

2017 EDITION

HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST

MOBILIZATION INDICATORS



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HVE MOBILIZATION BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

The indicators of violent extremist mobilization described herein are intended to provide a roadmap of observable behaviors that could inform whether individuals or groups are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities. This includes the potential for individuals to seek to travel overseas to join a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), such as the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) or al-Qa'ida. The indicators are grouped by their assessed levels of diagnosticity—meaning how clearly we judge the behavior demonstrates an individual's trajectory toward 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. NCTC emphasizes 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. Law enforcement 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.

BACKGROUND

By law, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) focuses on international terrorism. Senior Intelligence Community officials judge that violent extremists inspired or enabled by ISIS 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.

In 2014, an interagency analytic focus group, including experts from the Intelligence Community, and law enforcement 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 based on new indicators identified since the publication of the original booklet.



GROUP INDICATORS

GROUP A Indicators are very diagnostic on their own.

GROUP B Indicators are moderately diagnostic, more so when observed with other indicators.

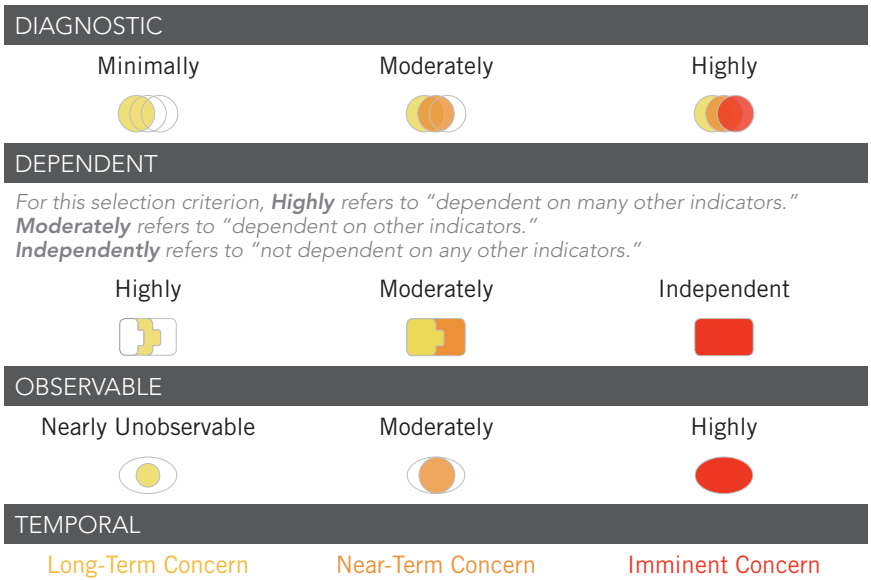
GROUP C Indicators are minimally diagnostic on their own and require the presence of other indicators to gain diagnosticity.

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



PREPARING AND DISSEMINATING A LAST WILL, MANIFESTO, 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



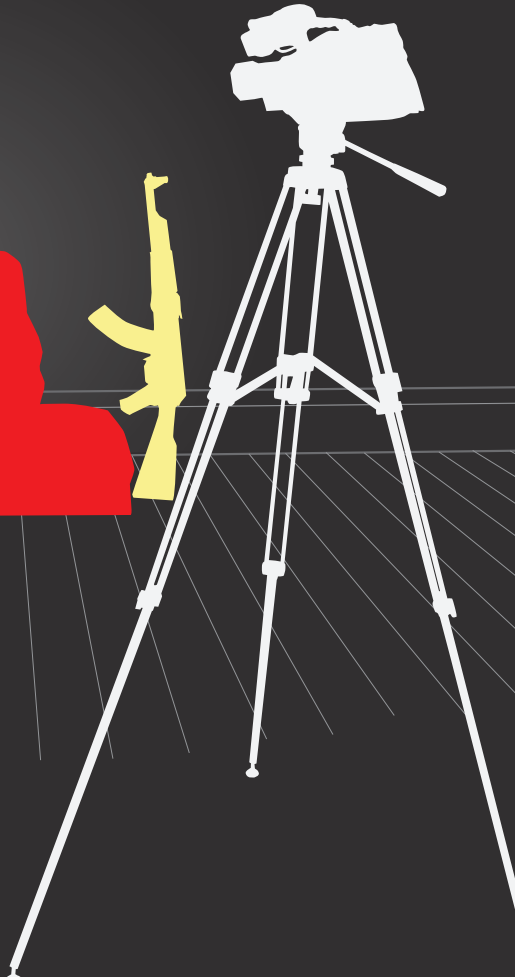
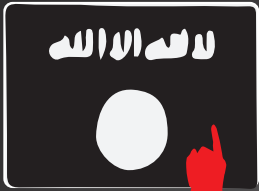
OBSERVABLE

IF SHARED WITH OR OTHERWISE DISCOVERED BY FAMILY,
FRIENDS, BYSTANDERS, AND 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 A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION



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 A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION



DIAGNOSTIC

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR



DEPENDENT

THIS BEHAVIOR ON ITS OWN IS A MOBILIZATION INDICATOR

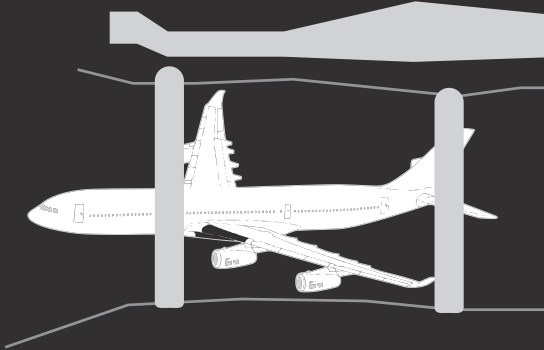


OBSERVABLE

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



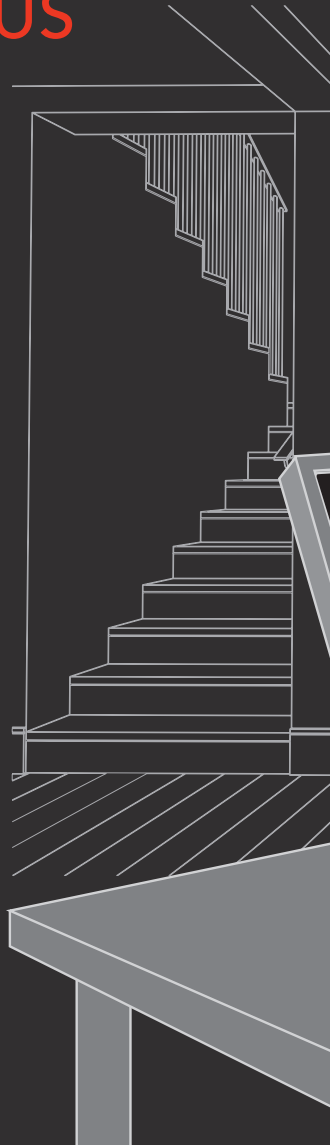
OBSERVABLE

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 PART OF LATE-STAGE PREPARATION FOR ACTION





ATTEMPTING TO MOBILIZE OTHERS, ESPECIALLY FAMILY MEMBERS AND 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

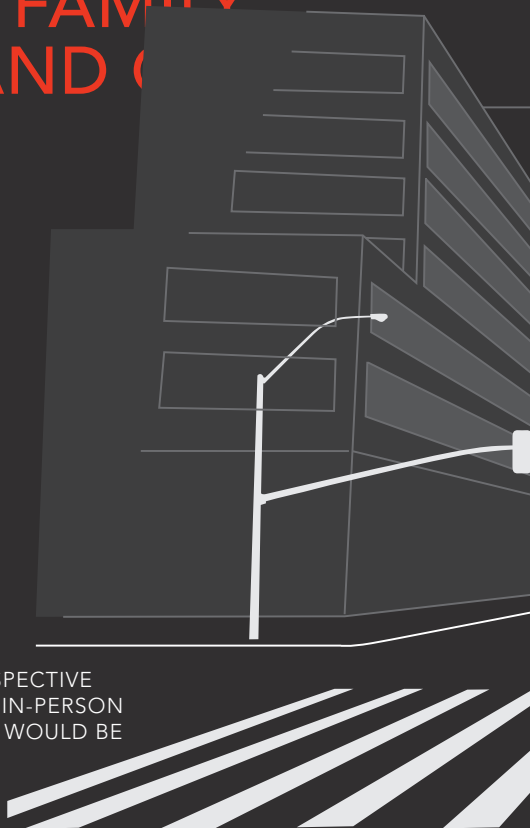


OBSERVABLE

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

TEMPORAL


(NEAR-TERM CONCERN)







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, law enforcement if alerted

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

LEAKAGE DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT OR INTENT TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENT EXTREMIST ACTIVITY (E.G., POSTING TERRORIST ICONS/FLAGS/IMAGES OF PROMINENT FIGURES TO SOCIAL MEDIA, PARTICULARLY AS A 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 TOWARD VIOLENCE, 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 part of late-stage preparation for action

CONDUCTING SUSPICIOUS FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS (E.G., UNUSUAL APPLICATIONS FOR CREDIT INCREASES 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, law enforcement


TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*) behavior is typically part of late-stage preparation for action

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, law enforcement, 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 EITHER TO MISREPRESENT LOCATION, OR HIDE VIOLENT 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 law enforcement 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 law enforcement 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

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, law enforcement, 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 ISIS 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, law enforcement

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, law enforcement

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., WEB/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, and 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, law enforcement

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

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 law enforcement

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 A CONFLICT ZONE TO FIGHT WITH OR SUPPORT AN FTO OR IDEALIZING LIVING AMONG VIOLENT JIHADISTS OVERSEAS

-  **DIAGNOSTIC;** depending on how explicit the aspiring traveler is regarding planned overseas activities
 -  **DEPENDENT** on other indicators pointing to violent action
 -  **OBSERVABLE** by family/friends, online contacts, travel agents, law enforcement
- 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, law enforcement with a warrant
- TEMPORAL** (*Long-Term Concern*)
-


ACQUIRING MAPS/BLEUPRINTS 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*)
-


INDICATORS

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

(AIRPORT, CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, 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*)

BEING OSTRACIZED, MARGINALIZED, OR EJECTED FROM FAMILY OR COMMUNITY FOLLOWING VIOLENT 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 law enforcement

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, law enforcement 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, law enforcement with a warrant

TEMPORAL (*Near-Term Concern*)

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 law enforcement, 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*)

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*)

BECOMING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED BY BREAKING CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY IF THE BREAK IS 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*)

REJECTING MAINSTREAM VOICES IN FAVOR OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGUES (E.G., ANWAR AWLAKI^{USPER}; 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 VIOLENT 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, HARASSING OR ABUSING 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 OR 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 law enforcement

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*)

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, law enforcement

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** by law enforcement, 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, law enforcement

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** by family, friends, online and social media contacts, bystanders, and persons with access to computer search history, possibly law enforcement

TEMPORAL (*Long-Term Concern*)

HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOBILIZATION INDICATORS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMIST?

A homegrown violent extremist (HVE) is a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), but who is acting independently of direction by an FTO. Because HVEs are acting to further the goals of an FTO, they are considered foreign intelligence threats under the authorities of the Intelligence Community and domestic public safety entities.

WHY WAS THIS BOOKLET CREATED?

We face a heightened threat environment in the United States as HVEs heed the call to violence from FTOs, including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and other violent jihadist groups.

- HVE attacks in California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas, as well as attacks in other Western countries, have added urgency to the publication of this booklet.

We published this booklet to inform our potential bystanders about what signals—or indicators—we judge HVEs, particularly those inspired or enabled by ISIS or al-Qa'ida, might display that could potentially be detected by first responder personnel and other people. As indicated earlier in this publication, NCTC emphasizes 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. Law enforcement 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.

If members of the public suspect—based on these indicators—that an individual is mobilizing to violence, they should contact law enforcement.

HOW WAS THIS BOOKLET DEVELOPED? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'DIAGNOSTICITY?'

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 law enforcement 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.

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 peer-reviewed academic studies concerning violent mobilization and active shooters, and on brainstorming sessions by focus group members.

WHY DOESN'T THIS BOOKLET INCLUDE VIOLENT NEO-NAZIS, VIOLENT ANTI-FASCIST GROUPS, VIOLENT SINGLE-ISSUE EXTREMISTS, VIOLENT ANTI-POLICE EXTREMISTS, ETC?

By law, 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 ISIS 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.

Certainly, behaviors exist and are noted in this booklet that would be troubling regardless of whether they were motivated by an FTO, a domestic violent extremist group, or a personal grievance, (e.g., seeking religious or political justification for a violent act), and may warrant contacting law enforcement. However, this document is focused on individuals or groups that are inspired or enabled by FTOs, including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates and allies.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK AN INDIVIDUAL IS ENGAGING IN BEHAVIORS THAT LINE UP WITH THE INDICATORS IN THIS BOOKLET?

NCTC cannot mandate action; however, the Center strongly encourages notification of the closest FBI office at <https://tips.fbi.gov> or via telephone at 1-800-CALLFBI. In case of an emergency, please call 9-1-1.

WHY CAN'T LAW ENFORCEMENT DO ALL OF THIS ITSELF; WHY INVOLVE THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

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.

Bystanders almost always are the first to detect hints that an individual may be considering violent action in the Homeland or overseas.



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