Community Awareness Briefing

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Why are we here?

We want to talk about violent extremism, which takes many forms.

We want to build awareness of how people become radicalized to violence.

We want to ensure our communities are protected.

And, most importantly, we need your help.
Violent Extremism

A wide range of threats...

- White Supremacists
- Eco-terrorists
- Neo-Nazis
- Al-Qa'ida or ISIL-inspired groups
- Plotted to kill cops, bank workers, and Muslims in mosques

- Used Facebook to spread his violent ideology and find recruits
  - "We must rebel. Blood and bullets are the only two things that will change this world, short of divine action."

- Pleaded guilty to numerous counts, including attempted robbery
Q.
All Violent Extremist Groups

- Look for vulnerabilities
- Focus on grievances
- Provide a community of interest (in-person or online)
- Promote violent action as solution
- Hold a black and white narrative
Why would someone join a violent extremist group?

- Ideological
- Personal
- Sociopolitical

- Group
- Community

Someone could have some or all of these factors and not radicalize to violence.

In the United States, thoughts are protected, no matter how extreme,

No single factor leads to radicalization.
# Forming the Black and White Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Generic Message</th>
<th>Al-Qa'ida's Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>My world has gone wrong...</td>
<td>The United States has brought ruin and disgrace to Islam...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Camps</td>
<td>... because of the actions of a villain.</td>
<td>... The United States is at war with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Point</td>
<td>Now is the time...</td>
<td>Now is the time...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>... when using violence will prevent total catastrophe for us.</td>
<td>... only violence will work to end their war on against us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danger of Contamination</td>
<td>If we let no one dissuade us...</td>
<td>If we do not let the non-believers dissuade us from our righteous course...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>... we will prevail.</td>
<td>... we will reestablish a pious society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of the Narrative

- US citizens or residents traveling to countries to fight, such as Somalia

- Between September 2007 and October 2009, approximately 20 young men left the Minneapolis area to fight for al-Shabaab, an al-Qa’ida affiliated group in Somalia.
Example of the ISIL Narrative

- Over 100 US citizens or residents attempted to or traveled to Syria and Iraq
- They come from a range of backgrounds and go for many reasons
- Some were arrested while attempting to leave the US
Attempted Travel to Syria/Iraq
ISIL: Evolution of Messaging

- **Al-Qaeda**: “Attack the West”
  - Travel to the West to conduct attacks or attack at home
  - To stop perceived Western aggression

- **Al-Shabaab**: “Come here to fight”
  - Travel to Somalia to fight
  - To build a “better” Somalia

- **ISIL**: “Help us purge and rebuild here”
  - Travel to Iraq/Syria or support from home
  - To purge the land of non-believers
  - Warped use of religious terms to justify violence in support of building a new state
  - Innovative combination of message and media
ISIL's Use of Social Media

- Tailored messaging to Americans in English

- Sophisticated use of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Kik, Ask.fm, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Flickr, Snapchat
“Dawn of Glad Tidings” App

- App allowed ISIL to tweet on others accounts
- 40,000 tweets per day by ISIL
- 72 retweets of every tweet
- 10,000 uses of ISIL hashtag per day by others
Operational Instructions Online

They will think that you’re one of those who keep your hands clean and your story straight. So make sure you deny any links and push forward the tourism agenda to the maximum. However, be sure NOT to have any “incriminating” materials with you which would negate your story. This includes knives & weapons, combat boots, camouflage clothing, etc.: basically anything which screams out that you want to get your feet dusty.

So, in sha Allah, take your precautions:

1. Make sure your plane ticket is a return (two-way) ticket.
2. Make sure you obtain a tourist visa and keep it well (it’s going to be in your passport, so keep your passport securely).
3. Make sure you have a good knowledge of the tourist attractions in Turkey. Go to a travel agent and get yourself some brochures on Turkey or buy a travel guide’s handbook. This is important since if they question you, you can just brandish this in front of their noses and show them how serious a tourist you are.
4. Make sure you don’t have any incriminating evidence against you. (I know this is contrary to what I advised in #DustyFeet part 5, but the advice in this post is from the Turkish brother I spoke to (not directly from me). Bringing, e.g. a knife is RISKY. Don’t neglect this if you’re extremely afraid of getting caught.)
5. Make sure your phone and other electronic devices are “clean” from incriminating evidence.
6. Plan out an itinerary before you land in Turkey. I advise brothers to take the bus/Coach down south. Lay low during the day and travel at night. I advise sisters not to take the bus/Coach. Sisters, read the second half of this post, insha Allah, for advice about what you should do.
Abu Fulan al-Muhajir @Brizwest
Bilad al-Sham
A stranger. Currently fighting in Syria, to make the word of Allah the highest.

Ask me a question

Answers

Are the bathrooms clean?
Yes. But they don't become clean by themselves. We need to clean them
2 days ago

How can I convince my family please help me
Daawa. Talk to them. Tell them to imagine them being in Syria and nobody wanted to help them
2 days ago

Are martyrdom operations allowed in Islam?
Yes. But of course there are certain conditions
2 days ago
Moner Mohammad Abusalha

• Grew up in a gated community in Florida
  ▪ “He was a nice kid … Everyone got along with him.”

• Outgoing and funny, loved basketball
  ▪ “He’d play basketball with any hoop anywhere he could find one.”
Moner's Last Words
How does this happen?
Minnesota's Somali community acts to counter ISIL recruiters

Program developed with Justice Department aims to encourage vulnerable teens to stay in school and reject extremism

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by Hilary Brueck - @Hila rx

Somali community leaders in Minneapolis are working with U.S. authorities to develop a program inspired by gang-prevention methods to steer disaffected youths away from extremist groups overseas.

The program — a mix of mentorship, psychological care and after-school programs — has been developed to give more opportunities to mostly young Somali-American men in Minnesota, home to the largest population of Somalis in the United States.
What can you do?

- **Stay safe online**
  - Know who your kids are talking to online and what sites they are visiting

- **Have open communication**
  - Talk with your kids about what is happening in the world

- **Look for behavior changes**
  - Have a conversation with your loved ones; find out what might be triggering their changes