Empowering Somali Key for Countering Youth Radicalization and Their Travel Abroad for Terrorism

16 June 2015

(b)(3) per 50 U.S.C. § 3024(i) and 6 U.S.C. § 121(d)(11)
(U/FOUO) **Empowering Somali Key for Countering Youth Radicalization and Their Travel Abroad for Terrorism**

(U/FOUO) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA).

(U) **Scope**

(U/FOUO) This Assessment intends to help federal, state, local, and private partners prioritize efforts countering violent extremism (CVE) and invest in the most promising CVE strategies. Although there are dozens of CVE programs around the world, including ones that actively involve Somali-American violent extremists, this analysis is intended for partners whose positions afford them interaction with Somali-Americans in CVE efforts.

For this study, we highlight how Somali-American figures can be key CVE advocates in their communities, based on their positions and influence. This analysis is intended for partners whose positions afford them interaction with Somali-Americans in CVE efforts.

(U/FOUO) This Assessment takes a broad look at ethnic Somali groups in the United States and elsewhere in the West. Europe is home to a significant number of ethnic Somali youth who traveled—or attempted travel—to join violent extremists in Syria, and aspects of radicalization involving ethnic Somalis to violence appears to be fairly similar on both continents. This Assessment identifies possible pitfalls, opportunities, and best practices already present throughout the West that could minimize challenges and maximize opportunities to support Somali-American advocacy as primary advocates of efforts to prevent radicalization to violence and travel to join foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). The information cut-off date for this Assessment is 19 May 2015.

(U) **Key Judgments**

(U/FOUO) The significant number of Somali-Americans joining terrorist groups in Syria demonstrates that these individuals remain vulnerable to entreaties from violent extremists and underscores the importance in CVE efforts.

(U/FOUO) can make it difficult for Somali-American groups to cooperate with and fully understand Western security agencies and legal systems. These challenges might not be fully aware of negative influences facing Somali-Americans. These challenges can make it difficult for well-meaning to recognize radicalizing and mobilizing to violence and to handle such activities appropriately.

(U/FOUO) In the face of these challenges, Somali-American have demonstrated the capability and willingness to help become more resistant to the appeal of violent extremists in foreign conflict zones, and.

(U/FOUO) Many Somali immigrant are already positioned to prevent from radicalizing to violence, and the vulnerability of some young Somalis—like other American youth—to recruitment by violent or other members to establish communicative relationships and to exert a positive influence over them. There are valuable lessons we have learned from their responses to the presence or absence of government and private engagement efforts.

---

* (U) For this study, we define “Western Somali” as someone with citizenship or long-term residence in Western Europe or North America who has ethnic background in Somalia.
(U//FOUO) The Syrian conflict has re-energized some Somali-American youth to join violent extremist groups fighting in Syria. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stemming the flow of fighters to Syria, so I&A assesses insufficient. To date, CVE programs to dissuade Somali-Americans have proven insufficient in stem
for government at all levels due to their perception of undue scrutiny at airports and invasive police contacts.

(U/FOUO) Abuses by Authorities in East Africa Undermine Trust of Some in Western Officials

(U) Some Somali figures were abused by authorities in East Africa and remain wary of security services after arriving in the West, including the United States, which might deter these individuals from seeking help from government officials. A number of Somali-Americans suffered from dangerous and corrupt government authorities in East Africa, and consequently are fearful of Western security officials.

(U/FOUO) Possibly lacking a complete understanding of Western systems of justice, some ethnic Somali have publicly expressed frustration that authorities, including those in the United States, could not do more to protect from terrorist activities.

(U/FOUO) A US official in February 2015 identified as reasons why the would not report their suspicions to authorities, even in cases where might have been concerned about behavior for months. Many Somali immigrants fear that responding to any government initiative could put their legal status and personal wellbeing in jeopardy, which is a consequence of misunderstanding of how the US government system works and the civil rights and liberties guaranteed to every citizen and resident of the United States.

(U/FOUO) Immigration Stresses Can Undercut Control

(U/FOUO) I&A assesses that some Somali in the West, including the United States. I&A assesses that some Somali

(U/FOUO) I&A assesses that some Somali
Of the six young Somali-American males arrested in April 2015 for their alleged attempts to join violent extremists in Syria, two were brothers and another in the group had a brother who is
assessed to have previously joined al-Shabaab in
Somalia. 67 Separately, a Columbus-based Somali
male arrested on terrorism-related charges in
February 2015 is the half-brother of an US person
who allegedly joined al-Nusrah in Syria during August
2013. 68

(U) Two British-Somali sisters from Manchester
traveled to Syria in June 2014 where their brother
reportedly joined foreign-based violent extremists
over a year before their trip. 69

(U) A Finnish-Somali fighter who appeared in an
August ISIL-produced video possibly was encouraged
to join ISIL by his cousin—another Somali from
Finland—who died in June 2014 fighting in Syria. 70

(U) Empowering Cooperation

(U) A range of opportunities exists for government and
private entities to inform Somali about the
potential violent extremist influences and to make public and private programs more
approachable to Somali.

(U/FOUO) Socio-Economic Factors Put Somalis at Risk

(U) To help address perceived profiling at airports,
US Customs and Border Protection agreed as of
mid-February to hold a series of job fairs that
courage Somali-Americans to apply for
approximately 2,000 open jobs across the agency. 78
In mid-February, the first-ever Somali-American
member sworn into the Metropolitan Airports
Commission in Minnesota said that he “expects to contribute an East African perspective to the commission.”

(U) The Portland Police Bureau in late May 2015 swore in its first Somali-American officer. The agency put forth significant effort to build relationships with local Somalis. Likewise, one goal of local Somalis after a Somali was arrested for (b) (3), (b) (7)(E).

(U) The introduction of local Somalis in community liaison and police officer roles improved the frequency and quality of encounters between local law enforcement and members of the Somali-American community in Minneapolis. Similarly, relations between the Somali-American community and local law enforcement in Minneapolis had improved dramatically in recent years, largely because of the focused effort to hire Somali-Americans as sworn law enforcement officers and community liaisons.

(U) The Somali-American Police Association (SAPA)—a national organization with origins in Minnesota where there are approximately two dozen police officers of Somali descent—has been considered a model resource for police departments seeking to forge deeper ties with local Somalis since its founding in 2012. SAPA has been credited with diverting a number of Somali-American teens from potentially radicalizing activities.

(U) The Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office—unlike many of its counterparts with jurisdiction in Somali communities throughout the United States—has partnered with a community advisory board to field calls from individuals without immediately involving law enforcement. The Sheriff’s Office also released a Somali language video in mid-February 2015 aimed at strengthening its relationship with the community by describing its public safety responsibilities, law enforcement roles, security issues affecting local Somalis, and ways residents can partner with its Community Engagement Team to reduce crime.

(U) In comparison to efforts in Belgium, cities like Minneapolis and St. Paul employ more sophisticated CVE policies, which include recruiting Somalis for law enforcement roles and teaching the police about Somali culture and language. After visiting Minnesota, the head of crime prevention at the Helsinki Police Department (HPD) concluded that HPD needed to adopt best practices from the MPD by recruiting Somali officers establishing associations for Somali youth, and organizing meetings with the community.
(U/FOUO) Fear for officials as of March 2015 sought to engage who may be targeted by violent extremists in the “pre-criminal space” to help these youths before they cross the line into significant terrorism-related activities.99

(U) Independent, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can provide non-punitive support to Somali immigrant parents to help pivot away from foreign conflict zones. NGOs in Europe—including in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and Sweden—have established successful support groups for drawn to violent extremist activities abroad, according to.

(U) In a relatively unprecedented decision, a federal judge in February 2015 sentenced an 18-year-old Somali-American who was convicted of seeking to join terrorists in Syria—a charge with potential penalties of more than a decade of imprisonment—to a halfway house and entry into a mandatory community reintegration program.92 Approximately three months later, a judge announced that he would consider moving five young Somali-Americans accused of attempting travel to Syria from prison to a halfway house while they awaited trial.93 Lenient treatment of potential foreign fighters, however, has drawn criticism, including from Somali-Americans, and the 18-year-old violated the terms of his release to the half-way house, sending him back to prison,.

(U) intelligence officials work with other government and private entities to tailor administrative actions outside the penal system—including referrals to social service agencies, curfews, and travel document confiscations—to discourage aspiring foreign fighters before their activities escalate to serious crimes.

(U) authorities emphasize non-criminal measures, such as confiscating or not issuing passports to minors, to help steer away from breaking serious counterterrorism laws. According to the same source, cities deploy Muslim community leaders and social service administrators to help stop violent extremist-related activities before they become serious crimes.

(U) The inspired by a call-center, funded a support hotline in April 2014, which includes Somali language counseling services, to provide an alternative to informing the FTOs, which most are reluctant to do. There are hotlines in countries to field calls from seeking advice, counseling, referrals, and other services to address potentially radicalizing.

(U/FOUO) A -based private support network offers counseling services, educational materials, and intervention assistance to interested in dissuading young adults from joining FTOs. The organization works with law enforcement counterparts to avoid potentially provocative actions, such as raids and arrests, unless they become absolutely necessary.

(U/FOUO) The of foreign fighters in and organized private support groups to help members increase their awareness of how violent extremist recruiters target adolescents and.

(U) A that met weekly to discuss worrisome changes by their helped inspire programs in the United States that help Somali-American families deal with...
(U/FOUO) Community Resiliency Programs a Proactive, but Contentious, Development for 2015

(U) A delegation from Minnesota, including the US Attorney representing that district, attended a late-February 2015 counterterrorism summit at the White House to advocate pilot programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis intended to stem the causes of radicalization, including within Somali communities. These pilots—administered by local US Attorneys in coordination with the Department of Justice, NCTC, and DHS—plan to infuse communities with resources to increase their resilience to violent extremism as well as establish outlets for sensitive communications on potentially concerning activities. A significant number of Somali-Americans, however, are skeptical of these programs, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E).

(U) These pilots envisage the creation of community-led “intervention teams” in which [redacted] would have the confidence, privacy, and means to enlist help from mental health counselors, religious leaders, teachers, and other community advocates if they suspect [redacted] are being recruited by violent extremists, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). Based on conversations with friends and relatives of youth who entered foreign conflicts, the delegation sought to employ resources, such as the intervention teams, to emphasize the early detection of youth at risk for radicalization before their activities become criminal in nature, (114). The Community intervention team will only contact police if it cannot dissuade a person from joining a terrorist group, but the goal is to handle these cases outside law enforcement channels, (114).

(U) Elements of the pilot program also are intended to counteract the very sophisticated and persuasive violent extremist messaging directed at youth, including young Somali-Americans, by encouraging after-school programs, job training, law enforcement occupations, and elimination of perceived profiling at airports, (117).

(U/FOUO) The pilots have drawn concerns and skepticism from many participants, including Somali-Americans, that these efforts will blur the lines between law enforcement, community outreach, and intelligence gathering. Much of this unease comes from reports that post-unrelated community outreach programs created by the FBI and St. Paul police were designed, in part, to gather intelligence, although both agencies publicly maintain they never used outreach efforts to stymie community members with whom they engaged, (118,119,120). In early May 2015, nearly 50 Muslims organizations, including the local chapter of the Council on American–Islamic Relations, jointly criticized the pilot program for unfairly targeting local Somalis and subsequently developed a task force separate from the federal program, (121,122,123,124).

(U) Support Is Available to Assist Somali

(U/FOUO) Despite the challenges of [redacted] have access to broad support networks in the West beyond their immediate families (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). Efforts to discourage radicalization and mobilization to violence are particularly successful when they take advantage of the typically (b)(3), (b)(7)(E).

(U) When facing negative circumstances, individuals in the Somali diaspora commonly rely on extended family members for support, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). There have been cases of Somali immigration in the West enlisting (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) to monitor their children and help detect violent and anti-social behavior, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E).

(U) The communal aspect of Somali culture often results in the responsibility of monitoring young children being entrusted to the whole community, with any adult having the right to speak to a child about his or her behavior, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). Adults in Somali culture commonly act as parents if they see something potentially wrong involving unsupervised youth, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E).

(U/FOUO) Many Somali immigrants have welcomed education about risks they face, including radicalization to violent extremism and recruitment to overseas conflicts. Such guidance has proven effective in integrating advocacy into broader efforts (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). As of February 2015, stakeholders for radicalization concerns in Europe, (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) were developing training modules to enable practitioners to help [redacted] potential foreign fighters detect early warning signs of radicalization, (131,132).
» (U/FOOU) Somali-American* in Minnesota told [b]3, (b) (7)E] that they appreciated education from government officials about violent extremist recruitment in their neighborhoods because that information equipped them for productive talks. [b]3, (b) (7)E] 133 Publicity on the recruitment of Somali youth in Minnesota to become foreign fighters in Somalia, for example, prompted a Somali-American* to report [b]3, (b) (7)E] alleged attempt to join Yemen-based violent extremists in 2009. [b]3, (b) (7)E] 134

» (U) (b)3, (b) (7)E] mental-counseling program created in 2011 deploys counselors to work with [b]3, (b) (7)E] members of individuals at risk of radicalization to violence to help steer them away from violent activities. This program capitalizes on strong [b]3, (b) (7)E] bonds to keep communication lines open with troubled youth, coach [b]3, (b) (7)E] members on gathering insight into the motives of relatives who may be radicalized to violence, and employs strategies that undermine violent extremist narratives. Counselors affiliated with the program also analyze statements by [b]3, (b) (7)E] who may be in the process of being radicalized to violence to help craft responses intended to sustain and intensify contact over time, improving the chances that their appeals to abandon violent extremism will succeed.135

» (U/FOOU) I&A assesses that [b]3, (b) (7)E] 

» (U/FOOU) Community Awareness Briefings by DHS and NCTC educate and empower audiences across the United States, including [b]3, (b) (7)E] terrorist messaging online, its risks to impressionable youth, and methods to counter it. [b]3, (b) (7)E] 136 The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization partners with local mosques to host Internet awareness and safety workshops directed primarily at helping [b]3, (b) (7)E] identify and address violent extremism online.


» (U) A crime prevention program deploys school, social welfare, and police officials to educate [b]3, (b) (7)E] regarding the Internet’s effect on young people, so that the [b]3, (b) (7)E] can detect and appropriately address online radicalization with [b]3, (b) (7)E] k.139

(U/FOOU) Outlook: [b]3, (b) (7)E] 

(U/FOOU) CVE programs deployed for the benefit of Somali-American communities must be implemented carefully to empower advocacy organizations embraced by community members, promote comprehensive CVE services, and minimize the perception of undue government influence.

» (U) Minneapolis-St. Paul-based individuals and organizations developing innovative, community-led CVE programs often lose out in competitions for funding to organizations that are effective at securing government funding. [b]3, (b) (7)E] 

» (U) Many Somali-Americans, particularly those in Minneapolis-St. Paul, believe that promises of outside support are hollow and self-serving based on years of researchers, journalists, government offices, and other organizations studying radicalization and recruitment in their communities only to abandon the community when the research funding is exhausted, according [b]3, (b) (7)E] found that Somalis in Minneapolis-St. Paul were more willing to discuss the primary research interest—terrorist recruitment and methods for countering it—when [b]3, (b) (7)E] demonstrated genuine interest in the community’s challenges and accomplishments.
(U) Mosques, community leaders, and organizations performing CVE-related work(b)(3), (b)(7)(E) do not know where to go when they have concerns(b)(3), (b)(7)(E), (b)(3), (b)(7)(E). This finding that some organizations unaffiliated with government-driven initiatives can more effectively message Minneapolis-St. Paul Somali youth because they do not raise as much community suspicion regarding motives.

The Somali community in Minneapolis widely believe

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) The large and varied body of (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) reporting provides us (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) confidence in our judgment that (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) We have (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) confidence in our ability to account for most major government and private programs in the West—and areas where these efforts are lacking—(b)(3), (b)(7)(E) Limited substantive information—where noted—prevented us from making definitive judgments on certain trends, although we have (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) confidence in the anecdotal information cited.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit http://nsl.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx.

(b) (3), (b) (7)(E)
Customer Feedback Form

Product Title: (U/FOUO) Empowering Somali Key for Countering Youth Radicalization and Their Travel Abroad

1. Please select partner type: Select One
   and function: Select One

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive? Select One

3. Please complete the following sentence: “I focus most of my time on:” Select One

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product’s overall usefulness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s relevance to your mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s timeliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s responsiveness to your intelligence needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations
- Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats
- Share with partners
- Allocate resources (e.g., equipment and personnel)
- Reprioritize organizational focus
- Author or adjust policies and guidelines
- Initiate a law enforcement investigation
- Initiate your own regional-specific analysis
- Initiate your own topic-specific analysis
- Develop long-term homeland security strategies
- Do not plan to use
- Other: 

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How did you obtain this product? Select One

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback? Yes

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name: 
Organization: 
Contact Number: 
Position: 
State: 
Email: 

Privacy Act Statement

Product Serial Number: IA-0214-15

REV. 29 October 2014
(U//FOUO) Syria-Based US and UK Persons’ Public Social Media Activity Effective but Provides Terrorism Prevention Opportunities

20 May 2015

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

IA-0196-15
(U//FOUO) Syria-Based US and UK Persons’ Public Social Media Activity Effective but Provides Terrorism Prevention Opportunities

(U//FOUO) Prepared by the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA)

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This Assessment examines public, English-language, social media activity by US and UK persons participating in the conflict in Syria or Iraq. This Assessment utilized DHS and CIA reviewed public and unclassified intelligence and open-source media released between September 2013 and November 2014 that documented 255 messages posted by 20 confirmed or self-proclaimed US persons who attempted to or engaged in violence or material support in Syria or Iraq.

(U) Key Judgments

(U//FOUO) DHS and CIA assess that the examined social media postings of 20 US and 20 UK persons in Syria were effective. These individuals attempted to or engaged in violence or material support in Syria or Iraq. Many of the examined US and UK persons possibly engaged in social media activity that was effective. This Assessment is intended to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial counterterrorism and law enforcement officials and cleared private sector security partners in better understanding the threat posed by Syria-based foreign fighters and US-based violent extremists.

(U//FOUO) We judge that the US and UK persons examined are:

1. Many of the examined US and UK persons possibly engaged in social media activity that was effective.

(U//FOUO) We assess that these persons are:

(U//FOUO) DHS assesses that trying to directly engage such Syria-based English-speakers on social media would be most effective.

(U//FOUO) DHS defines a lone offender as an individual motivated by one or more violent extremist ideologies who, operating alone, supports or engages in violence in furtherance of that ideology or ideologies that may involve influence from a larger terrorist organization or a foreign actor.
(U//FOOU) DHS assesses that [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

DHS judges that [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) US and UK Persons Promoted Similar Themes

(U//FOOU) A study of the identified, prom[ed] social media postings of 20 US and 20 UK persons participating in or supporting violence in Syria revealed that [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

though the UK subjects [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

Their messages frequently [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) The individuals studied likely emphasized these themes [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

[b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) Roughly 30 percent of the examined messages posted by these persons comprised [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

We assess that persons [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

Such messaging also likely attempted to [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) Nearly 20 percent of messages included [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) Approximately 20 percent of the [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) Less than 10 percent of the messages [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

These messages [b] (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) Calls for external attacks in the West by lone offenders, criticism of the US-led Coalition bombing campaign against ISIL, and commentary on ISIL’s execution of US and UK hostages [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

Given that the examined individuals elected to travel to support violence, [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

Additionally [b] (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOOU) For more information on the examined persons’ social media activity see attached Reference Aid. "(U//FOOU) Research Findings: Use of Social Media by UK and US Foreign Persons in Syria."
(U//FOOU) According to [b]3, [b]7(E), [b]7(E), None of the examined US persons
publicly called for attacks in the United States on
their social media accounts during the timeframe we
examined.

(U//FOOU) US and UK persons also rarely posted
about [b]3, [b]7(D), [b]7(E)

US persons provided general
[b]3, [b]7(E)

(U//FOOU) [b]3, [b]7(D), [b]7(E)

(U//FOOU) By contrast, following ISIL’s declaration
of a Caliphate, US persons [b]3, [b]7(E)
The frequency of commentary by US persons about
life inside Syria was [b]3, [b]7(E)

(U//FOOU) After the declaration of the Caliphate,
we saw [b]3, [b]7(E)

On [b]3, [b]7(E) 2014, prominent ISIL
supporters began to promote the
[b]3, [b]7(E) to encourage the group’s followers [b]3, [b]7(E)

[b]3, [b]7(E) is
likely one factor contributing to the
[b]3, [b]7(E).

(U//FOOU) In the months following the
[b]3, [b]7(E) in [b]3, [b]7(E) 2014, some UK users
(b)3, (b)7(E)

Their reluctance to provide
[b]3, [b]7(E)—

(b)3, (b)7(E)
(U//FOUO) Several of the examined US persons most prominent on social media [B](3), [B](7)/E

DHS assesses that some of these persons may have [B](3), [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) Male and female UK users generally [B](3), [B](7)/E except for [B](3), [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) Messages by Syria-based females in the study [B](3), [B](7)/E and we assess they were [B](3), [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) The one US woman included in this study also emphasized [B](3), [B](7)/I/E

(U//FOUO) US and UK Persons May Show Differences in Platforms, Similarities in [B](3), [B](7)/I/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) Thirteen of the 20 US persons had publicly viewable [B](3), accounts in which they posted content relevant to this study [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E. However, [B](7)/D

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E

We assess that they [B](3), [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/I/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E

(U//FOUO) [B](3), [B](7)/D, [B](7)/E
Messaging Reaches Small Numbers,

As expected, the size of the examined US and UK persons’ identified online social networks was - The examined US and UK persons—many of whom also maintain public social media presences—

DHS analyzes judge that the best direct measure of the resonance of the examined messages is

Although the English-speaking audiences mostly had

The examined individuals also often received questions about

These persons are

In May 2014, a prominent UK social media user who traveled to Syria in August 2013, about a non-violent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to effect societal or political change.

* DHS defines radicalization as the process through which an individual changes from a non-violent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to effect societal or political change.
(U//FOUO) We often saw violent extremists in the West use to seek to seek (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) Opportunities to (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) DHS assesses that (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) In July 2014, (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) In contrast (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) We assess that (b) (3).

(U//FOUO) We assess that (b) (3).

(U//FOUO) We judge, based on our analysis of numerous recent cases of radicalization to violence in the West, (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

As a result, we assess that counter-narratives that (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

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

are likely to be (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) We assess that personal associates, (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) DHS assesses that (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Instead, DHS judges that (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)

Religious leaders, NGOs, community leaders, and family and friends are typically (b) (3), (b) (7)(E)
(U//FOUO) In October 2014,  

Montgomery County, Maryland’s municipal officials and police have partnered with the US-based NGO World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WIDER) to develop an intervention program for individuals radicalizing to violence. Part of the program—which is informing separate locally led countering violent extremism pilot initiatives in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis—seeks to educate communities about the risks of individuals being exposed to violent extremist materials, especially on social media. 42

(U//FOUO) Online users, especially ISIL supporters, employ a range of tactics to circumvent the effects of account shutdowns, such as [REDACTED]. In the summer of 2014 repeatedly suspended ISIL’s official group accounts, which forced the group to migrate to significantly less popular sites—[REDACTED]—until these second tier sites also suspended the group’s official accounts. [REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) DHS notes that [REDACTED]. Many individuals in the early process of potentially radicalizing to violence may be engaging in protected speech and have not committed or expressed an intent to commit any illegal activities. [REDACTED]

(U) The US-based Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) in 2014 released a toolkit called the “Safe Spaces Initiative,” which was designed to provide Muslim American communities with practical advice on countering radicalization to violence among their members using the MPAC-designed Prevention, Intervention, Ejection (PIE) model. The prevention element of PIE recommends that, when a respected authority figure—such as a religious leader, teacher, or parent—learns that an impressionable community member has been exposed to violent extremist content online, the authority should view the material with the vulnerable individual and debunk its misleading narratives. 41
Research Findings: Use of Social Media by UK and US Persons in Syria

Key Findings:
- UK and US persons in Syria typically promoted themes with a focus on atrocities and radicalization to violence. Our study's findings are derived from a review of 20 UK persons and 20 US persons.
- This infographic highlights the most common themes they promoted, as well as key similarities and differences between UK and US persons, men and women, and the social media platforms they used.

Calls for External Attacks
- Promoting a Foreign Terrorist Organization
- Life in Syria
- Application Preferences

Differences and Similarities of UK and US Persons
- UK and US persons published messages in approximately the same proportion about life in Syria, combat operations in Syria, tributes to martyrs, and terrorist messaging.
- UK persons were more likely to promote (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E) and provide comments.
- US persons were more likely to promote (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E).

Calls for External Attacks
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)
- Travel Guidance and Advice
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)
- Promoting a Foreign Terrorist Organization
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)
- Life in Syria
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)
- Application Preferences
- (b) (3), (b) (7)(D), (b) (7)(E)
(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) DHS and [REDACTED] reviewed (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) released between September 2013 and November 2014 that documented (b)(3), (b)(7)(D), (b)(7)(E) 20 confirmed or self-proclaimed US persons who attempted to or engaged in violence or material support in Syria or Iraq as (b)(3), (b)(7)(D), (b)(7)(E) by 20 UK persons. We have (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) confidence in (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) We also have (b)(3), (b)(7)(E) confidence in (b)(3), (b)(7)(E)

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx.

Customer Feedback Form

Product Title: (U/FOUO) Syria-Based US and UK Persons’ Public Social Media Activity Effective but Provides Terrorism

1. Please select partner type: Select One
   and function: Select One

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive? Select One

3. Please complete the following sentence: “I focus most of my time on:” Select One

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product’s overall usefulness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s relevance to your mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s timeliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s responsiveness to your intelligence needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations
- Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats
- Share with partners
- Allocate resources (e.g., equipment and personnel)
- Reprioritize organizational focus
- Author or adjust policies and guidelines
- Initiate a law enforcement investigation
- Initiate your own regional-specific analysis
- Initiate your own topic-specific analysis
- Develop long-term homeland security strategies
- Do not plan to use
- Other:

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How did you obtain this product? Select One

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback? Yes