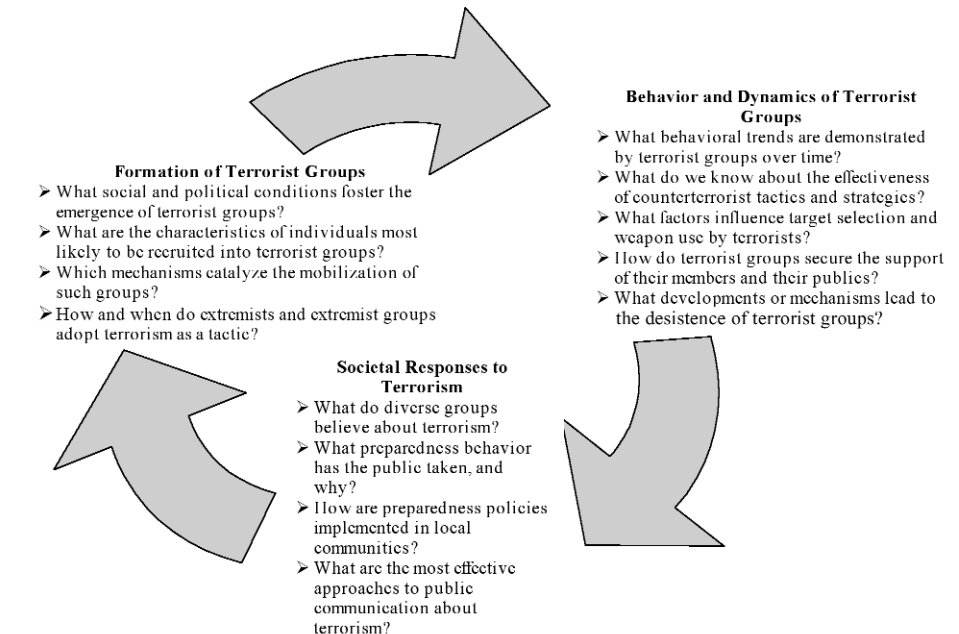


The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Progress Thus Far

This article was adapted from a paper written by Gary LaFree, Ph.D., Kathleen Smarick, Ph.D., and Gary Ackerman of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released a Broad Agency Announcement calling for the establishment of a Homeland Security Center for Behavioral and Social Aspects of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, to be integrated into the DHS Center of Excellence program. After selection by DHS, a team led by Dr. Gary LaFree of the University of Maryland launched the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) in spring 2005.

Since its inception, START has focused on advancing knowledge about the human causes and consequences of terrorism, developing resources and tools to support homeland security professionals, and training the current and future homeland security workforce based upon state-of-the-art social science. Toward this goal, START has assembled a consortium team of more than 45 faculty members and 175 students from more than 50 institutions around the world. START is directly supporting 37 interrelated research projects, each of which is contributing to the advancement of knowledge and the development of cutting-edge tools—including databases, surveys, and assessment instruments—designed to support decision-makers in the homeland security community. For instance, START researchers have already collected survey data from more than 5,000 individuals around the world, and have compiled systematic data on more than



500 politically motivated and/or terrorist groups, and on nearly 80,000 terrorist attacks.

This report provides an overview of how START has supported the needs of DHS while advancing basic science on the behavioral and social aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism.

Research Program

START's mission is to apply the theories, concepts, and methods of the behavioral and social sciences to advance understanding related to three primary areas: the formation of terrorist groups; the behavior and dynamics of terrorists groups; and societal responses to terrorism. The figure above depicts these three research areas, illustrating the complex collection of interrelated questions that comprise each topic and indicating the degree to which the research areas themselves are, in turn, interconnected.

The following sections provide samples of the two-year accomplishments of each of START's three core research areas. While much of this work is in progress, the early data returns and analysis point to a host of insights regarding the causes and consequences of terrorism.

Working Group 1: Recruitment and Formation of Terrorist Groups

The decision to join a terrorist organization or launch a terrorist attack represents a conjunction of individual motivations prompted by geopolitical circumstances, mediated by ideological arguments, and conceived in reaction to ongoing political events and military interventions. Major data collection efforts include our comprehensive Global Terrorism Database (which includes terrorist events from around the

(See **TERRORISM**, p. 6)

Illinois SAC Works on Wide Range of Projects

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Research Grant

In September 2006 the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) was awarded a grant from the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, to conduct research on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth (CSEC). The overall goal of the research is to gain a better understanding of this problem. A final report has now been completed. The study utilizes three research methods: focus groups with workers in the sex trade, interviews with law enforcement officers, and arrest records. A review of the literature was also included, with over 70 reference notes in the final report.

Evaluation of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts Evidence-Based Practices

In March 2005, ICJIA research staff entered into a three-year cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to evaluate Illinois' Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Initiative. This project will assist local probation departments participating in the EBP Initiative by providing them with data and analysis that gauge per-

formance before and during the implementation of evidence-based practices, and will establish a process and protocol for ongoing assessment of probation performance through an effective state and local partnership. The first wave has been completed in all six participating counties, and the second wave of data collection has been completed in one county, has begun in another, and will begin in late 2007 at the remaining sites. Partnership agreements have been executed for four of the six counties.

Assessment of Prior Victimization and Access to Services Among Adult Female Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections

This project is designed as an assessment of the prevalence of prior victimization, primarily domestic violence and sexual assault/abuse, among adult female inmates within the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). Through an examination of existing data collected during the reception and classification process at the Dwight Correctional Center, the research team will determine the prevalence of these forms of prior victimization, examine those inmate characteristics correlated with prior victimization (i.e., demographic, socio-economic, criminal and substance abuse history, and mental health), and gauge the access to IDOC services among

those with histories of victimization. Data have been obtained from IDOC and preliminary analysis has begun.

CHRI Ad Hoc Data Connection Partnership

The Authority has entered into a data sharing partnership with the Illinois State Police whereby Criminal History Records Improvement (CHRI) data are made available to the Authority via a permanent online connection. All data entered on state "rap sheets," as housed in the State Police Computerized Criminal History system, are accessible to staff in electronic format. These data provide a unique resource for answering information requests from legislators, the media, and other interested parties; in-house research projects; and studies being conducted by others around the country. A CHRI Ad Hoc Data Archive of all criminal history records from 1990-2006 has been created in formats that can be readily shared with researchers. This archive currently holds close to a million records for each year of data.

The data archive is used for both internal and external research projects. Authority staff continue to work on this multistate research project examining the rate of recidivism of violent sex offenders released from prison. A sample of approximately 1,100 sex offenders has been identified from a data file of year 2001 exits received from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), along with a control group of violent non-sex offenders. Recidivism rates for new offenses (for sex offenses and all other types of offenses) are being determined from CHRI data. The project is slated to be completed by September 30, 2007.

The CHRI Ad Hoc data partnership with the State Police has progressed to the point where the Authority is now considered the sole source for electronic CHRI data for research purposes. (The State Police still generate paper versions for a fee.) Outside researchers can enter into a user agreement to gain access to CHRI data, which are distributed

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through the Authority. The process incorporates verification of bona fide research and appropriate protection of confidential data. The unified user agreement facilitates accountability for the research use of criminal history data records.

During the last quarter, user agreements were executed with researchers from University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola University, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Several others are pending approval. Since the inception of the CHRI Ad Hoc Connection Partnership, a total of 22 outside research projects have received CHRI data from the Authority.

Safe Havens Domestic Violence Program Evaluation Project

Staff are evaluating the Chicago Safe Havens demonstration site, a project funded under the Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. The Safe Havens Program was established by the Violence Against Women Act

of 2000 to provide an opportunity for communities to support supervised visitation and safe exchange of children, by and between parents, in situations involving domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. The purpose of the supervised visitation program is to enable custodial parents to comply with court-ordered visitation, without having to fear that they or their children will be revictimized. Staff identified the following priority areas of the evaluation: interviews with visitation center directors and staff (to determine changes in practice in policy and roles as collaborators), the issue of case termination (to determine why cases come to a close and what can be done in cases in which visits should continue, but do not), observation forms used by staff at visitation centers during visits as well as other data collected in client files. (Data from these forms, together with data

collected through the interviews, helped determine how accurately these forms reflect what happens during visits. Other client information found in their files helped identify who is referred to visitation services from court, how rule violations are handled, and, in terms of termination, whether or not clients fail to show up for services, if they terminate visits due to court order, etc.). Also included in the final report are findings from an evaluation completed on a judicial training for judges in the Cook County Family Court division that focused on domestic violence in relation to custody and visitation rights. Staff distributed a pre-survey, a survey at the training itself, and a post-survey to determine whether or not the training had an effect on judges' beliefs or actions in the courtroom. The final draft of the report is being reviewed, and publication is expected this fall. ☛

Connecticut SAC Issues Report on Family Violence

The Connecticut Statistical Analysis Center (CTSAC) recently completed its *Family Violence Case Flow Analysis Report*. Working in collaboration with the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) within the Judicial Branch, the CTSAC was able to provide an overview of the court's processing of family violence arrests. This report provides some insight into the amount of effort put forth by CSSD for pre-trial referrals and services. Additionally, 2006 data are provided for family violence arrests, referrals, protective orders, charge outcomes, and offender involvement in the three CSSD domestic violence sanction programs.

West Virginia SAC Releases Report on Domestic Violence Incidents

The West Virginia Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (the West Virginia SAC) recently published a study on domestic violence incidents reported to the police over a six-year period. The report, *Official Reports of Domestic Violence Victimization in West Virginia: 2000-2005*, provides statistics on domestic violence trends in the state and across federal judicial districts. In addition, county-level analyses highlight concentrations of high domestic violence rates in the state. The findings include the following:

- In 2005, 97.8% of reported domestic violence victims incurred no or only minor injuries; twenty seven domestic violence-related fatalities were reported to law enforcement in 2005.

The report is available online at: <http://www.wvdcjs.com/publications/Official%20Reports%20of%20Domestic%20Violence%20Report,%202000-2005.pdf>. ☛

- Between 2000 and 2005, domestic violence victims averaged 17.4% of all crime victims known to police.
- The total number of violent crime domestic violence victims known to law enforcement declined by 33.6% between 2000 and 2005, from 2,056 to 1,366.
- Youth under the age of 18 made up 10.9% of all domestic violence victims reported to law enforcement in 2005.

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National Association of Sentencing Commissions Holds Annual Conference in Oklahoma City

By Christopher Hill, Ph.D., Director of Research, Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center, and Jack O'Connell, Director, Delaware Statistical Analysis Center and current President of the National Association of Sentencing Commissions.

If asked about the most pressing challenges, needs, and problems of your criminal justice system, what would be your response? Prison overcrowding? Risk assessment at sentencing? Managing sex offenders? Dealing with natural disasters? These and many other relevant questions were discussed and debated at the 2007 Annual Conference of the National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) held August 5-7 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

NASC and the Annual Conference

Established in 1994, the National Association of Sentencing Commissions is a not-for-profit voluntary organization whose mission is "to facilitate the exchange and sharing of information, ideas, data, expertise, and experiences and to educate on issues related to sentencing policies, sentencing guidelines, and sentencing commissions." Membership of NASC represents the growing number of sentencing commissions across the country, and the annual conference reflects the variety of purposes for which these commissions are created. What unites all NASC members and commissions is a desire for deliberative discussions on the many issues states face in dealing with criminal offenders.

The conference, which focused on "New Frontiers in Sentencing," drew 180 individuals from 27 states, making the conference one of the best-attended in NASC history. The Oklahoma Sentencing Commission and Oklahoma Department of Corrections hosted the conference, and staff of the Oklahoma Statistical Analysis Center (Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center) assisted in the planning and execution of this event. The Skirvin Hilton Hotel, a historic landmark in downtown Oklahoma City dating back

to 1911, served as the site of the three-day gathering.

A Crossroads in Sentencing

The conference began with welcomes and introductions from Jack O'Connell, President of the NASC and Director of the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center; Justin Jones, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections; Senator Richard Lerblance, Chairman of the Oklahoma Sentencing Commission; and Representative Sue Tibbs, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice for the Oklahoma House of Representatives. One theme running throughout the introductory comments was the growth in prison populations across the country. In commenting on Oklahoma's having the nation's third highest rate of incarceration, Senator Lerblance told attendees, "We're at the crossroads right now in sentencing. We've got to get over the idea of locking them up and leaving them there." Legislators praised the work of sentencing commission staff who provide the unbiased information needed by decision-makers to understand and act on important sentencing and capital criminal justice expenditures.

Critical Issues in Sentencing: Plenary, Panel, and Roundtable Sessions

The Monday morning plenary addressed "Frontiers Old and New in Sentencing Guidelines," with an emphasis on the Model Penal Code developed by the American Law Institute. Professor Kevin Reitz, University of Minnesota Law School, spoke about the ongoing revisions to the Model Penal Code, including modifications to address the inclusion of both advisory and mandatory sentenc-

ing guidelines as part of the new Model Penal Code. The afternoon plenary, "Disasters and Sentencing," described and discussed the impacts of natural and other disasters on criminal justice systems. By sharing photographs and personal experiences, the presenters gave attendees a front-row seat to the devastation of the justice systems in New Orleans caused by Hurricane Katrina and in Bosnia following that country's civil war.

The conference offered attendees a variety of panel sessions and round tables on sentencing issues. These included:

- Revisiting Theories of Sentencing;
- Issues in Federal Sentencing;
- Post-Prison Sanctions;
- Issues in Juvenile Sentencing;
- Communicating Research to Policymakers; and
- How Sentencing Changes After Increases in Legislated Penalties.

A Taste of Oklahoma

Monday's events concluded with a dinner and presentation at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Attendees were treated to an authentic Oklahoma meal that featured bison and side items that were all home-grown within the state. Presenters included K.C. Moon, Director of the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center; Ged Wright, the Governor's appointee to the Oklahoma Sentencing Commission; and Andy Coats, Dean of the University of Oklahoma School of Law. The museum was opened for a private showing of its vast collection of art, sculpture, and memorabilia that celebrates our nation's western traditions and legacies.

Concluding Sessions


The third and final day of the conference began with a roundtable on

“Costs and Benefits in Corrections and Sentencing.” Steve Aos’ presentation created significant discussion on how prison populations may be better handled with a variety of well-managed and monitored prison alternatives. Additional sessions throughout the day included:

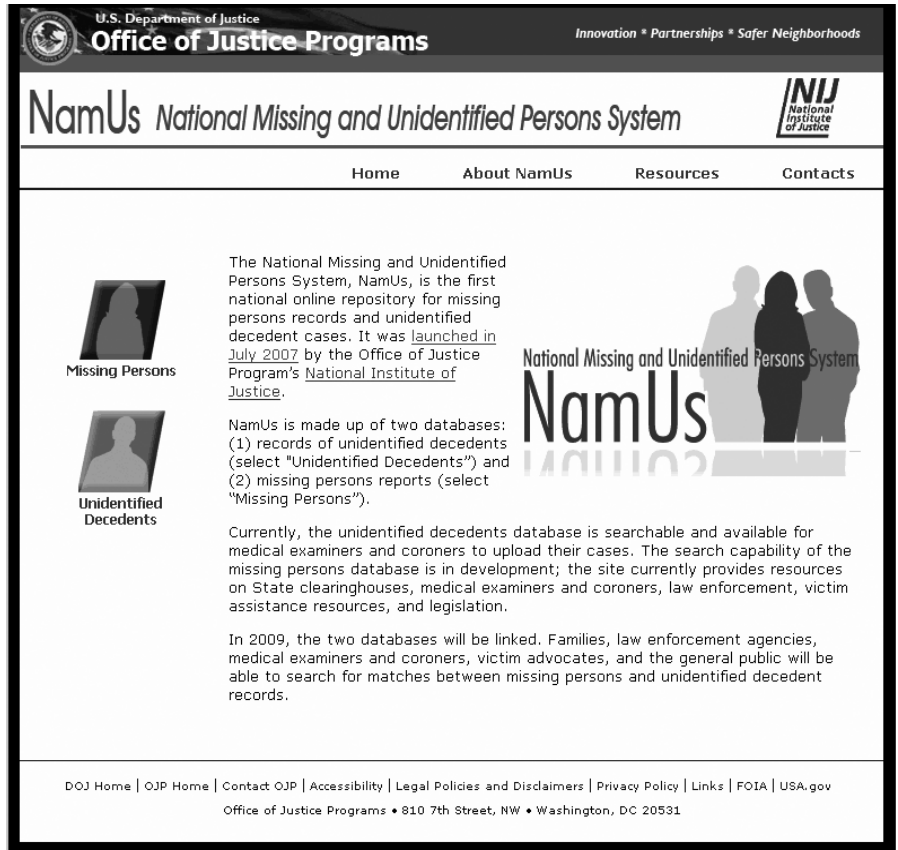
- Community Monitoring of Sex Offenders;
- Connecting Sentencing Networks Through Weblogs;
- Native-American Justice: Crime Policies of the First Oklahomans; and
- Specialty Courts such as drug and mental health courts.

A Dialogue Among New and Old Sentencing Commissions

One of the most significant aspects of the NASC 2007 Annual Conference was the opportunity for dialogue among new and old sentencing commissions. Many states, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Washington State, have had sentencing commissions for a decade or more (Pennsylvania’s commission was established in 1978). Other states, including Alabama, California, Nebraska, Vermont, Colorado, Montana, Connecticut, and Illinois, have recently created commissions or study groups to address the many issues relevant to sentencing and corrections. The conference offered two specific sessions to facilitate this dialogue: “Developments in California Sentencing” and “Dialogue Among New and Old Commissions.” The Pew Charitable Trusts was instrumental in facilitating this dialogue by providing travel assistance for several individuals from the “new” states to attend the conference.

This annual opportunity for sentencing commissions from across the country to collaborate and deliberate on sentencing issues is the core of the NASC mission. Each commission, whether old or new, contributes valuable information and ideas to this national discussion that has far-reaching implications for our systems of criminal justice. 

NIJ Announces New Online System for Identifying Missing Persons



The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NamUs, is the first national online repository for missing persons records and unidentified decedent cases. It was launched in July 2007 by the Office of Justice Program's National Institute of Justice.

NamUs is made up of two databases: (1) records of unidentified decedents (select "Unidentified Decedents") and (2) missing persons reports (select "Missing Persons").

Currently, the unidentified decedents database is searchable and available for medical examiners and coroners to upload their cases. The search capability of the missing persons database is in development; the site currently provides resources on State clearinghouses, medical examiners and coroners, law enforcement, victim assistance resources, and legislation.

In 2009, the two databases will be linked. Families, law enforcement agencies, medical examiners and coroners, victim advocates, and the general public will be able to search for matches between missing persons and unidentified decedent records.


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As many as 100,000 persons are actively missing in the United States each day, according to a recent report by the National Institute of Justice (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/journals/256/missing-persons.html>), and tens of thousand of people vanish under suspicious circumstances each year. Efforts to identify human remains are hampered by such problems as the sheer number of cases (for example, 40,000 sets of remains that cannot be identified are being held by medical examiners across the county), by the burying of remains before testing, or by inadequate testing technology in smaller labs.

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For more information about NamUS, visit <http://www.namus.gov/>. 

(TERRORISM, from p. 1)

globe for the years 1970-2004), a series of Internet and face-to-face surveys in predominantly Islamic nations, content analyses of open-source materials, and interviews and experimental simulations.

Individual-Level Findings. A recently completed survey administered in four predominantly Muslim countries (Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia) found that large majorities of respondents felt that two important U.S. goals in the Middle East are to weaken and divide Islam and to achieve political and military domination to control Middle Eastern resources. However, only a minority of respondents viewed attacks against U.S. civilians as justified (although such minorities can be quite sizable: only 4% of Indonesian respondents endorsed such attacks, for example, but that could mean 10 million terrorism sympathizers.)

State-Level Findings. Terrorism is a tool of change. If the state system doesn't appear to work, then citizens may well be unhappy and ready to consider alternatives including those proposed by terrorist ideologues. To look at these issues more systematically, researchers used the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which contains over 80,000 terrorist events from 1970 to 2004, to examine the relationship. Consistent with their hypothesis, they found a strong, statistically significant relation between state failure and terrorism. Moreover, they found that the strength of this relation has increased over time.

Organizational-Level Findings. Not all organizations that form in response to a perceived grievance espouse terrorism. START investigators looked at those that do and those that do not, using the Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB) database, which was recently completed for the Middle East region. Organizations committed to a democratic ideology were significantly *less* likely to use violence and terrorism to pursue their organizational objectives. In addition, the traditional political rhetoric may have lost some of its appeal for Middle Eastern populations and they look now to alternative ideologies to address their grievances. The researchers found moderate support for the conclusion that organizations with a religious ideology are somewhat more likely to use violence and terrorism. Several existing projects are expected to generate new results in the coming year: One is examining the role of the media, including the Internet, in the recruitment of terrorists in Indonesia, while another involves interviewing inmates of U.S. prisons to examine the possibility that prisons in this country are a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment.

Working Group 2: Terrorist Group Behavior and Dynamics

Understanding *radicalization processes* provides key insights into how terrorist groups evolve over time, as well as how they persist and secure support of the public in their efforts. Radicalization can be understood as change in belief, feel-

ing, and action toward increasing support for intergroup conflict. However, radicalization in belief and feeling is only loosely associated with radicalization in action. Radicalization in action has two dimensions that are only slightly correlated: legal and non-violent political action (activism) and illegal and violent political action (radicalism). Twelve mechanisms of radicalization have been identified: four at the individual level, five at the group level, and three at the mass-public level. One implication of the distinction of levels is that the trajectory of an individual joining an existing terrorist group is likely very different from the trajectory of an activist group moving collectively toward violence.

Analyses of START's Global Terrorism Database demonstrate that the median age of a terrorist organization is less than two years. This empirical finding has motivated START researchers to explore *terrorist organizations' desistance*, that is, to better understand de-radicalization processes at the individual and organizational levels.

Of particular interest to START, and to the homeland security community, is the impact that *counterterrorist strategies and tactics* have on the evolution and possible dissolution of terrorist organizations. START researchers examined these issues in the context of terrorist activities in Northern Ireland as well as in Israel/Palestine. In Ireland, hazard modeling was used to find that military initiatives have been successful in temporarily quelling terrorism to the extent that they are extensive (possibly representing a reduction in the terrorists' capability to carry out attacks). To the contrary, common, small-scale military and criminal justice-based interventions actually exacerbated terrorist strikes over time from 1970 to 1992. A similar pattern emerges from the hazard modeling study of Palestinian terrorism.

Analyses of *terrorist tactics and targets* reveal that decisions at the operational level often emerge from in-group competition: competition for status and leadership within a terrorist group, and competition with other groups for the same base of sympathizers. To increase understanding of group decision-making and links between decisions and terrorist rhetoric, START has analyzed the con-

Homeland Security Resources

START Web site <http://www.start.umd.edu/>

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) <http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd/>

Social Vulnerability Index (SOVI) <http://www.cas.sc.edu/geog/hrl/sovi.html>

Terrorism and Preparedness Data Resource Center
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/TPDRC/>

Report on Muslim Public Opinion, Attacks on Civilians and al Qaeda
http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf

START Research Briefs
http://www.start.umd.edu/publications/research_briefs/

tent of public al-Qaeda messages in a project that partners START with researchers at several federal agencies.

With regard to *organizational characteristics*, research has linked organizational-level data to existing event data using regression analysis and social-network methodologies, and identified three organizational characteristics that are significantly and positively correlated to an organization's level of lethality: organizational size, adherence to religious ideology, and persistent alliances with other terrorist organizations.

START research on tactics has explored the issue of *suicide terrorism* in particular. Currently, the popular answer to this question of why suicide terrorism rates are increasing is that suicide terrorism has often enough succeeded in coercing the state targeted. No terrorist group uses only suicide terrorism, but suicide terrorism can benefit groups that engage in this type of attack even when it does not succeed in coercing the state targeted. Three mechanisms have been identified: (1) extra status in competition with groups that do not use suicide terrorism, (2) mobilization of sympathizers and supporters with the witness value of martyrdom, and (3) state overreaction to the shock value of suicide terrorism that targets and mobilizes previously passive terrorist sympathizers.


Working Group 3: Societal Impacts of Terrorism

Researchers in Working Group 3 are concerned with the socio-behavioral consequences of terrorist threats and attacks and with reducing those impacts. Methodologies employed include random-sample survey methods, media textual analysis, focus group research, geospatial information system research, in-depth interviews, problem-focused working groups, historiography methods, participant observation, and modeling and simulation.

In the area of *risk perception and communication* for terrorist events, the challenges associated with terrorism are similar to those that arise during extreme events of all types. Analyses of the 2001 anthrax attacks indicate that changing circumstances of risk during these types of episodes present significant challenges for official risk communica-

JRSA Welcomes Two New Staffers

Kristie Fontana is working with the Weed and Seed project as a Research Assistant. Kristie graduated in December from American University with a B.A. in justice. She was an intern at JRSA in the summer of 2006, working to organize and store past Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reports electronically for JRSA's Weed and Seed project. As a full-time staff member, Kristie will be collecting and analyzing data on Weed and Seed sites in order to assess and improve the program. She is interested in corrections issues, and plans to return to school in the future to earn a master's degree in judicial administration.

Chip Herin, JRSA's new Administrative Assistant, is a recent graduate of the University of Georgia. While studying at the university, Chip majored in political science with a pre-law intent. He served as an Office Assistant with the Office of Staff Development and Judicial Programs, a division of the Department of Housing at the university. This role provided over four years of administrative experience, and a solid background in the justice field. Chip's future plans are to attend law school and to continue his work in the justice field as an attorney. His position at JRSA primarily involves maintaining the association's CRM database, as well as assisting the office in an administrative capacity. 

tions, with contradictory statements common, a delay in acknowledgement of errors likely, and characterization of uncertainty in risk information uncommon. Research demonstrates that uncertainties regarding both information and organizational responsibilities complicate risk communication efforts. As incidents unfold, there is a need for "communication triage" that prioritizes the most important audiences and channels information to them. Centralization of risk communication, which is often advocated, may in fact hinder communication triage.

Regarding *community preparedness* and the implementation of DHS guidance in local communities, preliminary studies indicate that communities organize for homeland security protection in different ways. Regional urban-area security initiative (UASI) groups exhibit different organizational forms, and preparedness network size and composition varies. Many UASI personnel believe that regional preparedness has increased as a result of federal funding. At the same time, concerns exist regarding the sustainability of regional preparedness efforts.

With respect to the *public response to terrorist attacks*, investigators have been analyzing data and reviewing the litera-

ture on evacuation processes for structures and for communities. In the area of evacuations following terrorist attacks, researchers have access to a unique dataset on occupant behavior and evacuation developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in its investigation of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. There has also been an effort to assess research findings on building evacuations and on community evacuations that showed that the same causal models can be used to predict behavior at both the micro (building) and macro (community) levels.

Research on *vulnerability and resilience* takes several forms. Population vulnerability is assessed nationwide through the application and enhancement of the Social Vulnerability Index (SoVI), a GIS-based tool that integrates information on hazards with a set of indicators that identify communities whose populations are at risk of experiencing negative outcomes from extreme events. Research has found that there are differences in the level of vulnerability of U. S. cities based on their social and built environment characteristics. High levels of vulnerability do not always translate into high per capita UASI funding levels.

(See **TERRORISM**, p. 8)

(TERRORISM, from p. 7)

Researchers have also developed a community assessment of resilience tool (CART) based on the literature on psycho-social resilience, with strong input from first responders and groups of community residents. CART assesses the post-event adaptive capacities of groups and communities. Resilience emerges from four measurable sets of adaptive capacities: social justice, social capital, information and communication, and community competence. In general, community adaptive capacity is manifested in population wellness, defined as high and non-disparate levels of mental and behavioral health, functioning, and quality of life.

Conclusion

In the space of two short years, START has implemented an ambitious and far-ranging research program in an

attempt to answer some of the “big” questions surrounding the causes, conduct, and consequences of terrorism. The majority of START’s research projects have yet to be completed, and as START matures, its research will evolve in response to changes in the nature of the terrorist threat. For example, in the last two years concern has increased (following the 2005 London subway bombings and the recent Fort Dix plot in the U.S.) about “homegrown” terrorism that originates amongst our own citizens. The entire START consortium of researchers, students, and managers is committed to the continued collection of extensive empirical data, the application of cutting-edge social and behavioral science methods to analyze these data, and the use of social science theories to interpret and communicate the results to both the homeland security community and the interested public.

Gary LaFree is Director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and a former Director of the New Mexico Statistical Analysis Center. Kathleen Smarick is the Executive Director of START. Gary Ackerman is Research Director of START and Director of the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies, a private research and analysis institute.

Ashley Nellis, JRSA Research Associate, received two consecutive START pre-doctoral fellowships, which funded her dissertation study on the topic of public responses to terrorism-related information. Along with other START researchers, Dr. Nellis was recently invited to present her findings at a congressional briefing on evidence-based terrorism research. ☛

JRSA FORUM

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