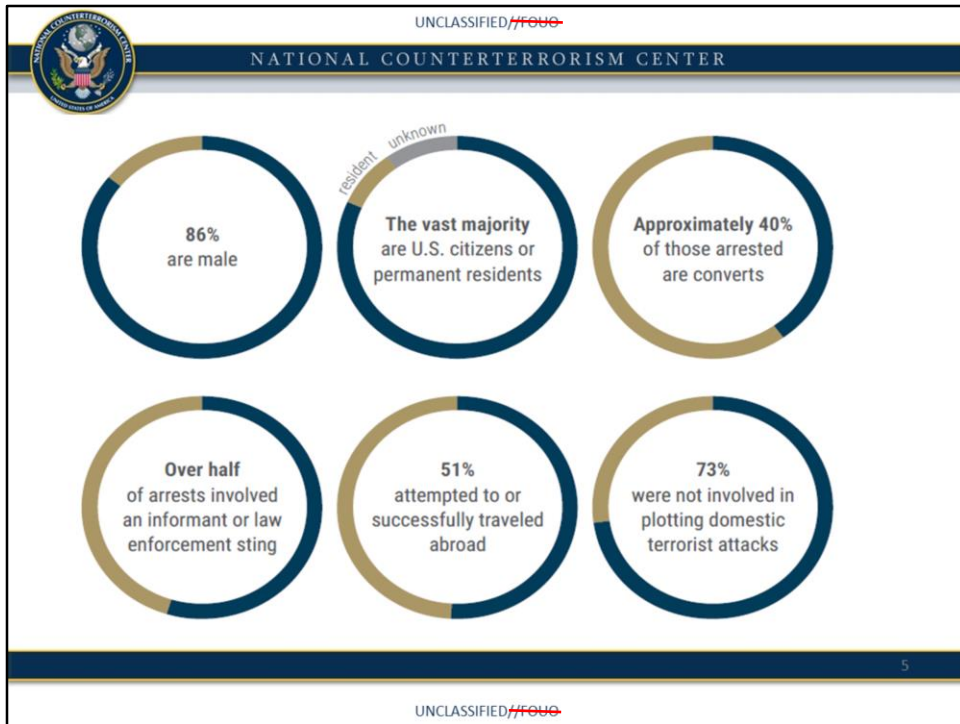NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

## ISIL Recruitment Process

- ISIL takes advantage of sense of sympathy and compassion Americans have towards the Syrian conflict

- ISIL obligates Muslims to make *hijrah* to the "Caliphate", to build a utopian Islamic society

- Targets:
  - "Disenfranchised individuals seeking ideological, religious and personal fulfillment"

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Source: ISIS in America, From Retweets to Raqqa, Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, December 2015, The George Washington University
Quote: Nicholas Rasmussen, Director, NCTC, *Countering Violent Extremism: The Urgent Threat*

- American recruits to ISIL:
    - The youngest U.S. person arrested was a 15-year-old boy, others have been 16 and 17
    - Average age is 26 but over one-third are under 21.

Source: ISIS in America, From Retweets to Raqqa, Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, December 2015, The George Washington University

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# ISIL Uses Social Media to Threaten the West

- "...**if you can kill an American** or European... or other infidels from the allied countries who are fighting the Islamic State, put your trust in God and **kill him in any way or manner whatsoever**."

- "Whether the infidel was **civilian or military**, it is the same, kill him."

Abu Mohammed al-Adnani (ISIL spokesman)

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Recommendations on how to avoid geo-tagging, not to use unsecured wifi, going "dark", instructions on how to use a VPN, centralization of propaganda efforts in order to control the release of information

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# Questions?

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