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HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST
**MOBILIZATION
INDICATORS**
FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

2017 EDITION

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HVE MOBILIZATION BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

(U//FOUO) The indicators of violent extremist mobilization described herein are intended to provide federal, state, local, territorial and tribal law enforcement a roadmap of observable behaviors that could inform whether individuals or groups are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities including potential travel overseas to join a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The indicators are grouped by their assessed levels of diagnosticity—meaning how clearly we judge the behavior demonstrates an individual's trajectory towards terrorist activity. The list also includes additional information concerning what the behavior could indicate, identifies likely observers, and provides a probable timeframe between behavior and an ultimate violent act. Some of these activities might be constitutionally protected and may be insignificant on their own, but, when observed in combination with other suspicious behaviors, may constitute a basis for reporting. Law enforcement (LE) action should not be taken based solely on the exercise of constitutionally protected activities or on the apparent race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion of the subject.

BACKGROUND

(U//FOUO) By law, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) focuses on international terrorism. Senior Intelligence Community officials judge that violent extremists inspired or enabled by the self-proclaimed Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qa'ida, including their allies and affiliates, are among the most lethal international terrorist threats to the Homeland. This product focuses on the threat from those actors.

(U//FOUO) In 2014, NCTC's Office of National Intelligence Management (NIM) formed an Interagency Analytic Focus Group, including experts from DCTC, DHS/I&A, DOE, FBI, NCTC, NSA, and cleared representatives of State and local law enforcement, who collaboratively developed the list of behavioral indicators and ranked them into three tiers of diagnosticity. The focus group created this list with law enforcement, homeland security, and public safety officials in mind. The focus group updated the list for 2017 based on new indicators observed since the publication of the original booklet.



GROUP INDICATORS

(U//FOUO) **GROUP A Indicators** are very diagnostic on their own.

(U//FOUO) **GROUP B Indicators** are moderately diagnostic, more so when observed with other indicators.

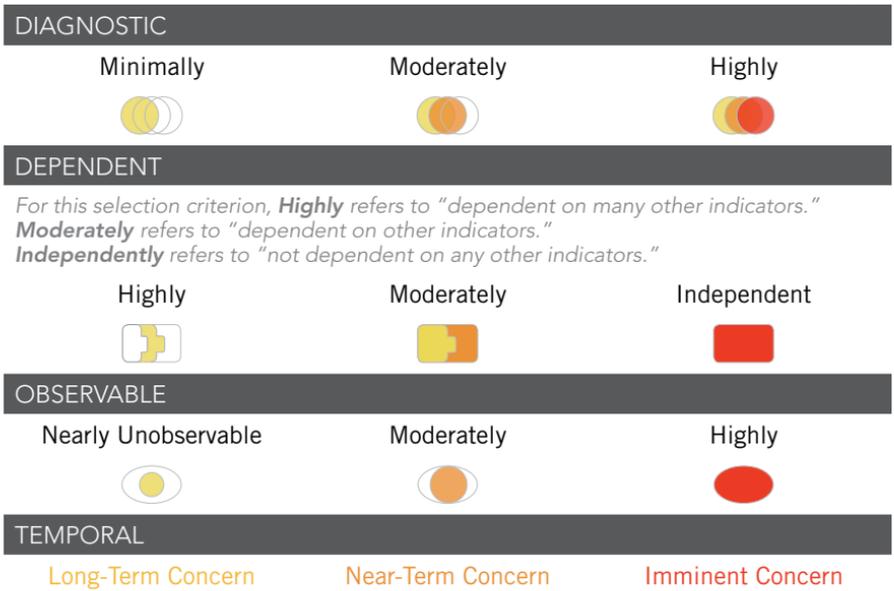
(U//FOUO) **GROUP C Indicators** are minimally diagnostic on their own and require the presence of other indicators to gain diagnosticity.

(U//FOUO) Nothing in this list of indicators is intended to confer additional authorities to law enforcement beyond that which is provided by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Officers who believe individuals are exhibiting significant mobilization indicators are encouraged to immediately contact the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

MOBILIZATION INDICATOR SELECTION CRITERIA KEY

Threat Level Low

Threat Level High



GROUP A

INDICATORS ARE VERY DIAGNOSTIC ON THEIR OWN.

PREPARING AND DISSEMINATING A LAST WILL OR MARTYRDOM VIDEO/STATEMENT

(I.E., END OF LIFE PREPARATIONS)



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



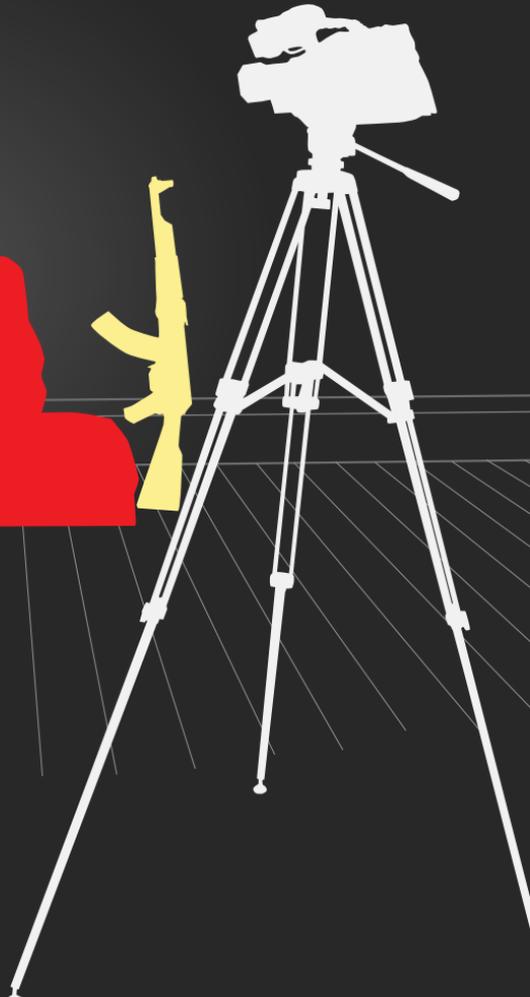
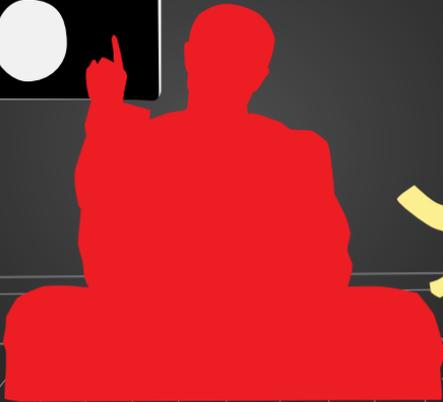
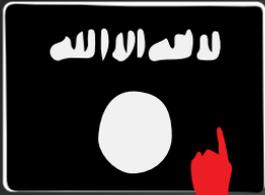
OBSERVABLE

IF SHARED WITH OR OTHERWISE DISCOVERED BY FAMILY,
FRIENDS, BYSTANDERS, ONLINE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA
CONTACTS

TEMPORAL

(IMMINENT CONCERN)

BEHAVIOR TYPICALLY OCCURS DAYS/HOURS BEFORE
VIOLENT ACTION



SEEKING HELP FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO ENABLE TRAVEL TO JOIN TERRORIST GROUPS OVERSEAS



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR STRONGLY INDICATES
PREPARATION TO FIGHT WITH OR
OTHERWISE SUPPORT AN FTO



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



OBSERVABLE

BY FAMILY/FRIENDS

TEMPORAL

(NEAR TERM CONCERN)



PLANNING OR ATTEMPTING TO TRAVEL TO A CONFLICT ZONE TO FIGHT WITH OR SUPPORT AN FTO



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS A
MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



OBSERVABLE

SEARCHING FOR TRAVEL ROUTES, PURCHASING TICKETS,
AND ASKING QUESTIONS ON HOW TO TRAVEL CAN BE
OBSERVABLE BY FAMILY/FRIENDS, ONLINE CONTACTS,
TRAVEL AGENTS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

TEMPORAL

(NEAR-TERM CONCERN)





SEEKING RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR VIOLENT ACTS



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR IS DIAGNOSTIC
ON ITS OWN AND CAN BE
ONLINE OR IN-PERSON



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



OBSERVABLE

MOBILIZED VIOLENT EXTREMISTS CAN BE
OBSERVED IF THEY SEEK PERMISSION OR
SANCTION TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE FROM
RELIGIOUS LEADERS, FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND
ONLINE CONTACTS

TEMPORAL

(NEAR-TERM CONCERN)

BEHAVIOR IS TYPICALLY LATE-STAGE PREPARATION
FOR ACTION





ATTEMPTING TO MOBILIZE OTHERS, ESPECIALLY FAMILY MEMBERS AND CLOSE FRIENDS



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR IS DIAGNOSTIC
ON ITS OWN AND CAN BE
ONLINE OR IN-PERSON



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS
A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR

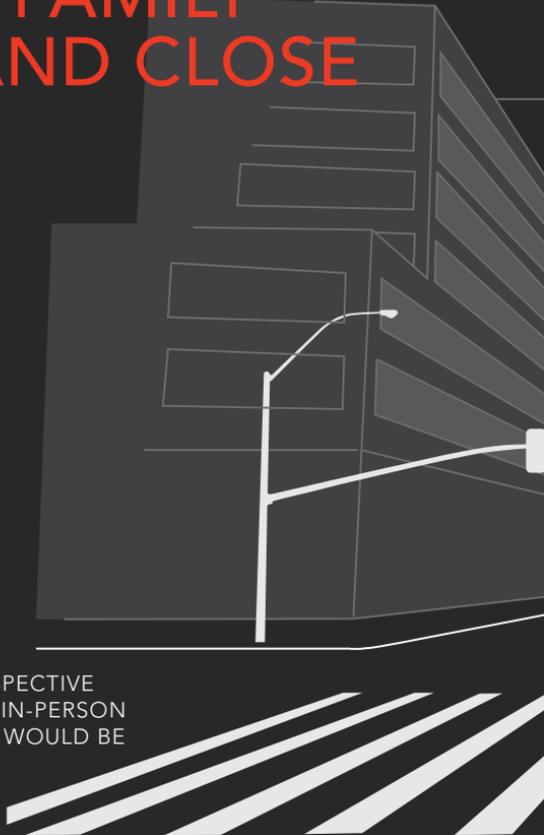


OBSERVABLE

POSSIBLY BY FAMILY, FRIENDS, PROSPECTIVE
RECRUITS; OTHERWISE, ACCESS TO IN-PERSON
OR ENCRYPTED COMMUNICATIONS WOULD BE
NECESSARY

TEMPORAL

(NEAR-TERM CONCERN)





GROUP B

INDICATORS ARE MODERATELY DIAGNOSTIC, MORE
SO WHEN OBSERVED WITH OTHER INDICATORS.

INDICATORS

OBTAINING OR ATTEMPTING (ILLICITLY OR OTHERWISE) TO OBTAIN EXPLOSIVE PRECURSORS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**, particularly if there is information suggesting that violent action is the principal motivation for this behavior

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by sellers, LE if alerted

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

LEAKAGE DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT OR INTENT TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENT EXTREMIST ACTIVITY (E.G., POSTING TERRORIST ICONS/FLAGS/PROMINENT FIGURES TO SOCIAL MEDIA, PARTICULARLY AS PROFILE PICTURE; LEAVING UNUSUAL POST-DEATH INSTRUCTIONS TO FAMILY, OR EXPRESSING UNUSUAL GOODBYES TO CONTACTS)

 **DIAGNOSTIC**, depending on how explicitly terrorism is linked to this behavior

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** to family, friends, online contacts, social media users, and educators

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

EXPRESSING ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE AS A NECESSARY MEANS TO ACHIEVE IDEOLOGICAL GOALS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online associates, and educators

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

ATTEMPTING TO RADICALIZE OTHERS, ESPECIALLY FAMILY MEMBERS AND CLOSE FRIENDS

-  **DIAGNOSTIC**; terrorist acts would be the principal motivation for this behavior
 -  **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action
 -  **OBSERVABLE** possibly by family, friends; otherwise, access to in-person or encrypted communications would be necessary
- TEMPORAL** (*Long-Term Concern*)

CREATING OR JOINING AN EXCLUSIVE GROUP THAT PROMOTES VIOLENCE TO RECTIFY PERCEIVED GRIEVANCES (SOCIAL, POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL)

-  **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization
 -  **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism
 -  **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, community members when not solely via online communications
- TEMPORAL** (*Near-Term Concern*) behavior is typically late-stage preparation for action

CONDUCTING SUSPICIOUS FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS (E.G., UNUSUAL APPLICATIONS FOR INCREASE OF CREDIT OR MULTIPLE LINES OF CREDIT, RECEIVING AN INFUSION OF MONEY FROM UNKNOWN THIRD PARTIES LOCATED OVERSEAS)

-  **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization
 -  **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism
 -  **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, sellers, sales/bank records, travel agents, customs, LE
- TEMPORAL** (*Near-Term Concern*) behavior is typically late-stage preparation for action

INDICATORS

CREATING OR ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL OR VIRTUAL SIMULATIONS OF AN ATTACK/ASSAULT

(E.G., FOCUS ON LOCAL, OR OTHER REAL-WORLD TARGETS)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by employees of the institutions, family, friends, security officers

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

EMPLOYING COUNTERSURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, LE, and educators

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

CHANGING BEHAVIOR OR USING LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS THAT REFLECT NEW SENSE OF PURPOSE RELATING TO VIOLENT EXTREMIST CAUSES

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by close family, friends, online contacts, coworkers

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

ENGAGING IN SUSPICIOUS TRAVEL ACTIVITY

(E.G., UNUSUAL PURCHASE OF ONE-WAY TICKETS, FALSE EXCUSES FOR INTENDED TRAVEL, USE OF PASS-THROUGH HUBS, OR FRAUDULENT APPLICATION FOR A NEW PASSPORT)

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** via ticket reservations, travel and customs history; possible awareness by family and friends

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

DELETING OR MANIPULATING SOCIAL MEDIA OR OTHER ONLINE ACCOUNTS TO MISREPRESENT LOCATION, EXTREMIST ACTIVITIES, GROUP MEMBERSHIP OR CONTACTS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by LE with FISA authorization, or by family and friends

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*) if deletion is done to hide planning activities or operational activities

USE OF ENCRYPTED MEDIA APPLICATIONS TO ENGAGE WITH UNKNOWN OVERSEAS INDIVIDUALS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by LE with FISA authorization, or by witting family and friends

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*) if engagement is with violent extremist actors or appears to be operational in nature

INDICATORS

SURVEILLING POTENTIAL TARGETS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violent acts needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** possibly by security guards, LE, community members

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

HAVING AN ACKNOWLEDGED OR IMPLIED MEMBERSHIP IN, OR ASSOCIATION WITH VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS

(E.G., INDIVIDUALS DECLARE THEY ARE MEMBERS OF ISIL ON SOCIAL MEDIA)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to intent to act needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, LE

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

PLANNING OR ATTEMPTING TO TRAVEL TO A CONFLICT ZONE (NON-SPECIFIC)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm violent extremism as motivation for travel

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, travel agents, customs officials, LE

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

ENCOURAGING OR ADVOCATING VIOLENCE TOWARD U.S. MILITARY OFFICIALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR CIVILIANS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online associates, religious leaders and educators

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

PARTICIPATING IN ONLINE (E.G., WEBSITES/SOCIAL MEDIA/MOBILE APP) SITES OR GROUPS THAT PROMOTE VIOLENT EXTREMISM

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** to family, friends, social media, and gaming contacts

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

COMMUNICATING WITH, RETWEETING, OR LINKING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISTS ONLINE

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, social media contacts, people with access to computer search/history, LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS

SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONVICTED OR INCARCERATED TERRORISTS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, corrections officials, or LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

SENDING MONEY, ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT OR SURVIVALIST GEAR TO SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE OR GROUPS OVERSEAS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, money services, banking institutions, material providers/shippers

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

EXPRESSING DESIRE TO TRAVEL TO CONFLICT ZONE TO FIGHT WITH OR SUPPORT AN FTO OR IDEALIZATION OF LIVING AMONG VIOLENT JIHADISTS OVERSEAS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** depending on how explicit the aspiring traveler is regarding planned activities overseas

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family/friends, online contacts, travel agents, LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

CONDUCTING INTERNET RESEARCH FOR TARGET SELECTION, ACQUIRING TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES, PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, bystanders, LE with a warrant

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

ACQUIRING MAPS/BLUEPRINTS IN A SUSPICIOUS MANNER

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by people with access to computer search history, city records personnel, librarians

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT, OR APPLYING FOR JOBS THAT PROVIDE SENSITIVE ACCESS

(AIRPORT, CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION, LE, MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY)

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization as motivation

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, job recruiters, employers, possibly online associates

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS

BEING OSTRACIZED OR RECEIVING OVERT DISAPPROVAL OR REJECTION FROM FAMILY OR COMMUNITY FOLLOWING EXTREMIST OUTBURSTS OR BEHAVIOR

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, religious congregations, community members

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS ARE MINIMALLY DIAGNOSTIC ON THEIR OWN AND REQUIRE THE PRESENCE OF OTHER INDICATORS TO GAIN DIAGNOSTICITY.

UNUSUAL PURCHASE OF MILITARY STYLE TACTICAL EQUIPMENT

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, sellers, transaction/bank records, possibly LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

SUSPICIOUS, UNEXPLAINED, OR ILLICIT ACQUISITION OF WEAPONS AND/OR AMMUNITION (E.G., USING BORROWED OR STOLEN ID TO PURCHASE FIREARM)

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, sellers, transaction/bank records, LE with a warrant

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

SELLING PERSONAL ASSETS/BELONGINGS IN AN UNUSUAL MANNER

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, LE with a warrant

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS

ENGAGING IN VIOLENT IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED OUTBURSTS/FIGHTS WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES, FELLOW EMPLOYEES, OR STUDENTS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by LE, family, friends, community members

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

BLAMING EXTERNAL FACTORS FOR FAILURE IN SCHOOL, CAREER, OR RELATIONSHIPS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

EXPRESSING FRUSTRATION WITH EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

(UNDEREMPLOYMENT/LOSS OF JOB OR STATUS)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

DISPLAYING AN UNSTABLE MENTAL STATE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, community members

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

SWITCHING FROM ONE VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY TO ANOTHER

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, religious community

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

BECOMING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED BY BREAKING CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY IF BELIEVED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENT EXTREMIST DOCTRINE OR IDEOLOGY

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS

ESCHEWING MAINSTREAM VOICES IN FAVOR OF ONE OR TWO VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGUES

(E.G., ANWAR AWLAKI; SHAYKH ABDULLAH FAISAL)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, religious community

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

PROMOTING EXTREMIST NARRATIVES (E.G., THAT THE WEST IS WAGING WAR WITH ISLAM; THAT LEADERS OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES ARE APOSTATES; THAT CONTEMPORARY MAINSTREAM MUSLIM SCHOLARS HAVE SOLD OUT; THAT VIOLENCE IS REQUIRED TO DEFEND THE IDENTITY-GROUP)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, social media users

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

DEHUMANIZING PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN THE IDENTITY-GROUP (E.G., NON-BELIEVERS, ADHERENTS TO OTHER RELIGIONS OR IDEOLOGIES)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to act needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online associates, religious community, possibly educators

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

REPLACING FAMILY AND FRIENDS WITH VIOLENT EXTREMIST SOCIAL GROUP

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, community, online associates

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

UTILIZING COMMUNICATION SECURITY TECHNIQUES AND TRADECRAFT (E.G., CHANGING SIM CARDS, PHONE NUMBERS OR USING DISPOSABLE "BURNER" PHONES)

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, possibly LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

DISCUSSING OPERATIONAL SECURITY OR WAYS TO EVADE LAW ENFORCEMENT

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INDICATORS

HAVING AN ACTIVE ROLE OR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN A CLUSTER, OR IN SECRET CLUSTER MEETINGS; HAVING VIEWS REINFORCED BY OTHER CLUSTER MEMBERS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, possibly online contacts, and community members

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

PRAISING PAST SUCCESSFUL OR ATTEMPTED ATTACKS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by family, friends, online contacts, social media users, LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

LYING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS/ OBSTRUCTING INVESTIGATIONS

 **DIAGNOSTIC;** many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** except by LE, family and friends

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF WHAT AN INDIVIDUAL PERCEIVES AS 'DOCTRINE' TO MANIPULATE THE BEHAVIOR OF PARENTS, CO-WORKERS, CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY (E.G., CRITICISM OF PARENTS' CLOTHING CHOICES, READING MATERIAL CHOICES, MUSICAL PREFERENCES, RELIGIOUS PRACTICES, INTERFAITH FRIENDSHIPS)

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** by close friends, family, online contacts, social media users, LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

PRODUCING, CONSUMING, OR SHARING VIOLENT EXTREMIST VIDEOS AND/OR PROPAGANDA

 **DIAGNOSTIC**; many other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to commit violence needed to confirm mobilization

 **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to terrorism and intent to take violent action

 **OBSERVABLE** except by family, friends, online and social media contacts, bystanders, and persons with access to computer search history, possibly LE

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOBILIZATION INDICATORS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(U//FOUO) WHAT IS A HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST?

(U//FOUO) A Homegrown Violent Extremist (HVE) is a violent extremist of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories, and who is acting independently of the direction of a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). Because HVEs are acting to further the goals of an FTO, they are considered foreign intelligence threats under the authorities of both the Intelligence Community and domestic public safety entities.

(U//FOUO) WHY WAS THIS BOOKLET CREATED?

(U//FOUO) We face a heightened threat environment in the United States as HVEs heed the call to violence from ISIL and other global jihadist groups.

- (U//FOUO) The rise of ISIL and an uptick in extremist travel and unsophisticated attacks—inspired in part by ISIL—prompted us to reexamine a set of violent mobilization indicators originally published in 2011.
- (U//FOUO) Recent HVE attacks in California, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas have added urgency to publishing this booklet.

(U//FOUO) We published this booklet to inform our federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement (LE) and private sector partners about what signals—or indicators—we judge HVEs, particularly those inspired or enabled by ISIL or al-Qa'ida, might display that could potentially be detected by first responder personnel and other people. We emphasize that many of these signals or indicators—some of which might involve constitutionally protected activities—may be insignificant on their own. However, when such signals or indicators are observed in combination with other suspicious behaviors, they may constitute a basis for reporting. LE action should not be taken solely based on the exercise of constitutionally protected activities or on the apparent race, ethnicity, national origin or religion of the subject, or on any combination of any such factors.

(U//FOUO) WHO IS THE BOOKLET'S TARGET AUDIENCE?

(U//FOUO) We tailored this booklet specifically for first responders, including LE, homeland security, and public safety officials. These officials are on the front line in their communities, are well positioned to notice suspicious behaviors outlined in the booklet, and have the potential to maintain regular engagement with members of their communities who may also witness indicators mentioned in the booklet.

(U//FOUO) If members of the public suspect—based on these indicators—that an individual is mobilizing to violence, they should contact LE.

(U//FOUO) HOW WAS THIS BOOKLET DEVELOPED? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'DIAGNOSTICITY?'

(U//FOUO) NCTC conceptualized this booklet with the help of an interagency focus group, including officers from the FBI, the DHS, cleared representatives of state and local LE agencies, and subject matter experts. We decided to broadly publish it for public safety officials, to address the obvious need to inform those on the front lines of the effort to detect violent extremists in the United States.

(U//FOUO) The group determined that the ideal manner of listing indicators would be by diagnosticity—the extent to which behaviors indicate violent mobilization – instead of by measuring how often the behaviors have been reported in past cases. The highest tier of behaviors would most likely indicate mobilization, behaviors in the middle tier would indicate mobilization when observed with other indicators, while the behaviors in the lowest tier would only likely indicate violent mobilization when combined with multiple other behaviors.

- (U//FOUO) An example of a Group A highest-tier behavior or hard indicator is the potential observation of an individual preparing and posting a last will or martyrdom video or statement to the Internet. The group judged that this behavior would be diagnostic on its own and may be observable if shared with or otherwise discovered by family, friends, and bystanders, and online and social media contacts.
- (U//FOUO) Examples of Group C lowest-tier behaviors or soft indicators would be those that on their own do not suggest mobilization, but when taken together would become more diagnostic. None of those behaviors, by themselves, conclusively signal violent mobilization.
- (U//FOUO) The behaviors noted in the booklet were based on a review of information derived from dozens of FBI terrorism investigations over the past three years and brainstorming sessions by focus group members.

(U//FOUO) WHY DOESN'T THIS BOOKLET INCLUDE VIOLENT WHITE SUPREMACISTS, VIOLENT ANARCHISTS, ETC.?

(U//FOUO) By law, the NCTC focuses on international terrorism, which includes people in the United States who are inspired or enabled by FTOs. Senior Intelligence Community officials judge that violent extremists inspired or enabled by ISIL and al-Qa'ida, including their allies and affiliates, are among the most lethal international terrorist threats to the Homeland. This booklet focuses on those actors.

(U//FOUO) Certainly, behaviors exist and are noted in this booklet that would be troubling regardless of whether they were motivated by a foreign terrorist organization, a domestic extremist group, or a personal grievance, (e.g., seeking religious or political justification for a violent act). However, this document is focused on individuals or groups that are inspired or enabled by ISIL, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates and allies.

(U//FOUO) WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMEONE REPORTS AN INDIVIDUAL IS ENGAGING IN BEHAVIORS THAT LINE UP WITH THE INDICATORS IN THIS BOOKLET? HOW SHOULD WE IMPLEMENT THE INFORMATION IN THIS BOOKLET?

(U//FOUO) NCTC cannot mandate action, however, we strongly encourage notification of the closest FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force and/or local state and local fusion center if a public safety officer reasonably believes—based on appropriate use of the information in this booklet—that an individual may be mobilizing to violence. For example, if public safety personnel observe either: Group A indicators on their own, or a cluster of Group B and C indicators that not only suggest mobilization toward violence, but also imply that the motivation for violence is based on violent extremist motivations; it is likely appropriate to inform LE agencies with investigative authorities via mechanisms like E-Guardian or Suspicious Activity Reporting.

(U//FOUO) CAN I PROVIDE THIS BOOKLET TO NON-PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIAL LIAISON PARTNERS SUCH AS RELIGIOUS LEADERS, MEDIA MEMBERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, ETC.?

(U//FOUO) This booklet, in its current form, is approved for release only to public safety officials.

(U//FOUO) However, many of the themes represented in the booklet are commonly featured in ongoing community engagement measures. Without directly referencing or distributing the booklet, public safety personnel are empowered to discuss measures to protect vulnerable populations within the communities they serve. This includes suggesting that community members seek assistance from public safety personnel if they notice specific individuals exhibiting or demonstrating concerning or suspicious behaviors.

(U//FOUO) WHY CAN'T THE FBI DO ALL OF THIS ITSELF; WHY INVOLVE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS?

(U//FOUO) We are all in this together. We continue to see that third-party bystanders—such as family members and peers—are often best positioned to witness signs of radicalization or mobilization to violence, but they are also the most resistant to reporting their concerns to the authorities. The intelligence and law enforcement communities have extremely little time to detect and disrupt plots. ISIL leaders know that they can have a real impact by motivating individuals to act in support of ISIL by carrying out attacks, even on a relatively modest scale, in their home or resident locations rather than the individual attempting to travel to ISIL-controlled areas. Public safety officials often are the first to receive reports that an individual may be considering violent action in the Homeland or overseas.

(U//FOUO) WHAT IS THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY OF THIS BOOKLET?

(U//FOUO) The indicators are ranked by diagnosticity, meaning the extent to which behaviors indicate violent mobilization. Although Group A indicators are most diagnostic, indicators in Groups B and C have great value as well and should not be discounted. The indicators in Groups B and C may not be as obviously linked to violent extremism, but, upon reviewing these indicators, public safety personnel may be more aware of the indicator's importance in suggesting an individual could be on the path toward mobilization to violence.

(U//FOUO) HOW CAN I TRAIN MY EMPLOYEES ON THIS INFORMATION?

(U//FOUO) NCTC is currently working to develop a "Train-the-Trainer" program that will equip you with the information needed to further disseminate these indicators to your workforce. Please contact us through the NCTC Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT@nctc.gov). You may also contact us via your local NCTC representative, FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, or state and local fusion center to find out more about these trainings. For further inquiries, please contact NCTCPAO@nctc.gov.

(U//FOUO) WILL THESE INDICATORS CHANGE OVER TIME? HOW WILL YOU DISSEMINATE UPDATED INDICATORS?

(U//FOUO) Many of these indicators have been found in HVE cases throughout the years despite evolving technology and greater online information sharing. In addition, the focus group had discussions about how the threat was evolving and reviewed indicators of such change (e.g., deleting social media, online accounts to avoid tracking by LE). As new indicators are identified and mobilization dynamics change, we will update this booklet and publish future editions.



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