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Connecting the Dots Between American Islamic Converts, Homegrown Violent Extremists, and Members of the Islamic Guerillas of America: Phenomenological Exploration

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by
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Approval Page

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Acknowledgments

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my colleague, the late former FBI Special Agent Robert A. Levinson, who vanished, almost without a trace, on Iran's Kish Island in 2007. His family has accepted U. S. assessments that he died in captivity, but they have not been able to adequately say goodbye to the beloved husband, father, and grandfather.

No body. No burial. No peace. –*Journalist James Gordon Meek*

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Abstract

Connecting the Dots Between American Islamic Converts, Homegrown Violent Extremists, and Members of the Islamic Guerillas of America: Phenomenological Exploration. Joseph F. O'Brien, 2022: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: IGA, IRGC, FTO, HVE.

This autoethnographic qualitative study details the researcher's interest in the world of Islamic terrorism, which stemmed from the 2007 disappearance of a colleague in Iran, while on a rogue CIA mission. From the literature review, four basic themes emerged, which were applied to five case studies. One of the first scholarly articles encountered, speculated that the lack of empirical research and evidence in Islamic terrorism studies, may be caused by conceptual and methodological difficulties and pointed out that social phenomenon such as radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration are hard to conceptualize and measure. Also, there is no consensus regarding the causes of radicalization. This study attempted to resolve those difficulties by examining the culture of a particular group or subset of radicalized Islamic converts, using two Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE's) as participants. What emerged, from the manual qualitative narrative data analysis, was a Themes, Subthemes and Codes Table. The recurring issue of a lack of HUMINT on the part of U. S. intelligence agencies was addressed; personal narratives of the three participants were provided; a decades-old assassination cover-up was disclosed in both narrative and diagram forms and the study ends with conclusion and recommendation from the researcher and scholars. Hopefully the study's findings and recommendations will provide policy makers and law enforcement officials with a better understanding of the national security threat posed by Islamic terrorism.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Jihad is becoming as American as apple pie."

That was a quote from a 2010 post by Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born cleric who became a leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The fact is, far from being foreign infiltrators, most jihadist terrorists in the United States have been American citizens or legal residents. Moreover, while a range of citizenship statuses are represented, every jihadist who conducted a lethal attack inside the United States since 9/11 was a citizen or legal resident except one who was in the United States as part of a U.S.-Saudi training partnership (Bergen, 2021).

A few scholars from terrorism studies and the social psychology of religion disciplines reason that religious studies might be better suited than terrorism studies, but they both soon discover that there is no consensus concerning the causes of radicalization. Some scholars argue that the failure to understand this phenomenon stems from inadequately developed theoretical models.

Nature of the Research Problem

From 2001-2016, 85 percent of individuals charged with jihadist terrorism offenses in the U.S. were homegrown. Though converts comprise only 20 percent of the American Muslim population, a third of those accused of such offenses in the U.S. are Muslim converts, and more than half of the "Virginia Jihad Network" were domestic converts. That network was a group of young men in Northern Virginia that were accused and subsequently found guilty of conspiring to train and participate in violence overseas as foreign fighters once they returned home (New American Foundation, 2017).

At some point in their lives, the men of the "Virginia Jihad Network," like each of the nearly 400 other homegrown American jihadists, likely went through a change that moved them from ostensibly non-violent individuals to a willingness to support or engage in violent terrorism. (New America Foundation, 2017)

Social scientists often refer to this change as *radicalization.* However, scholars and policymakers disagree about whether these changes represent shifts in attitudes, behaviors, or both. Similarly, while social scientists have identified some of the mechanisms in the process, they still do not have a complete answer for why and how these changes occur (Newman, 2003) and identifying some of the processes and mechanisms of homegrown jihadist radicalization conversion in the U.S. is the premise of this dissertation.

The study of radicalization has evolved over the decades since researchers began exploring the issue in the 1970s. The earlier explanation for why some people chose to engage in terrorism focused mainly on individual psychologies, personalities, and cognitions. The suggestion was that the minds of terrorists are different than people in the general population. Terrorists were thought to be remorseless, aggressive, self-centered, and violent, suffering from such pathologies as psychopathy and sociopathy.

Later, theorists added such personality traits as paranoia and narcissism and began attributing their violence to uncontrollable psychological impulses and various innate character flaws and less to mental illness.

Nevertheless, their view that terrorists had characteristics such as aggression, intolerance, and suspicion still gave credence to the idea that terrorists have little agency in their path to violence (Horgan, 2014). By the 1990s, individual-level theories of

radicalization matured, giving way to more nuanced psychological theories suggesting that individual cognitive styles and choices resulted in terrorism (Victoroff, 2005)

Terrorism scholars subsequently began to posit that poverty, lack of education, dictatorial regimes, occupation, along with Western intervention and influence in traditional Islamic societies, were causing feelings of deprivation, anger, and alienation. This era of scholarship led to theories postulating a culture war between Western and Islamic societies. Israel's occupation of Palestine and globalization have fomented a "clash of civilizations" between the West and the Islamic world (Huntington, 1993), the ghettoization of Muslim immigrants in Europe, failed integration, and Islamophobia-caused terrorist attacks (Leiken, 2005).

Beginning in the mid-2000s, after researchers could not identify a single terrorist profile that could point to underlying psychological or socioeconomic motivators for terrorism, they began to realize that there was a serious problem with their former radicalization theories, which focused only on individual psychological and structural strains. They also began to recognize that many people have the same or more severe psychological and structural experiences as terrorists but do not go out into society and commit political violence. Ultimately, terrorism scholars began to come to the consensus that radicalization is not mono-casual. Instead, it is a complex, multi-faceted process involving many variables, which, over time, move people toward violent thoughts and actions (Horgan, 2014).

What terrorism researchers generally come away with is that the motivations of jihadists in the United States are complicated to disentangle. It is not clear if there will ever be a straightforward answer to that question. Complaints regarding American

foreign policy play a role, as does religious ideology, but so do profoundly personal attributes.

Some jihadists appear to follow understandable paths of radicalization, while others do not, and often there is no logical explanation for their choices in life. Overall, it does not appear that jihadists are simply mentally ill or criminal by nature. In the end, as Immanuel Kant put it, “From the crooked tree timber of humanity, not a straight thing was ever made.”

With this new perspective, several scholars built radicalization process models to explain how many different factors move people from non-radical to radical. These new models introduced a complex series of stages, such a Randy Borum’s heuristic four-stage model and Fathali Moghaddam's five-stage model of relative deprivation and moral disengagement, in which cognitive mechanisms and social factors interact in the process of radicalization. These models and others like them will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.

A March 2021 newspaper article stunned its readers. Entitled *Iranian Terrorists Claim to Have Active Cells in Washington, D.C.*, the journalist reported that Iranian militia groups claim to have active cells of operatives stationed in Washington, D.C. and other U.S. cities, according to chatter overheard from online forums used by these groups. Iranian "resistance cells are rooted even in America and its capital," and terror factions associated within Iran are growing stronger, attracting more support than ever before. The group demanded the United States withdraw all of its troops from Iraq and the Middle East. The post included caskets containing U.S. soldiers (Kredo, March 2021).

That recent, somewhat alarming article might well have been written 40 years ago, had journalists been aware of what was essentially a sleeper cell operating out of a radical Washington, D. C mosque at the time. (The use of the term "sleeper cell" referring to a domestic terrorist group did not become commonly used until 2001, following the September 11 attacks carried out by members of the terror group al-Qaeda living in the United States.)

Former Washington, D. C. Islamic militant terror group, the Iranian-backed Islamic Guerillas of America (IGA), also known as Majlis-as Shura or The Council of Guidance, operated during the period of the Iranian Revolution (January 1978 to February 1979 and its aftermath), which coincides with the Carter administration (1977 to 1981) and which is the primary focus of this study.

This study explored this barely known organization whose members engaged in criminal activity to support themselves and the cause of the Iranian Revolution, including bank and jewelry store robberies, arson, assault, joining forces with Hanafi Muslims, and affecting the terrorist take-over of three U.S. government buildings in Washington, D. C. together with the Statue of Liberty and even cold-blooded murder on U. S. soil.

The IGA, was perhaps the most violent and consequential Iranian-backed domestic organization of its time. Despite that fact, this organization has never been the subject of research until now. In fact, NSU's own Dr. Dustin Berna's PhD Research concentrated on Middle Eastern Politics, Islamic Fundamentalism, religious extremism, social movements, terrorism, and political institutions. He wrote the Encyclopedia of Islamic Fundamentalist Movements, which included a two-volume encyclopedia which categorized, described, and explained the ideological and biographical backgrounds of

more than 700 known Islamic Fundamentalist Movements that had been in operation since 1970. The IGA was not one of them; not even mentioned (Berna, 2012). Also noteworthy is the fact that the IGA produced Dawud Salahuddin who, upon committing murder on behalf of the Iran Revolution, officially became the "First American Islamic Jihadist Terrorist."

The IGA, together with its two founders and two of its former leaders, will be identified as a domestic terrorist group and homegrown violent extremists (HVEs)/foreign fighters and constitute the five case studies. The IGA, the subject of the first case study, comprised primarily of African American Jihadists (Islamic fundamentalists who supported armed violent confrontation and advocated the assassinations of high-ranking U.S. government officials.) In July of 1980, the U.S. Justice Department estimated IGA membership at 30 and growing. Members included many "born again" black Muslims, recruited from veteran groups, Washington, D. C. correctional institutions, Lorton Penitentiary in Virginia, street gangs, and Howard University, Muslim Student Associations (MSA), a traditionally predominantly black institution.

Some of the group's original artifacts include its manifesto entitled *Thoughts and Strategies of Islamic Guerilla Warfare in the United States.* In addition, the IGA, well-trained in using explosives and firearms, studied the Irish Republican Army (IRA) type of terrorist tactics, similar to those used against the British Government in Northern Ireland.

When the Violence Policy Center (VPC) looked into firearms training for Jihad in America, they obtained a copy of a document reportedly found in a terrorist safe

house in Kabul, Afghanistan. The six-page document, entitled *How Can I Train Myself for Jihad,* advises that "military training is an obligation in Islam upon every sane, male, mature Muslim, whether rich or poor, whether studying or working or living in a Muslim or non-Muslim country" (Anonymous).

It offers tips on various ways to make "suitable preparations for battle," including physical training, martial arts, survival, and outdoor training, firearms training, and military training. The pamphlet notes the advantages the United States, in particular, offers for firearm training and advises readers on how to exploit them.

A few years ago, many Americans were surprised, especially in a post 9/11 world, when the Christian Action Network released a video based on their over 2-year investigation of the spread of homegrown terrorists. Entitled "The Soldiers of Allah," the video describes how El Shiekh Mubarak Ali Gilani established 35 Islamic guerilla warfare terrorist training camps in America's backyard, including upstate New York, Georgia, Michigan, Washington State, and South Carolina.

These para-military training camps comprised between 25 -35 acres and were owned and operated by the group Muslims of America. There, would-be holy warriors prepared themselves for jihad by learning various guerilla warfare tactics, including scaling mountains, subduing enemies, murdering guards, hijacking cars, weapons training, and setting off explosives. Sheik Gilani, who set up these compounds, was perhaps best known as the man who also set up Wall Street Journalist Daniel Pearl to be kidnapped, tortured, and ultimately beheaded in Pakistan in February 2002.

One of the IGA's founders, Bahram Nahidian, a Washington, D. C.- based, radical Imam and alumnus of Howard University, is the subject of the second case study.

This cleric need not have excelled in Psychology 101 to quickly recognize that many of his fellow students, particularly those of color, felt marginalized and disaffected in American society, which was something the Iman thought he could exploit. Later, as an alumnus, he maintained a strong affiliation with the university, primarily through its MSA. When he eventually became emersed in the cause of the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, one of this charismatic Imam's favorite IGA-recruiting methods was to use the racial and civil unrest in the United States to enlist those black Howard University students and others so inclined, whom he was able to convince, had a far greater calling in life than that offered by their own country. That calling was, naturally, Islam, and Imam Nahidian, their spiritual leader, was there to teach them how the Quran would show them the way.

The IGA's co-founder, Said Ramadan, is the subject of the third case study. Ramadan, an Egyptian lawyer, political activist and humanitarian was one of the prominent leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. He was the son-in-law of the Muslim Brotherhood founder and emerged as one of the Brotherhood's main leaders in the 1950's. Ramadan and Salahuddin became quite close friends. Salahuddin considered Ramadan his mentor and Ramadan trusted Salahuddin as his personal bodyguard whenever he visited the United States, which was often.

IGA rhetoric included such things as "We're fighting American Imperialism and Zionism, the system that created the Shah." Discontent with the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, known as the Shah of Iran, the exile of Ruhollah Khomeini, social justice, religious motives, and other reasons were the primary causes of the Iranian Revolution.

IGA members were also fond of quoting traditional revolutionary rhetoric such as "freedom comes from the mouth of a gun" and "we bargain in the name of God; we work in the name of God; we will kill in the name of God." In July of 1980, in an upscale Bethesda, Maryland, neighborhood, one of Nahidian's top African American lieutenants did just that and has been an American-born, Iranian international terrorist/fugitive, wanted by the FBI, ever since.

That individual HVE/foreign fighter, David Belfield, whose Muslim name is Dawud Salahuddin, is the subject of the fourth case study. Upon committing murder, on behalf of the Iranian Revolution, Salahuddin officially became "the first American Islamic terrorist." After successfully escaping, he went directly to Geneva, Switzerland where he met with Said Ramadan, his mentor. Ramadan subsequently paved the way for Salahuddin to enter Tehran where he was greeted by Ayatollah Khomeini and given a high-level position in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Salahuddin was assigned to a special unit of the IRGC known as the Quds Force. The Quds Force is one of five branches of Iran's IRGC specializing in unconventional warfare and military intelligence operations. It has been described by U.S. Intelligence sources as an organization analogous to a combination of the CIA and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in the United States.

Responsible for extra territorial operations, the Quds Force supports nonstate actors in many countries, including Lebanese, Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the state of Palestine's Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Yemeni Houthis, and Shi Militias and Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. While assigned to the Quds Force, Salahuddin's missions included fighting with the mujahideen in Afghanistan with another IGA

member, Cleven Holt, also known as Isa Abdulla Ali who is the subject of the fifth case study.

The Quds Force reports directly to the Supreme Leader of Iran, the Ayatollah. The United States Secretary of State designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Quds Force as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) based on the IRGC's "continued support of and engagement in terrorist activity around the world." This was the first time that the United States ever designated another government's department as a FTO.

Among those missions, according to their own personal accounts as related to this student, Salahuddin and Ali were sent on a special one to Tripoli to personally warn then Libya leader Muammar Gaddafi not to undertake any terrorist attacks without first coordinating with Tehran. These missions were accomplished under aliases, with Salahuddin on the FBI's Most Wanted list the entire time.

Also, as a foreign fighter, Ali initially joined the Amal militia and was a major player in the Lebanese Civil War throughout the 1980s. After that, he joined Hezbollah and the mujahideen and fought alongside the Salahuddin in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

According to Salahuddin, Ali "played a major role" in the bombing that destroyed the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport that killed hundreds of Americans.

In the 1990s, then in his late 40s, Ali returned to the Islamic fight in Bosnia. According to terrorism expert Joseph Bodansky, Ali lived in Sarajevo, under an assumed name, with his funding "covered in part by Osama bin Laden." In 1995, according to Salahuddin, Ali spent time in Tuzla, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, where he gathered an

"American force" of more than two dozen Islamist fighters and "planned attacks against U.S. forces."

The threat posed by terrorists, both international and domestic, has evolved significantly since 9/11. There are people in this world who, for various reasons, abandon their religion, assuming they ever subscribed to one, and converted to Islam. They represent a small percentage of the Muslim communities in Western countries. Small as that percentage may be, research suggests that converts include a disproportionally large number of individuals who become Islamist extremists/militants and engage in terrorism.

In fact, in Western democracies, Muslim converts are generally overrepresented in Islamic terrorism compared to born-and-raised Muslims. Consequently, researchers have begun to consider just how the process of conversion to Islam might influence participation in terrorism by HVEs. Yet, empirical data is lacking. Thus, to explore these conversions, along with the closely-related foreign fighter phenomenon, this present study measured the conversion experiences of several HVEs/foreign fighters and their willingness to engage in radicalism and violence.

In his speech before a Senate committee in 2018, FBI Director Christopher Wray emphasized that "The threats posed by foreign fighters, including those recruited from the U.S., are very dynamic. We will continue to identify individuals who seek to join the ranks of foreign fighters traveling in support of ISIS, those foreign fighters who attempt to return to the United States and HVEs who may aspire to attack the United States from within." One of those foreign fighters, whom Director Wray was referring to that day, not only attempted but somehow succeeded in returning to the U. S., apparently

undetected by American intelligence agencies, on more than one occasion. That individual would be U. S. Army veteran Isa Abdulla Ali.

Ali used his previous military training to set up an IGA terrorist training camp in Northern Virginia, where he trained over 30 IGA members, including Imam Nahidian and assassin Dawud Salahuddin, in guerilla warfare tactics and the use of firearms, similar to the camps set up across the country decades later by Sheikh Gilani for the Al Qaeda 9/11 terrorists.

Wray continued, “The FBI assesses HVEs are the most significant terrorism threat to the homeland. They have been radicalized primarily in the U.S. and are not receiving individualized direction from foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). We face significant challenges in identifying and disrupting HVE’s, partly due to their lack of direct connections with an FTO, ability to mobilize rapidly, and the use of encrypted communications (FBI Director Wray, 2018).

As the majority of coverts to Islam never become radicalized or resort to terrorism, the following research questions emerge:

1. what are the social determinants, including but not limited to, the economic, political, educational, religious, psychological, and ideological components that create the mindsets of potential Islamic terrorists?
2. What led members of the IGA, during the period of the Iranian Revolution, to fight, kill innocents, and risk almost certain death in the name of Islam, their newfound religion?; and
3. How do terrorist activities, like those engaged in by the IGA four decades ago, pose threats to the national security of the United States, today?

Similar to the lack of research on the IGA, this topic has never been the subject of serious scholarly research or congressional investigation. It is assumed that the primary reason for this is the difficulty of accessing primary sources. However, there may be a more sinister reason for the complete lack of public knowledge in these matters. This study reveals for the first time the U.S. Government's complicity and its "soft" direction and support for the IGA. That support came from the very highest levels of the U.S. Government including the U.S. Department of Justice, the CIA, the FBI, the U.S. State Department and the Presidency itself. This complicity was apparently for purely political reasons and what followed was a four-decades old cover-up. That support may have well aided and abetted the murder of former Shah of Iran's attaché which was committed in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. These surreptitious dealings have been one of the U.S. Government's closely guarded secrets at least up to this point.

In the interest of justice and adding to American history, there is a long-overdue need to finally set the record straight; develop a deep understanding of this essential yet under-explored topic and its implications; empirical evidence to which this researcher has unprecedented, primary source access.

Barriers & Issues

Considering the numbers of Islamic converts, analyzed per existing studies, ranging from a handful to several dozen, empirical insights into the life stories and motivations of (would-be) convert foreign fighters are fewer still (Van San, 2015).

The initial plan to interview a representative number of "militants" as primary sources has been scrapped, based on early feedback from the dissertation committee members, mainly because the IRB would likely not have approved of such interviews.

That barrier removed, there was sufficient literature and research conducted on known extremists to obtain such a representative sample. Even more significant is the fact that this student has compiled a virtual treasure trove of terrorism-related government documents from the U.S. State Department of State, law enforcement personnel, journalists, intelligence officials, and FOIA requests.

There are also hundreds of pages of correspondence, including the researcher's copious and contemporaneous hand-written notes and recorded international telephone calls from the Middle East and elsewhere, collected from such American Jihadists as Salahuddin, Ali and others over the past few years. (In the interest of full disclosure, Dawud Salahuddin wrote one of the three recommendation letters the researcher needed when applying for this Ph.D. program.)

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative autoethnographic study was to explore the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. The findings generated from this study could aid authorities in generating adequate procedures to mitigate threats from terrorism and safeguard the American public. This chapter details a description of the research methodology. The sections that are included in the chapter are the following: (a) research methodology and design; (b) role of the researcher; (c) participants, recruitment, and sampling; (d) instrumentation; (e) data collection; (f) data analysis; (g) trustworthiness; and (h) ethical considerations. The summary of the research methodology is presented in the conclusion of the chapter.

Definition of Terms

Terrorism

"The unlawful use of—or threatened use of—force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives (U.S. DOD, 2015).

Convert

A "person with a religious but non-Islamic or non-religious background who adopts Muslim identity" (Karagiannis, 2012).

Jihad

Struggle or effort. Muslims use the word to describe three different kinds of struggle: A believer's internal struggle to live out the Muslim life as well as possible; the struggle to build a good Muslim society; and Holy War: the struggle to defend Islam with force if necessary.

Radicalization

The process of acquiring and holding radical, extremist, or jihadist beliefs.

Socioeconomic status

The social standing or class of an individual or group, often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources and issues related to privilege, power, and control (adapted from APA's Socioeconomic Status Office publications.)

Political factors

For purposes of this study, synonymous with “patriotism,” defined as the belief in American exceptionalism and the view that the United States is the greatest country in the world (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a long and complicated relationship, beginning in the mid-to-late 19th century when Persia was first known to the West as Iran. For the past 40 years, since the Iranian revolution, the U.S. has attributed the worsening of relations to the 1979–81 hostage crisis, Iran's repeated human rights abuses, and its worldwide-threatening nuclear ambitions.

Iran and the U.S. have had no formal diplomatic relations since April of 1980; (not coincidentally the exact period in time that this study centers around). Pakistan serves as Iran's protecting power in the U.S., while Switzerland serves that function for the United States in Iran. Contacts are carried out through the Iranian Interests Section of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D. C., and the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Tehran. In August 2018, the Supreme Leader of Iran Ali Khamenei officially banned direct talks with the United States.

This study focuses on describing the culture of a particular group or subset of radicalized Islamist converts, also referred to as Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs). The group was formed in the Washington, D. C. metropolitan area in connection with the Iranian Revolution. Based on the literature review of 46 scholarly articles on Islamic terrorism, the group is an under-researched social phenomenon.

Silke & Veldhuis (2017) speculated that the lack of empirical research and evidence may be caused by conceptual and methodological difficulties and pointed out that social phenomena such as radicalization, recruitment, rehabilitation, and reintegration are hard to conceptualize and measure.

One of the first scholarly articles I encountered, when I began research into this topic was by (Shuurman et al., 2016), from the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in the Hague. He concluded that, although converts to Islam represent a small percentage of the Muslim community in Western countries, when it comes to Islamist extremism and terrorism, he found that "research has suggested that converts are considerably overrepresented."

The Four Themes that Emerged from the Literature Review

At least four themes emerged from the review: (1) Assessing, Converting, Grooming, and Radicalizing converts to Islam, (2) the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon, (3) the role of female converts to radical/militant Islam and (4) Lone-Wolf terrorists.

Europol, the European Union law enforcement agency, a government agency headquartered in The Hague and GLOBEC, is a non-partisan, non-governmental think tank involved in global security and headquartered in Slovakia.

According to these two organizations, both of whom track violent extremist offenders (VEOs), the number of such terrorists charged with, arrested, or incarcerated for terrorism-related offenses has increased steadily. This increase is due, in part, to the increased number of offender categories (including lone actors, foreign fighter returnees, sympathizers, and homegrown terrorists) against the backdrop of civil war in Syria and Iraq and the rise and decline of ISIS (Europol, 2018; GLOBSEC, 2018).

Assessing, Converting, Grooming, Radicalizing Converts to Islam

A report written by the (Minaret of Freedom Institute, 2007) discussed how discontent with one's socio-economic and political status is only part of the radicalization equation. Instead, it is a four-step process involving (a) cognitive opening, (b) religious

seeking, (c) framing, and (d) socialization. The report provides essential information on why some Muslims become radicalized, why some go further and join radical organizations, and others commit acts of terrorism.

In his book, *Milestones Along the Road*, Egyptian Islamist author (Sayyid Qutb, 1964) cited new military conquests of non-Muslims that inspired many terrorist attacks in the mid-1990s by violent insurgent groups. Brandon (2009) described Qutb's "manifesto for revolutionary Islamism" as a significant source of jihadist literature of its day. In a December 2009 CTC Sentinel article, Brandon wrote about the radicalization process in prison, pointing out that most new extremists take an average of 5–7 years to become fully violent. Brandon illustrated how these individuals could exploit, for their own ends, the psychological impact and shock that new inmates experience on entering the prison system, as well as the difficulties individuals experience in coming to terms with daily life and the confirmed social interaction possible within the prison environment.

A month earlier, Brandon had written another article for the Quilliam Report citing a few examples of radical Islamic recruitment within the prison system, including Richard Reid, the 2001 "shoe bomber" who converted to Islam in prison in the mid-1990s. Examples of imprisoned convicted terrorists included John Walker Lindh, the "American Taliban" captured in Afghanistan in 2001. Brandon's research results were of particular interest to this student because much of the assessing, grooming, and radicalizing of converts to Islam engaged in by the "Imam" was conducted in the Washington, D. C. metropolitan prison system or by his primary, go-to convert and "assassin," Dawud Salahuddin.

Meanwhile, (Veldhuis & Silke (2017) revealed the risks that radicalization and violent extremism, particularly in religion and ideology, have traditionally played in prison. These authors went on to confirm the initial assertion that, despite the scholarly and policy attention paid to violent extremists, the amount and quality of empirical research into these matters are still insufficient.

Just as many of the members of IGA were recruited from local D.C. prisons, several of those ended up back in prisons years later, having led lives of crime, including, but not limited to, acts of terrorism.

Western Jihadism Project (2015) is a good example. Their data collection detailed demographic records of Western citizens and residents who have been convicted of terrorist acts on behalf of or inspired by Al Qaeda. From this larger dataset, the authors identified a subset of American "homegrown" Jihadists, including in this category only individuals who were born in and raised in the United States or arrived in that country before the age of 16 and therefore were assumed to have been radicalized in the U.S.

To foreground my study of African-American men and (to a limited extent) women and their religious conversion to militant Islam, I draw on several studies exploring the socio-economic and political factors that create the mindset of an American jihadist. Among them are (Sam Mullins' *Re-Examining the Involvement of Converts in Islamist Terrorism: A Comparison of the U.S. and U.K.*,2005), (Michael King's *The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence, Terrorism and Political Violence* , 2011), and (Selene Campion's *Tow 2ard a Behavioral Model of "Homegrown" Radicalization Trajectories* 2016).

According to previous research, Mullins' study determined that American converts to Islamist Terrorism were worse off than non-converts on socio-economic measures. In addition to their social and economic deprivation, a high number also suffer from mental health problems. Contrary to Mullins' findings, American converts to Islamist terrorism suffer from mental issues (Sandler, 2014) presented an analytical study of terrorism that views all agents as rational decision-makers. Based on his analytical review of literature on terrorism, the author presents what he views as the five areas of intense research interest: terrorist attack trends, the economic consequences of terrorism, the study of counterterrorism effectiveness, the causes of terrorism, and the relationship between domestic and transnational terrorism.

King (2011) concluded that three factors likely contribute to the radicalization process: (a) affective reactions to group relative deprivation, (a) management of identities, and (c) personality characteristics. However, King would disagree with Mullins on at least one issue, claiming that he had successfully challenged long-held assumptions about the root causes of terrorism through empirical verification. Those assumptions went from psychopathy to demographics and poverty, both of which were largely disproved. According to King, jihadists worldwide were often seen as psychologically stable and from the middle class.

Campion (2010) took a different approach. Using a model developed by other researchers for "homegrown terrorists" and used by the NYPD, the author developed a dynamic risk assessment model for such extremists. She determined that behaviors are ideology-specific, but social background and demographics (e.g., age and gender) also

shape the behaviors of terrorist offenders. Based on extensive research, she estimated that there were 300 homegrown Muslim terrorists in the U.S as recently as 5 years ago.

Recruitment to Islam and the subsequent radicalization process are explained in three additional sources. Borum (2012) two-part series entitled “Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories” and “Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research” deal with the radicalization process. The first volume draws on existing social science theory to assist researchers in asking more focused questions about radicalization into violent extremism (VE). In contrast, the second volume presents three separate models, showing a progression to terrorism. His analysis is based on in-depth studies of “several hundred individuals, known to be involved in, or closely associated with, violent extremist activity, ranging from fundraising to the planning of suicide bombings.” Moghaddam (2006) argued to Americans that contemporary Islamic terrorists, contrary to popular belief, are not generally crazy or suicidal from a social psychology perspective. Instead, they become terrorists because their repressive societies allow for their need for identity to be fulfilled, only through such relatively autonomous Islamic organizations as terrorist cells.

Kleinmann (2011), 5 years later, answered questions about the mechanism and process that lead to radicalization for Muslim converts and non-converts in the U.S. He explained the many and diverse reasons why people violently radicalize by categorizing several theories scholars pose. Out of 83 case studies, individual-level factors were found to be more prevalent among converts than non-converts. Group-level processes similarly affect both groups. Mass-level mechanisms are not significant factors in radicalization.

Lee (2011) produced “Who Becomes a Terrorist? Poverty, Education, and Origins of Political Violence.” Like many studies of the social backgrounds of terrorists, he has found that they are wealthier and better educated than the population from which they are drawn. However, studies of political behavior have shown that all forms of political involvement are correlated with socio-economic status. Among those who are politically active, opportunity costs may lead those involved in nonviolent activities to have a higher social status than violent individuals with a similar ideological orientation. This article develops a theory of participation in violence that incorporates both opportunity costs and informational barriers to participation and tests it by comparing violent and nonviolent political activists involved in the anti-colonial agitation in Bengal (1906–1939) using data from their police files.

Exploring the causes of terrorism, Crenshaw’s (1981) study is organized around three central questions: why terrorism occurs, how the process of terrorism works, and what its social and political effects are. She presents a unique causation approach in her terrorism study, which distinguishes a common pattern of causation
from a historical perspective.

Regarding the problem of defining “terrorism,” three additional scholars view the subject from a somewhat different perspective. Scholar Boaz Ganor asked the question, “Is One Man’s Terrorist Another Man’s Freedom Fighter?” (Ganor, 2010).

Five years later, Gilbert Ramsay described “Why terrorism can, but should not be defined” (Ramsay, 2015). He sought to “turn the debate about the definition of terrorism on its head” by arguing, among other things, that terrorism scholars have largely missed the really interesting question about the word, namely: Why is it that, given the

heterogeneous purposes and contexts for which the term is used, we nonetheless "continue to use a single word for all?" In other words, "How is it that we continue to know terrorism when we see it?"

Then, in 2017, an article appeared the *American Journal of Political Science* entitled "How the Public Defines Terrorism." The authors pointed out that although political scientists have offered a variety of conceptual frameworks, they have neglected to explore how ordinary citizens understand terrorism and government action in the wake of violence. These two authors synthesize components of scholarly definitions and public debates to formulate predictions of how various incidents affect the likelihood they are perceived as terrorism (Huff & Kertzer, 2017).

In terms of an analysis of religious conversion to Islam, several studies deal with that issue. Rambo (2021) provided what he refers to as seven steps in the conversion process: context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences, while Kose (1996) offered the first ethnographic study, which explores the different factors and venues that lead to some seventy native British Muslim converts.

Zabiri's (2008) book *British Muslim Converts: Choosing Alternative Lifestyles* goes into the post-conversion stage of converts' social and cultural roles, exclusively within the European Islam context. The results of those studies added significantly to my understanding of the important role that the Islam religion plays in the Muslim conversion process in the West. One ethnographic study that treats conversion to Islam in the U.S. is that of Robert (Dannin,2002) entitled "Black Pilgrimage to Islam," which explored the history and experiences of African-American converts from the early 1920s to the late 1990s.

Dannin (2002) analyzed the primary factors that prompted black Americans' conversions to Islam as a way of connecting to what he terms the "unchurched culture of early slaves from West African." He then provided an interesting analysis of African-American inmates in Green Haven State Prison in New York. A second ethnographic study of this issue was conducted by (Ahmed, 2010) in his work entitled *Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam.*

Foreign Fighter Phenomenon

In response to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and European Union (E.U.) guidelines, many governments have criminalized a range of preparatory offenses related to one's arrangements to travel to Middle Eastern countries and joining or supporting terrorist groups (van de Heide, 2015). Incarcerated Violent extremists (VEs) are supposed to be kept behind bars for public safety. However, prisons can turn out to be "hotbeds for radicalization". Medi Nemmouche (Counter Extremism Project, 2019), the perpetrator of the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014, and Amedy Coulibaly (Counter Extremist Project, 2019), who murdered a police officer and four visitors to a Jewish supermarket in Paris in 2015, were both radicalized in prison. Indeed, many European foreign fighters have been imprisoned before joining violent extremist groups (Thijs et al., 2018)

Moghaddam (2006) also attributed U.S. policy in the Middle East and its ally, Israel's repression of Palestine, to the United States becoming an inevitable target. This explains the foreign fighter phenomenon, often associated with hometown Islamic terrorist organizations, including the IGA. For example, one IGA member, Isa Abdullah Ali, known as the "American Jihadist" (Subject of Case Study #5), left a Washington,

D.C. ghetto and went to fight in proxy wars for Iran in Afghanistan and Lebanon, reportedly killing nearly 200 enemy combatants.

Williams (2018) reported that the United States had witnessed a dramatic increase in domestic arrests connected to foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) in the wake of the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). He questioned why ISIL was so much more successful than its predecessor, al Qaeda, in recruiting individuals within the United States and wondered if ISIL may have appealed to a different segment of the population or whether it simply made its pitch more effectively. Williams took a data-driven approach to look at the demographic profile of all publicly known individuals within the United States who have been connected to Islamist FTOs. Whereas previous research has typically examined data segments, these researchers took an expansive approach to all cases in the 16 years following 9/11, regardless of the individuals' roles in an organization—direct terrorist operative, homegrown violent extremist, foreign fighter, financier, and/or facilitator.

"Mobilization Indicators: Homegrown Violent Extremists" (2019), described observable behaviors that could help determine whether individuals or groups are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities, such as conducting an attack or traveling overseas to join a foreign terrorist organization. Indicators are grouped by "diagnosticity"— how clearly the researchers assessed the behaviors as demonstrating an individual's likelihood of engaging in terrorist activity.

Hegghammer (2013), in an article entitled "Should I Stay or Should I Go": Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," explored the conflict within jihadists to understand their

motivations when trying to decide whether to conduct militant attacks at home or join insurgencies abroad. His study shows tentative data that indicated jihadists prefer foreign fighting.

The Role of Female Converts to Radical/Militant Islam

Ramahi (2017) explored the relationship between female converts to Islam in Britain and their close friends and family. She explains the perspectives on converts but also focuses on the reactions of their intimates to the conversion. The converts become "intimate strangers" through conversion: estranged on the level of understanding and belief but intimate on an emotional level.

Van San 2015) examined eight cases of Belgian and Dutch converts who joined the Islamic State. She concluded that most female converts in her sample, who joined, turned to Islam due to behavioral issues or traumatic events in their youth, such as being abandoned by their parents. "It was their way of leaving that part behind and seeking forgiveness."

Smith (2018) explained this phenomenon of female converts to Islam engaging in violence against innocents, generally accompanied by their male counterparts. Smith pointed out that such individuals may also begin to identify themselves as terrorists and engage in activities that highlight their commitments to their new beliefs, identities, and/or others who hold them. It is, however, essential to note that while these beliefs and behaviors may facilitate the movement to terrorism, this outcome is not inevitable. The author also discovered that those close to these individuals might become aware of the changes that their friends and family members are undergoing and attempt to address them or seek help from others who can. An important implication is that trusted

information and resources need to be available to assist in this effort. Another is that prevention and intervention efforts may benefit from addressing beliefs that justify violence and helping individuals develop identities in which these beliefs are not central.

Lone-Wolf Terrorist Threat

Based on the idea that lone-wolf terrorists may have characteristics in common with two other types of lone-actor violent offenders: assassins and school attackers (McCauley et al., 2013) found that those characteristics include perceived grievances, depression, a personal crisis ("unfreezing"), and a history of weapons use outside the military. These characteristics may help distinguish lone wolves from group-based terrorists.

While exploring the issue of female converts, one would be remiss not to recognize yet another serious problem confronting national security experts, that of lone-wolf or lone offender terrorists. (Applegate, 2016) cited a poll from the(Washington Post , 2016) that "86% of Americans are very concerned or somewhat concerned that about lone offender terrorist attacks in which individuals in the U .S. decide to take terrorist action on their own." In particular, she warned of the threats these homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) posed and pointed out that although aimed more at Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, widespread media coverage has generated significant concern in the United States, and policy-makers should be aware of this threat.

Anders Behring Breivik, a lone wolf terrorist, killed 77 people in two terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011. Applegate's (2016) study used the framing theory from social movement studies to compare Breivik's Manifesto with the rhetoric of the anti-Islamic movement. It contended that the movement has a dual and sometimes inconsistent

collective action framing. On the one hand, they portray Islam as an existential threat to the West and a warlike enemy; on the other, they promote peaceful and democratic opposition. The potential for radicalization is thus immanent. This case study reveals the importance of seeing lone wolf terrorists as acting from rhetoric embedded in larger social movements. It further demonstrates, in detail, the subtle and complex four factors that come together to produce violent radicalization: personal and collective grievances, networks and interpersonal ties, political and religious ideologies, and enabling environments and support structures.

Furthermore, the authors proposed adopting a "puzzle" metaphor that represents a multifactor and contextualized approach to understanding how ordinary individuals transform into violent extremists and concluded with three recommendations to strengthen the empirical foundations of radicalization studies. I found this article very informative. While some scholars saw the threat of HVEs as real and constant, others, like (Brooks, 2011), did not. When examining the willingness and capacity of Muslim Americans to execute deadly attacks in the U.S., Brooks used three conditions, ways in which political narratives rejecting terrorism and political violence nevertheless end up inspiring such acts.

van Sikorski (2018) complained of the lack, on the media's part, of differentiating between Islamic terrorism and Islam itself and referring to the inevitable development of Islamophobic attitudes. Drawing from social identity theory, findings from two experimental studies revealed that coverage not clearly distinguishing Muslims from Islamist terrorists (i.e., undifferentiated coverage) activated negative stereotypes about Muslims and, in turn, heightened Islamophobic attitudes.

Further attempts to understand terrorism from another perspective (McCleery & Edwards, 2018) studies were conducted as the micro-sociological analysis of homegrown violent extremist attacks and the micro-dynamics surrounding each of four violent episodes. Some of the common denominators of those acts of violence confirm other studies in terms of characteristics of the terrorists, along with their ideological motivation.

A few years earlier (Southers, 2013), a security and public policy expert, in his book, *Homegrown Violent Extremism*, challenged how Americans think about terrorism, recruitment, and the homegrown threat. However, he seemed less concerned with the conditions that enable the existence of homegrown violent extremists than he was with coming up with approaches to reduce the risk. While that topic may end up as part of the conclusion of my study and dissertation, that is not my main focus at this time, which is more of trying to understand the phenomenon.

Day's (2015) study is more pertinent in that he considers the performative, emotional, and ritual aspects of terrorism as key to identity and disposition formation. Terrorist rituals and community practices forge actor preferences and passions, just as in other social cleavages. Furthermore, from a research design approach, Day explains how to conduct mixed methods research on terrorist practices, looking specifically at how religious practice disaggregation predicts terror campaign duration.

A common theme that arises from attempting to profile HVE's is that many of them seem to have some sort of collective grievance. Numerous terrorism scholars have attempted to understand how individuals in relatively peaceful and affluent Western countries embrace extremist ideologies that emanate from distant places, such as the

subjects of these case studies, former leaders of the IGA. The most recent empirical literature on the causes of Islamic terrorism and dynamics of radicalization often evaluates the state of the art in the study of Islamist homegrown extremism in the West. Most proposed some sort of a theoretical synthesis based on which would determine the threat level at the time. Brooks (2011), opined that there was no significant basis for anticipating that Muslim Americans are increasingly motivated or capable of successfully engaging in lethal terrorist attacks in the United States.

Disagreeing with Brooks on the global threat level posed 5 years after her assessment, (Munir & Shafiq 2016) studied the global threats posed by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (I.S.) by discussing their dialogues, structures, and capabilities. The authors recommended that a comprehensive global strategy is required to eradicate this growing menace of organized terrorism.

Masse (2020) described employing a cognitive dissonance approach to examine the implications of ISIS's defeat on twelve jihadi supporters' commitment. It shows that, while a minority of supporters have disengaged, the majority have remained committed to the group of those perpetuating ISIS's ideological legacy. Surprisingly, my research determined that, following the 9/11 attacks, according to (Ahmed, 2010) there was an "unprecedented wave of curiosity and interest in Islam and conversions went up dramatically during the period, as the Quran sales skyrocketed."

Even before 9/11, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, the period of my study of the IGA, a big part of that influx of conversions to traditional Islam came from the African-American communities. Islam has historically been an attractive force for the oppressed and marginalized groups in American society (Ahmed, 2010). Drawing from what I

learned from the Risk Assessment course, I was familiar with the work of Dr. Elaine Pressman, Ph.D. Senior Research Fellow at the Canadian Centre of Security and Intelligence in Ottawa, Canada. (Pressman 2009) studied factors for violent individuals that have been used in risk assessment protocols for decades. Such tools and guides are valid and reliable ways to assess the risk of future violence. However, the available risk assessment protocols have questionable relevance to violent extremists and terrorists because the factors used to assess risk do not relate to this group of violent actors (Pressman, 2009).

The need was identified for a relevant tool for the population of violent ideologically motivated extremists. Approaches to risk assessment for violence are described in Pressman's document. These include unstructured clinical judgment, actuarial methods, and structured professional judgment (SPJ). Unstructured approaches have been criticized for not demonstrating high validity or good inter-rater reliability. Given the low base rate of violent extremists, it is challenging to create empirically-based actuarial prediction instruments for violent extremism. The structured professional judgment approach (SPJ) "has been used successfully with forensic populations and was considered appropriate for a tool to address risk assessment for the population of violent extremists." As current SPJ guides were found to be inadequate to address the specific historical and contextual features of violent extremists, a new SPJ guide was developed, and Dr. Pressman described it in her paper (Pressman, 2012).

Critical of some of the scholarly definitions and explanations for terrorism, Professor Tilly (2004) Columbia University wrote, "The terms terror, terrorism and terrorist do not identify causally coherent and distinct social phenomenon but strategies

the recur across a wide variety of actors and political situations. Social scientists who reify the terms confuse themselves and render a disservice to public discussion. The U.S. government's own catalogues of terrorist events actually support both claims."

This literature review was helpful in various ways. I discovered what information already exists on conversion to Islamic "homegrown" terrorism and identified clear gaps in the research. Other researchers in the field were identified: two at NSU, namely Dr. Ransford Edwards and Dr. Dustin Berna, both in NSU's Department of Conflict Resolution Studies. Dr. Berna's dissertation written in 2012 and entitled "Islamic Fundamentalism: A Quantitative Analysis" *Peace and Conflict Studies*, views Islamic fundamentalism movements as inherently anti-system social movements and, as such, they are designed to criticize government institutions and the political mainstream while mobilizing disaffected individuals (like those members of the IGA), against the existing sociopolitical and socio-economic institutions (Berna, 2012).

Major works were identified, such as that written by (Bergen & Hoffman, 2010) entitled *Assessing The Terrorist Threat: A Report of the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group*; *How Radicalization to Terrorism Occurs in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us;* and a report written by NYPD Senior Intelligence Analysts: *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat.*

Various methodologies and research techniques were identified. Of the 46 journal articles reviewed, 20 used the quantitative method, 20 used mixed methods, and the remaining five employed the qualitative method. Relationships were shown between previous studies and theories concerning convert radicalization and the disproportionality

to Islamist extremism and militancy. However, data on homegrown jihadism and foreign fighting were lacking, out of date, or dubious reliability or impartiality.

Some authors emphasized distinct personal characteristics and backgrounds of converts, while other empirical research drew attention to the group and structural-level explanatory variables. One group of authors cited socio-economic deprivation, while another highlighted experiences with discrimination and political grievances. At the same time, a third pointed to pre-existing social ties to radical or extremist groups and/or individuals and the role of charismatic extremist authority figures. Mullins, for example, found that converts are drawn to Islamist terrorism as a result of being marginalized in society, more socio-economic deprivation, and mental health issues, drawing attention to the role of socio-demographic variables.

Kleinmann (2012) emphasized that convert radicalization is mainly due to recruitment by militant movements or radical friends and family. He also noted the importance of "cognitive openings" before radicalization, such as traumatic personal experiences. Such an experience, he pointed out, can cause an introspective period of "religious seeking." Kleinmann also recognized more mental health issues among the Sunni militants in his sample than among the general population. These explanations, utilizing multiple analytical perspectives, provided a context for my research.

Although numerous scholars have conducted studies on this topic, the key researchers appeared to include security and public policy expert Errol Southers, who challenges how Americans think about terrorism, recruitment, and the homegrown threat in his book published in 2014: *Homegrown Violent Extremism*; Dr. Elaine Pressman, who researched risk assessment in violent political extremists in Canada; Michael King, who

wrote a journal piece on terrorism and political violence; and Bart Schuurman, whose *Converts and Islamist Terrorist, an International Centre for Counter-Terrorism -The Hague* article appeared in 2016. Various perspectives emerged during this extensive literature review regarding the process of convert radicalization.

Some researchers looked at converts' personalities and backgrounds, their social networks, and the influence of broader structural or macro-level factors to understand the phenomenon. Bartoszewicz argued that conversion to Islam has an immense impact on the subsequent "being a Muslim: aspect. Therefore, to investigate converts' radicalization, one needs to look at the conversion stories (Bartoszewicz, 2012). In other words, it is best to look at the conversion experience rather than the individuals themselves. Other researchers noted that the conversion mechanisms that intersect with radicalization are not yet well understood (Kleinmann & Flower, 2013). One aspect of the debate was the absence of evidence of a clear relationship between conversion and radicalization, as Flower and Birkett concluded in a 2014 study involving 25 cases of Canadian converts: "conversion to Islam alone is not a valid or reliable indicator of whether a person is likely to radicalize (Flower & Birkett, 2014).

Secondly, research findings support different conclusions on the subject of when converts radicalize. Is it after, during, or before their conversion to Islam? While Flower argued that there is a lag time, Van San (2015) concluded that conversion is more often impulsive. Radicalization was a singular process or mechanism, especially when the primary focus of a study was the causes of radicalization among African-American converts to Islam and their penchant for violence through terrorism.

As mentioned, sources of information included 46 journal articles published in nationally refereed or peer-reviewed journals, non-refereed articles, books, government terrorism-related documents from the U. S., Canada, and the U. K., and dissertations, theses, and communications from international terrorists, mostly primary sources. These sources document, demonstrate, and support a need for this study. The literature review showed how my topic fits into the much larger context of Islamic terrorism and its recruiting tactics on a global scale. Research already conducted helps frame my current investigation.

The sources I used included Google Scholar searching for peer-reviewed books and the most reputable journal articles, along with the following descriptors: Islamic terrorism; jihadist; American jihadist; recruitment of terrorists; converts to radical Islam; radicalization to terror; "homegrown" Islamic terrorists; Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE's); Islamic ideology.

One of the best all-around publications on the topic was Perspectives on Terrorism, whose authors (Andre Silke, Tinka Veldhuis, and Joel Day) give the most complete description of ways to counter violent extremists in prisons, with a review of recent research and critical research gaps, along with a list of terrorist practices.

A "matrix" system created to keep track of all the articles was created. It consists of abstracts organized by theme, and each shows its relationship to the research problems and questions posed. Scholarly studies are contrasted and compared on several levels, particularly on the degree of threat that homegrown violent extremists present to our homeland.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative autoethnographic study was to explore the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. The findings generated from this study could aid authorities in generating adequate procedures to mitigate threats from terrorism and safeguard the American public. This chapter details a description of the research methodology. The sections that are included in the chapter are the following: (a) research methodology and design; (b) role of the researcher; (c) participants, recruitment, and sampling; (d) instrumentation; (e) data collection; (f) data analysis; (g) trustworthiness; and (h) ethical considerations. The summary of the research methodology is presented in the conclusion of the chapter.

Research Methodology and Design

This research study explored the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland based on the personal experiences of the researcher and historical documents. The current study adopted a qualitative methodology. Qualitative research involves the exploration of the lives of individuals in order to provide meaning to their experiences (Fossey et al., 2002). The procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is different from quantitative research in that qualitative research is ideographic in nature, focusing on the individual experiences and perceptions in order to make sense of a phenomenon (Peck & Mummery, 2019).

Various methodological and philosophical assumptions underlie qualitative research, and these must be articulated to the readers (Huff, 2009). The methodological

assumption of qualitative research is informed by the question: What is the process and language of research? The characteristics of qualitative research include the use of inductive logic, studying within the topic, and emerging design. The researcher works with particulars (details) before making generalizations, describes the context of the study, and continually revises questions from experiences in the field (Creswell, 2012). Sometimes the questions change in the middle of the study to better reflect the types of questions needed to understand the research problem. In response, the data collection strategy planned before the study needs to be modified to accompany the new questions (Creswell, 2018).

The philosophical assumptions of qualitative research are informed by interpretive frameworks that researchers use when they conduct a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Participants in interpretive, theoretically oriented project often represent under-represented or marginalize groups, whether those differences take the form of gender, race, class, religions, sexuality or geography, or some intersection of these differences (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005). The IGA serves as a classic example of what those authors were referring to in terms of race, class, and religion.

The design that this study adopted was autoethnography, which is characterized by the process of seeking to "describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). Autoethnography has also been described as amalgamation of different studies involving anthropology, literary studies, autobiography, and ethnography (Denshire, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography allows researchers to use oneself as the primary informant, even though

these personal accounts can be supplemented by other people's accounts, in order to understand a cultural phenomenon (Ellis et al., 2011).

The specific type of autoethnography that was adopted in this study is the narrative autoethnography. According to Ellis et al. (2011), a narrative autoethnography uses the personal narratives of the researcher and the accounts of others in order to describe and understand a phenomenon. The goal was to detect patterns from the personal narratives of the researcher will be supplemented by historical records from the individuals who were part of the Islamic Guerrillas of America (IGA).

Other qualitative research design such as phenomenology and case study were considered but were ruled out upon careful examination of the purpose of the current study. A phenomenological study describes the ordinary meaning that several individuals ascribe to their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. It focuses on what all participants had in common as they experienced the phenomenon (e.g., grief is universally experienced). Its primary purpose is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the "universal essence," which represents (a "grasp on the very nature of things"). This design is not appropriate given that the personal experiences of the researcher and historical data will serve as the method in which the research phenomenon will be explored.

Case study was also considered but was eventually ruled out based on its lack of alignment with the current study. Yin referred to the case study as a "method" instead of confining it to only an approach or a "tradition" within the various forms of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Generally, the focus of the case study is on developing a narrative or revealing a phenomenon based on an in-depth, real-time, or retrospective

analysis. In addition, the case study method, particularly the multiple-base study design, offers researchers proven tools for achieving a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon, for example, the information-seeking behavior of a particular user group. This design is not appropriate given that the personal experiences of the researcher and historical data will serve as the method in which the research phenomenon will be explored.

Participants, Recruitment, and Sampling Procedure

The participants in this research study were the researcher and two members of IGA. However, data from the two members of Islamic Guerrillas of America (IGA) came from historical data. The researcher serves as the primary participant in this autoethnographic study, using his personal experience to assign meaning to the phenomenon of the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. The sample of the study comes from the personal experiences of the researcher and historical data from two members of IGA.

There was no recruitment of participants because data came from the personal experiences of the researcher and historical records involving two members of IGA. The sampling procedure that was used in the study was purposive, with the researcher selecting two members of IGA who have provided a rich description of their experiences through historical records. The researcher made all the necessary FOIA requests in order to acquire historical records.

Instrumentation

Because there were no participants interviewed or surveyed in this study, no instrument was developed. However, the researcher is often considered the instrument in

qualitative research studies (Rogers, 2018). Hence, the researcher was responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. As the primary instrument of the study, the researcher was also responsible for making sure that bias will not interfere with the trustworthiness of this study. The researcher used analytical memos throughout the study to document thoughts and perceptions about the different aspects of the research (Chenail, 2012). These analytical memos proved useful in two primary ways: (a) improve the coding process, and (b) minimize potential bias during the analysis.

Narrative Analysis

Narratives were derived from notes taken by this researcher while viewing documentary films and reading multiple articles in which journalists conducted a number of, what appear to be semi-structured interviews, of Dawud Salahuddin and Isa Abdulla Ali, a sample of which follows:

Articles and Documentaries

In the world of Islamic terrorism, Dawud Salahuddin and Isa Abdullah Ali, the subjects of Case # 1 & 2, could be, by some accounts, considered infamous as there have been several articles written and at least one documentary produced on each of these individuals:

Regarding Dawud Salahuddin

An American Terrorist. *He's an assassin who fled the country. Could he help Washington now?* By Ira Silverman. The New Yorker. July 28, 2002. (Note: It was after Ira Silverman personally met with and interviewed Salahuddin in Iran for that article, that Silverman introduced Robert Levinson to Salahuddin, in an attempt to answer the questions posed in the subtitle, which lead to Levinson's disappearance.

The Lone Assassin by David B. Ottaway. The Washington Post. August 25, 1996. Terrorist on Valiasr Street in Tehran and the murder of Ali Akbar Tabatabai in New York By Kayhan London. Note: The murder was not in New York but rather Bethesda, Maryland.

Just Another American Hit Man and Journalist Living in Iran. By Robert Mackey http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/ 2009/09/16

Movie: "Kandahar Journey" Salahuddin plays an American philanthropic doctor. Article by Joe Trento

Documentary: American Fugitive: The Truth About Hassan

Regarding Isa Abdullah Ali

The Unfinished Journey of Isa Abdullah Ali. By Tod Robberson. The Washington Post. December 16, 1990.

American Journey to Jihad. By Sara Day & William Rosenau August 2010, Vol. 3, Issue 8. CTC Sentinel.

American With Murkey Past Sets off Alarms in Bosnia. By James Risen January 26, 1996. Los Angeles Times.

Documentary: American Jihadist: The Life and Times of Isa Abdullah Ali by Cynthia Fuchs. March 7, 2010. As he tells his story in American Jihadist: The Life and Times of Isa Abdullah Ali, Isa sounds matter of fact and self-knowing. Note: The cast includes Ali, himself, and Dawud Salahuddin.

In conducting a narrative analysis of the above-described data, this researcher followed the steps for coding as explained by (Creswell, 2018 pp. 197-198) in a procedure that includes: instructions for hand coding; assigning labels; compiling codes

for images; reviewing codes; eliminating redundancy; reducing codes to potential themes; grouping codes into themes that represent a common idea; assigning codes/themes to groups; arraying the code/themes into a conceptual map that will show the flow of ideas in the "findings' section and writing a narrative for each theme that will go in the "discussion" section of the overall findings of the study. (Creswell, 2016, pp. 169-170.)

Inductive Coding

The method used by this researcher for coding the narrative data was inductive methods. Inductive coding refers to a data analysis process whereby the researcher reads and interprets raw textual data to develop concepts, themes or a process model through interpretations based on data (Thomas, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998; Corbin & Strauss 1990).

In the coding process, text data gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or paragraphs into categories and labeling those categories with a term, often based in actual language of the case subjects, call an in vivo term. (Creswell, 2018. pp. 193-194.)

Role of the Researcher

In an autoethnographic research study, the researcher is the main source of the data (Denshire, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011). Hence, it is important to establish the background and motivation of the researcher for exploring the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. In this section, the role of the researcher in the study as the primary informant is identified and discussed.

The student's initial interest in the nature of Islamic Terrorism and those who subscribe to it and engage in its violence stems from a life changing 2007 incident, when a colleague was kidnapped and held hostage by the largest state sponsor of terrorism, the

Islamic Republic of Iran. After determining that the kidnapping had been a major CIA failure and after watching the FBI fail in rescuing this hostage after two years, this student headed up a small group of select former FBI Agents and CIA Officers, all former intelligence officers, all colleagues of the hostage, and attempted to independently locate our colleague, determine his health condition and make attempts to rescue him.

Unfortunately, after fifteen years of trying, those efforts proved unsuccessful; Levinson was never rescued; the U.S. Intelligence Agency that sent him on that misguided mission to Iran had declared Levinson deceased; but his remains have never been repatriated to his family. In the process, information was developed on the individual whom our colleague had been sent to Iran to recruit on behalf of U.S. Intelligence and this researcher subsequently developed that individual as a confidential source. That led to the snowballing effect wherein that recruit introduced the researcher to other individuals characterized as “known terrorists”, by U.S. Homeland Security. The first two individuals recruited as sources are also the two participants in this study and the information gathered from that kidnapping investigation has now turned into data collected for purposes of this autoethnographic study.

Data Collection

All of the data have already been collected in the form of public accessible historical records from the U.S. government. Based on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the researcher had access to public documents through formal requests from the FBI, U.S. Department of State, and Washington, D.C. Police intelligence. A single FOIA request from the FBI yielded a CD-ROM containing 551 pages of the subjects of the five case studies involved in this dissertation. There are hundreds of pages of emails and

WhatsApp threads of messages along with recorded telephone calls from the Middle East and locations around the world, with most of them from the two selected participants of the study.

The researcher wrote of his personal experiences and perceptions regarding the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. The researcher wrote this narrative within the scope of the research questions of the study to enhance alignment of data with the study purpose.

Data Analysis

The reason narrative was adopted was due to the fact that it offers the following advantages that appear to fit the purpose of the study. Narrative analysis has been described as follows:

1) a powerful qualitative research tool that provides rich linguistic data that may show light on various aspects of cultural and social phenomena.
2) focuses on a topic and analyzes the data collected from case studies.
3) provides researchers with detailed information about their subject that they could not get through other methods.
4) reveals hidden motivations that are not easy to perceive directly. (Harappa Education, 2021)

Table–Themes, Subthemes and Code Table

Based on a line-by-line manual review and the qualitative analysis of all the data collected, what emerged was the following Themes, Subthemes and Codes Table:

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
Islamic Fundamentalism/ Ideology	Jihadist or Jihadi-Salafi ideology _____ Inherently anti-Western system.	-Western values
	Critical of government institutions	-Socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors.
	Mobilizes alienated, marginalized, disaffected individuals	-Alienation marginalization disaffection, marginalization, discrimination, oppressed minority status -ethnicity -poverty
	Basic lack of understanding of Islamic fundamentalism	Misinterpretation of Islam
Radicalization Process	Leads to ideological motivation.	-Ideology
	Ideological motivated violence in furtherance of political, social and religious goals.	-Religion
	Law enforcement efforts to counter and prevents terrorism	Counterterrorism
	Individual-level factors found more prevalent among Islamic converts	-Social determinants
	Terrorist belief that "others" are "enemies" and justifies engaging in violence against them.	-Violence -Otherness
	Spiritual sanctioners: charismatic leaders, play key roles in radicalizing American jihadists. Jihadists as grievance collectors Classic example: Osama bin Laden	Provide justification for violence Grievances vs U. S.: unjust, criminal, tyrannical and supports Israeli Examples:

	Terrorists' social determinants that constitute grievances	Perceived injustice; relative deprivation; social class; lack of opportunity; occupation
	Jihadist Training Manual (Modeled after Irish Republican Army, IRA	Firearms, martial arts, bomb training for guerilla warfare
	Recruitment Manual	Recruiters seek Discipline, obedience, patience, intelligence, caution and prudence & observe & analyze
Recruitment Targets	schools and colleges	Young students are inquisitive but less challenging & more susceptible to extremist reasoning/ arguments.
	Prison population	"captivated" audience of disaffected young men Prisons as "radicalization incubators"
	Additional social determinants identified as components creating the mindset of a potential Islamic terrorist	Economic, political, educational. religious, psychological and ideological
American Jihadism	No workable general profile of domestic violent jihadist exits.	-Lone Wolves -Homegrown jihad
	Charismatic leaders play major roles in radicalizing American jihadists.	American foreign policy- _Grievances vs. U.S.: Injustice, criminal, tyrannical, supports Israel
	Jihadists as grievance collectors. Classic example: Osama bin Laden	

		Perceived injustices: Relative deprivation, social class, occupation, lack of opportunity (as in case of jihadi engineers.)
	Jihadist Training Manual (modeled after IRA)	Training in guerilla warfare, including firearms, martial arts & bomb making.
	Jihadist Recruitment Manual	Recruiters seek Discipline, obedience, patience, intelligence, caution, prudence, & ability to observe & analyze.

Trustworthiness

This researcher understands that the truth value of qualitative research and transparency of the conduct of the study are crucial to the usefulness and integrity of the findings (Cope, 2014). Also important is the rigor of a study or the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of the study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). The criteria that (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) outlined were credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity. The researcher believes the criteria has been met in this study, though the use of standard procedures typically used in the qualitative approach; peer briefings with colleagues in the intelligence community; review and feedback by the participants and the applicability of the findings to other situations, such as the similarities between the motivations of lone wolf terrorist and school shooters. Therefore, the researcher feels that the trustworthiness of this study has been established.

Ethical Considerations

In autoethnographic research, a primary ethical consideration is the use of self as the primary source of data (Denshire, 2014). Relational ethics highlights the possible transgression of using self and interacting with others in order to generate data in a study (Denshire, 2014). It is therefore important to establish several ethical considerations for this autoethnographic study.

Based on the researcher's five-year background with the study's two participants, both of whom have been described by the Department of Defense as "known terrorists", there may be a natural bias in describing them and their activities. Nonethless, every

effort was made to avoid that from happening. The reader will be the best judge if those efforts were successful.

An exemption was granted by the university's Internal Review Board (IRB). No authorization letter needed to be submitted, except for the FOIA request to the U.S. government.

Informed consent was not secured for any participant, given that the researcher is the participant of the study. Historical records are also publicly accessible, which means that informed consent forms were not necessary. However, formal requests were made to the U.S. government in order to have access to the historical records.

All data is stored in a password-protected folder in the personal computer of the researcher. After a period of 5 years has elapsed, all data will be destroyed. The researcher will erase all the files in the hard drive of the researcher.

Summary

The purpose of the proposed qualitative autoethnographic study was to explore the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland. The findings generated from this study could aid authorities in generating adequate procedures to mitigate threats from terrorism and safeguard the American public. The specific type of autoethnography that was adopted in this study was the narrative autoethnography, combining the personal accounts of the researchers and the historical accounts of others in order to make sense of the meaning of a phenomenon (Ellis et al., 2011).

Chapter 4: Results of Study

The purpose of this qualitative autoethnographic study was to explore the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a national security threat to the homeland in the hope that the findings could aid authorities in developing adequate procedures to mitigate those threats from terrorism and safeguard the American public.

A good portion of the findings of this study was derived from the extensive literature review that was conducted, drawing from the considerable data on the subject of Islamic terrorism collected by scholars who are experts in this field. For the sake of brevity and in order to minimize redundancy, those results will not be repeated in this present chapter. Instead, Chapter 4 will focus attention on the five case studies; Researcher's Personal Narrative; Research Questions Answered; a Themes Table and accompanying narrative; a political assassination and accompanying diagram depicted the co-conspirators, motivation and timeline. A discussion of the above and a summary will follow in Chapter 5.

Case Study #1–IGA

IGA was an Iran-sponsored domestic terrorist organization sponsored and funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been declared a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). It was created in 1979 during the Iranian Revolution. African-Americans were recruited as homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) from Lorton Penitentiary and other prisons, the Howard University Muslim Student Association (MSA), African-American veteran groups, street criminals, and gang members. The organization's prime purpose was to be a pro-Khomeini domestic terrorist organization that would support the revolution and quiet any dissent in the United States. For active members, activities

included passing out pamphlets, organizing anti-Shah protests, taking over government buildings, arsons, assaults with deadly weapons, robberies and in some cases political assassinations.

The original Islamic Center leaders, Dr. Rolf and Dr. Asman were assaulted on April 11, 1980, by members of the IGA. Both men were hospitalized in serious condition. Another assault with a deadly weapon occurred on April 12, 1980, at the Islamic mosque, and again, the IGA was involved. Government observers in Washington believe that Nahidian and his followers had intimidated Drs. Rolf and Asman and had taken control of the Islamic Center. Nahidian began delivering the Friday sermon at the center and passed out literature simultaneously.

Sources close to the IGA report said that various members were fond of quoting traditional revolutionary rhetoric such as “freedom comes from the mouth of a gun.” One IGA member has been quoted as saying, “We bargain in the name of God, we work in the name of God, and we kill in the name of God.” The IGA was reportedly closely linked to those Hanafi Muslims who were directly involved in the 1977 takeover of three government buildings in Washington, D.C. As Bahram Nahidian, the leader of the IGA, publicly stated, “We’re fighting American imperialism and Zionism, the system that created the Shah.”

Manifesto

In November 1979, IGA members distributed a 2-page document publicly declaring their group’s policies, aims, ideology and political orientation. The document called for an Islamic guerilla war in the U.S. The document suggests that Muslims should not limit themselves to the use of conventional weapons but should consider the use of

daggers, razors, and short steel clubs. It explains that in the Islamic guerrilla war any American should be considered as a target because "no American is innocent as long as U.S. foreign policies are to the detriment of the Islamic community." Its willingness to use violence is also underscored in the alleged plan by some of its Arab members to down an aircraft or place a bomb in a public transportation area.

The IGA's close ties to the Iranians means that non-Americans who have angered Khomeini are also targets of its activities. Canada was, at the time, a prime target of the group's ire because of their role in the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis. The Manifesto blames America for their government's foreign policies "by Allah's mercy Muslims will place fear in the hearts and mind of the kafir." (That statement is the very essence of "terrorism") Kafir is the Arabic word referring to unbelievers or those perceived as sworn enemies of Islam and Muslims. That's why God will punish them by putting them into eternal fires.

Case Study #2– Bahram Nahidian (aka Fazil Nahidian, IGA leader)

Nahidian was born November 2, 1938, in Tehran, Iran, and was reportedly drawn to the United States in 1960 with a sense of adventure and an infatuation with America's high rises and lifestyle. In 1960 Nahidian enrolled at Western Kentucky University in Bolling Green. For the next 4 years, Nahidian reportedly led a restless playboy life and bounced between Miami and D.C., attending seven different colleges. After attending Howard University in Washington, D.C., Nahidian transferred to Northern Virginia Community College, where he earned a degree in computer science.

In 1964, at 26, Nahidian survived a car crash in which a friend was killed. He said, "It made me realize I could go tomorrow too." At that time, Nahidian claims to have

immersed himself in the Quran." Nahidian became a naturalized American citizen in 1965 and married an American. He started a rug business on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, D.C. in 1968, claiming that his sales in 1980 were between $200,000 and $300,000.

Nahidian has reportedly been affiliated with the Iranian Student Association (ISA) and the Islamic Revolution for several years. In 1978 Nahidian took a significant organizational step by purchasing a house at 57 16th NW Washington, D.C. This house was turned into a meeting place where area Muslims assembled, studied the Quran, and planned demonstrations. Nahidian is believed to have met and recruited many of his IGA followers at that location. An eight-foot banner proclaiming "Long Live Khomeini, Our Leader" was stretched across the archway.

Over a couple of months in 1980, as many as 200 Iranians met at the Nahidian-owned mosque to plan demonstrations. In 1978 Nahidian visited with exiled Khomeini in France. Nahidian allegedly bankrolled Iranian protesters throughout the United States. He reportedly sent 200 pro-Khomeini demonstrators to California. As quoted in a November 30, 1979 *Washington Post* article, Nahidian stated, "I am with the students (holding the American hostages in Iran) all the way." Nahidian reportedly placed long-distance calls to Tehran to counsel student leaders and listened to Iranian news broadcasts on a short-wave radio that he kept in the back of his rug shop. He has labeled American newspapers and television as "an extension of the CIA and the FBI." Nahidian allegedly wrote a letter in Iranian to the Islamic community in the Washington, D.C. area in which he advocated putting bombs in the homes and/or restaurants of Jews and other enemies of Islam. The final sentence stated, "after studying this alert, tear it up and explain the details to your

religious friends." The document was signed by Abdolla Bahram Nahidian, a representative of the Islamic Society of America and Canada in Washington.

During the latter part of 1980, Nahidian maintained close contact with various Anafi Muslims and visited Lorton Reformatory and the D.C. jail in hopes of obtaining recruits. Nahidian was arrested at the Statue of Liberty in New York City on November 4, 1979 (demonstrating without a permit and disturbance at a national monument). His arrest came the same day Iranian students seized the American hostages in Iran, which strongly suggested that Nahidian knew of the embassy takeover before it occurred. Arrested with Nahidian were his Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. associates. As of July 10, 1980, Nahidian remained a key IGA organizer.

Case Study #3–Said Ramadan

Said Ramadan, born in Egypt in 1926, was a political activist and humanitarian and was described as one of the foremost leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s. It was no coincidence that he was also the son-in-law of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood's official minister. From that decade on, he was considered Muslim (Algar, 2002).

Ramadan played a pivotal role in Pakistan, and his work as an ideologue is said to have contributed to making Pakistan an Islamic Republic in 1956, as "he was omnipresent in the media —arguing on every occasion for legislation based on Sharia" (Fourest, 2008). In the 1950s and '60s, the CIA supported Ramadan in his efforts to assume control over a mosque in Munich, Germany, expelling local Muslims to build what would become one of the Brotherhood's most important centers. A couple of decades later, with co-IGA founder Bahram Nahidian, Ramadan was involved in the

takeover of the Washington, D.C. mosque. The muscle that Ramadan and Noridian used to cast out the former leaders of that mosque was Dawud Salahuddin and Isa Abdulla Ali. Ramadan played a key role in the Islamic Revolution in 1979, assisted by Iran's chief representative in the United States, Bahram Nahidian.

Case Study #4–Dawud Salahuddin/Personal Narrative

The subject of this case study is also one of the two participants in the study, namely Dawud Salahuddin. Born David Theodore Belfield on November 16, 1950, in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. He grew up in Bay Shore, Long Island, N.Y., in a church-going Baptist family of four boys and one girl.

His parents worked at a psychiatric center on Long Island, his mother as a nurse's aide and his father in the laundry room. When Charles Belfield was not working at the Psych Center or as a security guard at *Newsday*, he was a bouncer at a Bay Shore nightclub. When Salahuddin refers to America as his former home, much of his talk is about his childhood in Bay Shore. He reminisces about the Bay Shore Bombers, a fast-pitch softball team, the high school gymnasium where he first dunked a basketball, and shopping sprees at local stores. His sister describes Dawud as an all-American boy who was liked by Black people and whites. Throughout his childhood, Salahuddin was seriously troubled by his race. "Maybe the most damage done to me as a kid was that it was somehow an indecency, an insufficiency, certainly a shame not to be white." As a bright young black student attending a predominately white Brookhaven Elementary School at Bay Shore, New York, he said, "I understood that the less black you were, you had a little more breathing space. But I still had a problem." He recalled one incident that stuck with him for the rest of his life. It was a third-grade project requiring each student

to bring in an ingredient to make a soup pot for the class. One of his classmates, a good friend named Johnny Carter, was a dark-skinned boy who brought a can of corn to school for his contribution. “Now, what I saw,” Salahuddin advised, “was when the soup was cooked, all the classmates who I thought were my friends picked the corn out of the soup.” To this day, Salahuddin remembers that and how badly he felt for his childhood friend Johnny Carter.

Then at age 13, in 1963, when in the 7th grade, Salahuddin watched the tv coverage of Eugene “Bull” Connor, the Police Chief of Birmingham, Alabama. The white police chief maliciously turned black civil rights marchers away with fire hoses and attack dogs. Salahuddin began to develop “an implacable hatred toward all symbols of American authorities.” By his senior year in high school, he refused to salute the flag or say the pledge of allegiance. He told his sister to listen to the words of the pledge: “they don’t apply to everyone.” In fact, by his senior year in high school, Salahuddin refused to salute the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

These racial incidents, he said, were further fueled by the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., coupled with his reading of radical books dealing with the injustices of slavery, which further fueled his hatred toward white America. Hanging out at “Johnny White’s Nightclub,” with a largely Black clientele, was more instructive than anything else during Salahuddin’s youth, as it was “a repository of all the things slavery had done to the minds and hearts of Black men.” As a teenager obsessed with race, Salahuddin witnessed considerable barroom violence, shootings, knifings and bottles broken over patrons' heads. Salahuddin recounts that he began

drinking at age 13, getting “blind drunk” on several occasions to block out those images from the nightclub.

By the time he was 16, he owned his gun and recalled pistol-whipping a teenager who had stolen a television from his house. “I was about to shoot him,” Salahuddin said, “when another guy grabbed my arm.” A proud African-American family in Bay Shore, N.Y., all of the Belfield children went to college. Salahuddin, whose real name was David and was referred to by the nickname “Teddy,” entered Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1968. Having lost interest after just one semester, he quit his classes and worked on construction projects as a day laborer. “This put me in direct contact with a class of black men that I had known every day of my youth, but now I was working with them.” “These men had no education, rarely a stable family, lots of them were alcoholics, and not one had a future.” When Salahuddin grew older, he came to believe that “Black America is Third World in a First World setting” and that “it is dangerous and unsuitable for all concerned.” Throughout those unsettled years in Salahuddin’s life, spent mostly in Washington, D.C., an African-American named Brother Oleigi was his closest known Muslim friend and a fellow New Yorker. The last thing Salahuddin knew of Brother Oleigi was that he was working as a recreational therapist with autistic children in Maryland.

Eventually, Salahuddin met another friend, a Korean War Veteran, who he first encountered at a gathering place for Black writers and activists. After some time, the veteran, whom Salahuddin had grown to admire, and who had been encouraging Salahuddin to learn about Islam, bluntly told him, "I am not talking to you anymore until

you read the Quran." Salahuddin took his friend seriously and found that Islam was "color-blind." Reading the Quran changed the trajectory of Dawud Salahuddin's life.

At 18, in 1969, David Belfield converted to Islam, taking the name Dawud (a male Arabic surname corresponding with David, the Prophet) Salahuddin (after the twelfth-century Muslim Warrior). He joined a fringe organization called the Black Man's Volunteer Army of America, which encouraged Black people to return to Africa and become farmers. Disparaging over the future of the black man in America but convinced that his recently joined organization was a scam, he quit the group a few months later.

However, during this period, he had become an editor of a small Islamic newspaper in Washington and spent much of his time at mosques and getting involved in Islamic causes. When he was not studying the Quran and hanging out with like-minded individuals, Salahuddin admits to committing several grab-and-run robberies at jewelry stores and pawn shops, none of which he was ever apprehended or charged. Shortly after his conversion to Islam, Salahuddin began to meet with Islamic revolutionaries, including some who were later directly involved with overthrowing the Shah of Iran. He spent time at the Iranian Student Center run by Bahram Nahidian at the time. Nahidian was known to have been Ayatollah Khomeini's main operative in the United States.

Reflecting on his improbable life, Salahuddin, who considers himself both a student of history and one of Islam, spoke with me about his conversion to his then new-found faith in how race and a sense of personal empowerment were key parts of his narrative. "African-Americans have been marginalized, disconnected, disenfranchised and treated like second-class citizens in a white man's world for centuries." So when he learned that Islam was supposedly not racist, it felt right to him.

Salahuddin associates Christianity with slavery and discrimination. Islam served as an escape from his strict Baptist upbringing and gave him "a sense of liberation while also feeling a call to discipline." His appreciation for Islam also centers around the fact that God ordains "freedom, equality, justice, and peace." These principles provided a foundation for his life in his new community as a member of the IGA in Washington, D.C.

Lastly, as both a recruit and a recruiter, as a card-carrying Muslim cleric, Salahuddin explained that the IGA drew its membership from the disadvantaged, welcoming ex-cons "wronged by the system of oppression" and that "Malcolm X converted to orthodox Islam, was the most notable example." Like-minded jihadists and fellow IGA members, who Salahuddin admired for their courage and discipline in addition to the group's co-founders, Bahram Nahidian and Said Ramadan, included the subject of the fifth case study, Isa Abdullah Ali.

Case Study #5–Isa Abdullah Ali/Personal Narrative

Isa Abduallah Ali, an African-American Muslim, was born Cleven Raphael Holt in 1956 in the Washington, D.C. housing projects. Growing up in the ghettos of America's capital as one of eight children, this young man was surrounded by physical and psychological violence from the beginning. As research in terrorism studies has indicated, violence and lack of hope for the future play significant roles in the radicalization process.

Ali is a classic example of the phenomenon of home-grown jihadism, analyzing the outreach in tactics employed by terrorists to reach susceptible members of society.

Growing up in a family of nine, his mother, Dews, recounted how Cleven was an exceptionally bright and witty child, but there was always a darker side to him. When he was just three, she remembers apologizing solemnly to her and saying, “Mommy, I have to go off to war.” Looking at her young son, this woman knew he was dead serious, so she simply kissed him goodbye, wished him good luck, and opened the door as she watched him walk to the sidewalk, stop a man on the street, and ask for directions to the Army.

Chaos and violence both in the home and in the streets of Ali’s neighborhood characterized his childhood. His mother, by her own admission, had a long succession of loser boyfriends and husbands who tended to be “very sick.” She did not understand why she was choosing these men. At least two of these boyfriends were very physically and emotionally abusive, not only to her but also sexually assaulting her teenage daughters. At least three of these men spent time in either prisons, psychiatric wards, or both.

At the tender age of 15, Cleven convinced an adult friend of the family to forge his birth certificate, which made him appear older than he was, and thus enabled him to join the U.S. Army, in his words, “to find out who I was.”

Once in Korea, Cleven became deeply involved in the racial tensions that were going on between white and Black troops. After several months of drinking and heavy drug use, he was the victim of a severe beating in a racially-motivated bar room brawl. Cleven and some other African -American soldiers were investigated in the connection to the killing of a fellow black officer whose throat had been slit in a racial brawl.
Ali had joined the Army in hopes of being assigned to the infantry because he wanted to go to Viet Nam and see combat. However, the Army had other plans for Cleven, and they

sent him to cooking school and then, in 1972, to South Korea. To get out of the service, he admitted to being only 16 years old at the time and proved it with the birth certificate that his mother sent to him reluctantly. He was honorably discharged from the Army without further investigation or prosecution and returned home to his Washington, D.C. ghetto.

Cleven felt he needed psychological help at the time. The unhappiness and turmoil he experienced in South Korea not only left him hating all whites but also profoundly disappointed with his own race. Nearly all of the Black people he knew from his neighborhood, both male and female, were convicted felons involved in fraud or a combination of drug users and dealers. Cleven had no one in his life, no father figure or otherwise, that he respected and in whom he could confide. Violent fantasies consumed his thoughts, and he often contemplated suicide.

One summer day in 1974, depressed and in a fit of rage, he ventured back to his old neighborhood and sat quietly in the street across from his high school. He recalls breaking down, weeping, and yelling at the sky, “God, help me!” About 3 days later, he came across a group of people outside another high school where a Black Muslim student was giving a soapbox speech about the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. That preacher spoke about “the sufferings and adversities of our Palestinian brothers and sisters were going through” when Holt blurted out, “If someone would give me a plane ticket, I would go over and fight with the Arabs against Israel.” The preacher’s message and demeanor seemed to impress Holt. He spoke of God not in terms of black versus white but as an all-seeing, all-knowing creator. The preacher offered Holt answers to questions he had long been asking about man’s relationship to God and his purpose on earth. Both men recalled the

precise moment Holt decided to convert. It was during a lecture the preacher was giving him about the "hell fire" of judgment day, Holt says, that he suddenly had a "vivid vision of people covered in ashes falling into hell." Holt supposedly made his entire being a vessel of his new religion, and he adopted the name Isa Abdullah Ali and later made it his legal name.

Ali began visiting local mosques and heard all these glorious and beautiful things about Islam from these spiritual, charismatic wise men, but nothing that spoke to him as an oppressed Black man. His disenchantment was exacerbated by increased exposure to Iranian Shiite dissidents in Washington who encouraged Black Muslims, which he viewed as an oppressed group whose status was similar to that of the Shiite minority in Islam, to join their campaign for the ouster of Shah Mohammed Reza Palavi. The Iranians, Ali recalls, liked to say that the gateway to heaven is unlocked with the key to the warrior's martyrdom in the name of God. Ali saw himself as a devout Muslim and an oppressed Black man, and he knew he was born to be a warrior. It felt logical for him to eschew his Sunni indoctrination, declaring allegiance to Shiism and, ultimately, to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Having made this ideological shift, Ali moved into "the Muslim House" at 16th St. NW building owned by an Iranian businessman and rug merchant who allowed him to live there, free of charge. That businessman was Braham Nahidian. The house became a cauldron of discontent where militant Iranians and young Black Muslims congregated and planned various activities aimed in part at disrupting the sedate lifestyle of Washington's Muslim community. There, Ali struck up friendships with other Black people, including Dawud Salahuddin, a somewhat older man who was an expert in Kung

Fu and trained Isa in martial arts. On the other hand, Salahuddin seemed fascinated with Ali's military skills. He was eager for Ali to train other black Muslims in hand-to-hand combat with guns and knives.

Ali began training a few men and eventually took on nearly two dozen trainees. Flyers were distributed by members of the group, which called itself the Islam Guerrillas of America (IGA). Ali and Salahuddin became active in an effort by Washington Shiites to wrest control from the Sunnis of the Islamic Center Mosque in Massachusetts NW. After a series of fistfights, they overcame a group of Sunnis and installed a Shiite cleric as the Imam. Encouraged by the Iranians to use his military skills in the name of Islam, Ali took a $1,100 a month security job at the Iranian Embassy. However, for Ali, that was not enough. He felt a calling to help his Muslim brothers overseas.

Using the money he earned at the Embassy, along with contributions from friends and relatives, he bought a round-trip ticket to Pakistan, where he joined the Afghan Mujaheddin in their arms struggle against the Soviets. In late June of 1980, he departed Washington with a duffle bag full of military gear (Robberson, 1990). (In Arabic, the surname "Isa" is that of one of the Prophets and translation of "Jesus" in the Quran, as depicted in Islam and commonly used by Muslims.) "Abdullah" is Servant of God and "Ali" literally means "high," "elevated," or "champion" as Ali saw himself as a champion of oppressed Muslims worldwide as a foreign fighter.

When talking about his Islamic faith, Ali describes its strong call to social justice and says that Islam appeals to many African-Americans seeking liberation from the white man's religion which "continues to oppress minorities." He also believes that it was African-Americans' ancestral Islamic heritage that is one of the reasons why African-

Americans turned from Christianity to Islam. Ali envisions himself as a "holy warrior." As mentioned, at a very young age, when his short but drastic stint in the U.S. Army failed him, he found his calling in Jihadism at home in the U.S. and abroad, fighting proxy wars on behalf of Iran-sponsored militia groups. Those groups of foreign fighters included radical religious organizations like the Amal militia, Hezbollah and the Mujahideen fighting in Afghanistan, Lebanon and Bosnia.

According to Ali, all of this was "in the pleasure of God taking a stand to help the ill-treated and oppressed." His religious/military experience was also a means of addressing chronic social, economic, and political issues in the United States. Ali summarized his life and legacy in a few words: "I did what I thought was best, and it was just like war. You keep it short, simple, and straight to the point."

Researcher's Personal Narrative

As a former FBI Special Agent, I am perhaps best known for spearheading the FBI's investigation in the mid-1980s that resulted in the downfall of Paul Castellano, the boss of the Gambino Crime Family and head of the New York Mafia Commission, the ruling organized crime body in the United States. The Attorney General credited me with developing a top echelon mafia informant who led my partner and me to take historic photographs of a once-in-a-lifetime secret meeting of the Mafia Commission on Staten Island in 1984. For those achievements, I was named the Top Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in 1987 and received the prestigious U.S. Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award. I attributed my success to the mentoring I received from former FBI Agent Robert Levinson, with whom I shared the skill of developing and operating high-level criminal informants and the New York Office Agent of the Year Award in 1983.

In 2017, 10 years after Levinson disappeared on the Island of Kish, Iran using some of the methods and techniques that had proved successful when deployed against the hierarchy of the Mafia. nearly four decades earlier, I obtained what purported to be documentary evidence that Levinson was still alive; in relatively poor health and being held hostage in Iran's notorious Evin Prison. when the FBI was claiming that Levinson was deceased. Attempting to authenticate the "proof-of-life documents," I sought the help of the FBI's Extraterritorial Investigation Squad in Manassas, Virginia. That squad is solely responsible for the Robert Levinson Missing Persons/Kidnapping Case. Unfortunately, the squad supervisor dismissed the documents as fake without seeing them, because he believed Levinson was no longer alive. Moreover, the supervisor refused to send an expert familiar with classified Iranian government documents, written in Farsi, to New York City to examine the proof-of-life documents.

Instead, the Supervisor requested that I send him the documents to show throughout the U.S. Intelligence community. When I refused to do that for security reasons, the Supervisor threatened me with a Federal grand jury subpoena. The situation got contentious, and the relationship between me and the FBI went downhill from there. Unable to locate me to serve the subpoena, the FBI served one of my trusted sources who also had a copy of the documents and required that he go to Washington, D.C., to produce the subpoenaed documents or go to jail. When I received additional confidential source information, from inside Iran, regarding Levinson. the FBI continued to obstruct my independent investigation, by not only denying the documents were real without proof, but also threatening to expose the sources' identities, which would have resulted in their execution. One of the sources threatened by such exposure, was the only human

being who came forward and disclosed to the world that Levinson was, in fact, in Iranian custody and did not simply disappear, as the regime had claimed. That man was Dawud Salahuddin, a participant in this study.

Salahuddin reflected on that day in July 1980, as he drove alone in a U.S. postal truck, in uniform, from the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., to Bethesda, MD, he thought about the characters involved in the plot to assassinate the Shah's press attaché. They included SAVAK General Hossein Fardoust, Bahram Nahidian, and Said Ramadan. During the Carter administration (1977–1982), independent intelligence collection in the back streets and among the masses in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates was relatively non-existent, and the CIA depended upon the Israelis, Saudi GID, and the Shah of Iran's dreaded SAVAK Intelligence Service.

In the late 1970s, Richard Helms, former CIA Director, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Iran from 1973 to 1976, was a prominent consultant on Iranian matters to U.S. Intelligence, as he developed and maintained a close personal relationship with the Shah. At the time, Helms got a call from both Helms' and the Shah's old prep school classmate, General Hossein Fardoust, the former head of SAVAK, Iran's powerful intelligence service. After the revolution, with Ayatollah Khomeini in charge in Iran, Fardoust had changed sides, betrayed his former boss, the last Shah of Iran, and agreed to lead SAVAMA, the new Islamic Government Intelligence Service.

According to Salahuddin, the new Iranian government was desperate to open weapons deliveries from the United States, so Fardoust told his superiors that he believed he could arrange arms in return for the Embassy hostages with President Carter. Thus, Fardoust became a go-between in a series of secret negotiations, and Richard Helms

arranged for his old school chum to come to the United States on an "official visit," ostensibly to attempt to improve relations between Tehran and Washington, D.C. Instead, Fardoust was on a personal mission to prove his disloyalty to his boss, the former Shah.

In May of 1979, Fardoust carried a *fatwah*, the holy order, for several assassinations targeted in the United States. Top of the list was Ali Akbar Tabatabaei, who was warned three times by phone calls by Salahuddin to end his collaboration with the United States. The phone calls were made anonymously. The attempt to warn Tabatabaei failed, and eventually, he had to be killed. Dawud Salahuddin was given the *fatwah*. by Bahram Nahidian,.

Imam Said Ramadan, Geneva-based international Islamic lawyer and secular CEO and theoretician of the worldwide Islamic Fundamental Movement, was working with the Ayatollah. Ramadan reported to the Ayatollah that many disaffected, able African Americans longed for respect and belonging that they could not find in American society. Ramadan argued that these young men, many of whom had military training, could be recruited as a secret cadre for the coming Islamic revolution. So the Imam called for a meeting and decided to spend $5 million recruiting disaffected African Americans to the cause. Dawud Salahuddin was a leader in that organization, and he later became close to Ramadan, who he considered his mentor, but he took orders from Bahram Nahidian.

Unbeknownst to Salahuddin, the one thing Fardoust, Nahidian, and Ramadan had in common, other than the cause of revolutionary Iran, was that all three of them were U.S. intelligence sources. All three were CIA assets. Consequently, the CIA was complicit in the murder of Ali Akbar Tabatabaei on U.S. soil.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Washington, D.C. Intelligence Unit Detective Carl Shoffler, had investigated the (IGA), the terrorist group created by Nahidian on behalf of the new Iranian Revolutionary Regime. Consequently, Shoffler became acquainted with Dawud Salahuddin and remained in contact with him after the Tabatabaei murder while Salahuddin was an FBI fugitive in Iran. I was fortunate to obtain unprecedented access to Shoffler's files, after he passed away, and shared some of them with Salahuddin, which he found amazing, but authenticated most of the information contained therein. Shoffler's meticulous notes contain documentation on how Salahuddin assisted Shoffler with information that went to U.S. Intelligence. It included leads on heroin trafficking from Afghanistan to Washington, D. C. and how Salahuddin warned Shoffler that President Clinton should not take a planned trip to Bosnia because an assassination team was waiting for him there. The team was headed by Isa Abdullah Ali in his old U. S. Army uniform, that Ali had kept for such an occasion. Shoffler passed the information on to the U.S. Secret Service, and the trip was cut short, possibly saving the President's life. I confirmed this account by speaking directly with former U.S.S.S. Special Agent Paul Wattay.

I was introduced to Salahuddin in December 2017 through a mutual friend, National Security Journalist Joseph Trento. Salahuddin was the last person to be with Levinson at the time of his capture. As mentioned earlier, Salahuddin was the only person to publicly contradict the Iran Regime's statement that they had no idea what happened to Levinson and that he had left Kish Island voluntarily on his own. Salahuddin knew that was not true since he and Levinson were taken into custody together by Kish police officers.

Although Salahuddin blamed the CIA for sending Levinson on the rogue, misconceived mission, he also blamed himself for going along with the scheme. The CIA believed that Levinson could make Salahuddin an asset for the agency's Illicit Funds Group. To assuage his guilt, Salahuddin has provided me with valuable intelligence over the past 5 years at great personal risk. At first, Salahuddin, like the FBI, assumed that Levinson had died because of his age, mental stress, diabetes, solitary confinement, heart condition, missing his family while in harsh prison conditions, and possibly even torture. Additionally, there had been no sign of him for seven years since he appeared in a hostage video pleading for U.S. government help.

Over the 42 years that Salahuddin has been in Iran, he has developed high-level contacts within the Iranian Government and the private sector, including charitable organizations and aviation. On one occasion, he traveled a great distance in inclement weather and met with a former executive with the International Committee for the Red Crescent (ICRC). That individual was known to have recovered the remains of victims of various wars in the region. In this case, the man offered to resolve the matter and return Levinson's remains to the Levinson family in south Florida. Also, Salahuddin advised me that he had a contact in private aviation who had agreed to fly the remains out of Iran and then also arrange for the remains to be securely sent directly to me at my residence in New York City. I would then be responsible for returning Levinson's remains to his family.

When Salahuddin's ICRC contact was unsuccessful in even establishing proof of death, much less acquiring Levinson's remains, Salahuddin began to speculate that the reason for this was that Levinson was still alive and imprisoned by the IRGC (Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps), in Iran. Then, when I showed Salahuddin the proof-of-life documents, he was even more convinced that Levinson could still be alive. He arranged to have a long-time friend and former IRGC officer telephonically contact me on May 8, 2018. The phone call was supposed to lay out the terms for Levinson's release. I told Salahuddin that whoever would be calling me should be able to at least speak basic English since I did not speak a word of Farsi. Salahuddin passed that information on to his IRGC contact and was told there might be an interpreter on the phone, someone who spoke Farsi and English. That person would be Robert Levinson himself.

Salahuddin instructed me on exactly how to deal with the IRGC caller. First, the caller should be required to prove that Levinson was alive and that this was not a hoax. As I waited anxiously for that phone call over the weekend, it was announced on the news that President Trump was going to withdraw the United States from the JCPOA, the Iran Nuclear Deal, signed by President Obama after being negotiated with Iran by Secretary of State John Kerry. Shortly after the announcement, Salahuddin called me and said that, because of the announcement, the anticipated phone call from Iran, and possibly Levinson, was called off immediately. (I have recordings and emails regarding the phone call that never happened.)

Over the past 15 years since Levinson went missing and the 42 years that Salahuddin has been a Most Wanted FBI Fugitive, several credible people, including the Levinson family attorney himself, David McGee, have expressed their belief that the United States Government did not want to see Levinson returned. It was hard for me to believe that but based on the constant obstruction I had encountered in trying to establish Levinson's situation, his exact location, and a possible extraction. I eventually began to

believe that these theories may be true. Everything I did was met with resistance and actual threats from the FBI. Other government agencies I contacted offered no help and referred me back to the FBI, the primary investigative agency in charge of Levinson's disappearance.

Over the years, Salahuddin had expressed a desire to return to his family and to see his mother before she passed away, but that did not happen. Assuming a reasonable plea deal with the prosecutor, Salahuddin was ready to return to the U. S., voluntarily. However, since that time his passport had been taken away from him as punishment for his unauthorized meeting with a CIA operative, Robert Levinson. In a sense, were he able to leave Ian and surrender to the FBI, he would be fleeing one type of imprisonment—that of living under the repressive regime of the Ayatollahs—and replacing it with a different form of captivity: a two-inmate cell in the Maryland State prison system.

In 2018, Salahuddin personally expressed to me his desire to return to the U.S. and asked me to act as his advocate. I was able to get a former FBI Special Agent/former Assistant U.S. Attorney to take Salahuddin's case pro bono and tried unsuccessfully to negotiate the fugitive's return to the U.S. through the Maryland County's Prosecutor's Office. The Prosecutor. confidentially informed Salahuddin's pro bono attorney, that U.S intelligence. "Does not want Salahuddin back because the FBI is afraid that he might disclose some embarrassing information about the CIA and the U.S. Government, in general, regarding its complicity in the 1980 assassination of Tabatabai" This amounts to nothing less than a cover-up of a cover-up at the highest levels of government.

Research Questions Answered

To answer the primary question by exploring the social phenomenon of Islamic terrorism, I analyzed the strategic tactics employed by foreign and domestic terrorist organizations (the Islamic Republic of Iran, IRI, and the IGA, respectively). Those recruiting tactics were designed to reach, what they believed, were the most susceptible members of society—the African American Muslim population—and to radicalize them to engage in violent acts of terrorism on their behalf. Personal narratives from the researcher and two participants, designated as 'known terrorists" by U.S. Defense Department, are also included in this chapter.

Research Question 1

What are the social determinants, including but not limited to the economic, political, educational, religious, psychological, and ideological components that create the mindsets of potential Islamic terrorists?

No consensus has emerged among scholars regarding the causes of radicalization into violent extremism. However, based on the data collected and analyzed in this research study, four major themes emerged, along with several subthemes and codes, as presented in a Table, included in this study. Those social determinants contribute to the Islamic terrorist mindset and make certain individuals more susceptible to recruitment by Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) than others, are many. They play into the radicalization process of American jihadists based on common Islamic fundamentalism ideology. Therefore, there are significant overlaps among themes.

Of all the contributing factors listed, certain determinants seem to have more influence than others on a prospect's decision to enter a terrorist organization and to

engage in terrorist activity: injustice, perceived deprivation, identity, sense of belonging, collective grievances, and terrorist violence are linked to and justified by ideological (e.g., political, religious) objectives and almost always involves a group or multiple actors/supporters (Borum, 2004).

Research Question 2

What led members of the IGA, during the Iranian Revolution, to fight, kill innocents, and risk almost certain death in the name of Islam, their newfound religion? In other words, what explains the foreign fighter phenomenon?

What prompted Iisa Abdullah Ali, for example to become foreign fighter for six years in Lebanon, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, despite being shot multiple times? Ali replied, “For the pleasure of God, by taking a stand to help the ill-treated and oppressed.” Regarding fighting against Palestinians, in a text message to this researcher in 2018, Ali wrote,” I learned a lot about them, in Lebanon, very brutal. I had to kill many of them while there. It was an insane time. I became someone I didn’t think I could become.”

Concerning his feeling toward the United States, another text message read, “ No matter what, it’s still my country, even though there’s some things I wouldn’t agree with. It is my homeland. . . . And this country has come through for me multiple times. Even when I’d been on the other side of the fence, our country was there when I needed help the most. I do love the good folk in this land.”

He continued,

> What a strange world for me. The people I sought to help were the ones who sought to do me harm, and our people in America came for me and showed their faces. I can’t ever forget this country was there for me. I’m honored to be American. . . . What a life I’ve lived, so strange. Even when the media called me a terrorist, your agency spoke up for me. This I know for a fact. . . . My only sadness is that I was forced back into this body and to be in life again, yet I accept

> the weight and responsibility of being again." (When Ali refers to "your agency," he is speaking about the FBI.) Finally, "God and the angels spoke to me. I am a professional Soldier of Islam. I stand up for the oppressed in the world. I am a walking dead man!"

Research Question 3

How do terrorist activities, like those engaged in by the IGA 4 decades ago, pose threats to the United States' national security today?

The most likely threat to the U.S. comes from terrorists inspired by ideologies such as the jihadist terrorist threat, and the most typical jihadist threat remains homegrown rather than from foreign nationalists infiltrating the country (*New America*, 2019). Terrorist attacks like those engaged by the IGA in the late 1970s and early 1980s still represent a threat, albeit somewhat diminished, to the U.S. Risk assessment and prevention of terrorism present challenging tasks. Therefore, law enforcement and intelligence agencies should be adequately equipped to deal with those threats, whether they are coming from domestic terrorist organizations, lone wolves, or returning foreign fighters.

Potential terrorist recruits find themselves on a pathway to violence paved with collective grievances and moral outrage, framed by the fixation on a malicious ideology and fueled by charismatic "spiritual sanctioners" like Anwar al-Awlaki, using social determinants as part of their assessment and recruitment strategy. (Iman al-Awlaki had the distinction of being the first United States citizen to be targeted and killed by a U.S. drone strike.)

Themes Overview

Four themes were developed after a manual analysis of the collected data: Islamic Fundamentalist Ideology, Radicalization Process, Recruitment Targets, and American Jihadism.

Theme 1: Islamic Fundamentalism Ideology.

Islamic fundamentalists oppose the infiltration of secular and Westernizing influences and seek to institute Islamic law, including strict codes of behavior.

Religious fundamentalists believe in the superiority of their religious teachings and the strict division between righteous people and evildoers (Altermeyer & Hunsberger, 2004).

Theme 2: Radicalization Process.

"Radicalization usually involved grievances, ideological socializations, social networking, and enabling support structures" (Hafez, 2015, p. 16).

Theme 3: Recruitment Targets.

The long-term survival of the terrorist recruitment process exists.

Terrorist organizations have historically used various tactics to recruit new members, often based on their ideologies, locations, and objectives, and, from their perspective, no uniform recruitment process exists (Bloom, 2017). The recruitment process used by the IGA (subject of Case Study #1) in recruiting its members, including Dawud Salahuddin and Isa Abdullah Ali (subject of Case Studies 4 and 5, respectively), is a prime example.

Theme 4: American Jihadism.

American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us is a book by investigative journalist Steven Emerson that documents the clandestine activities of Islamic terrorist groups such as Hamas in the United States. Emerson, seeking to explain the ideological motives of the global Islamic Jihad movements, contended that their efforts are aimed at exploiting the freedoms prevalent in the United States to infiltrate and develop various terrorist recruiting and financing networks and set the foundations for the destruction of the West.

Jenkins (2020) wrote that American jihadists were overwhelmingly male, with fewer than 6% percent women. At an average age of 27, these men were going to conflict zones in countries they had never seen, not to visit but to fight, perhaps die, or to obtain skills that would enable them to come back to the United States and carry out attacks. Perhaps the best example of an American Jihadist is that of the subject of Case Study #5, Isa Abdulla Ali, one of our participants and the subject of the documentary, *American Jihadist.*

Assassination Cover-up

1. February 1979, shortly before the triumph of the Islamic Revolution and before Imam Rodullah Khomeini's victorious return to Iran from Paris, an Islamic Revolutionary Council was formed at the behest of the Iman. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was appointed as a member of this Council, together with other notables.
2. April 1979 the Council created revolutionary tribunals, which called for the execution of enemies of the revolution.

3. April 1980 the tribunals delivered an ultimatum to leftist groups to leave Iranian universities and, following this, a “large number of leftists were killed or wounded”.
4. With the fall of the Shah of Iran, SAVAK the Shah’s dreaded secret police force, became SAVAMA, under the new regime.
5. Islamic Guerillas of American (IGA) was formed by Bahram Nahidian, SAVAMA’s Washington, D. C. area station chief. Dawud Salahuddin was Nahidian’s personal bodyguard and IGA leader.
6. At a 1980 Muslim Student Association (MSA) meeting, Iranian SAVAMA agents, allowed into the U.S. despite INS objection, gave orders to assassinate anti-Khomeini Iranian exiles living in the country. Nahidian’s son, Abdullah Nahidian was head of MSA at the time.
7. U.S. officials closed the Iranian Embassy in D. C. and expelled Iranian officials A1 Khamenei, Leader of the Iran’s Revolutionary Council issued a fatwa (a legal pronouncement: order to kill in this case) on the life of Ali Akbar Tabatabai, the Shah’s former secretary who was organizing anti-Khomeini protests and purportedly staging a military coup to over-throw the new regime, according to Salahuddin.
8. The *fatwa* was given to SAVAMA General Fardoust, who came to the U.S. on a special visa, with the assistance of Richard Helms and delivered the *fatwa* to SAVAMA Washington, D. C. station chief, Bahram Nahidian (Helms had been CIA Director from 1966-1973 and U. S. Ambassador from 1973 to 1976.)

9. On July 22, 1980, after accepting the *fatwa* from Nahidian, Salahuddin, admittedly, carried it out by shooting Tabatabai to death at the victim's Bethesda, MD residence.
10. On the morning of July 23, 1980, according to documents and testimony, a meeting was held in the office of U. S. Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti, attended by National Security Council (NSC) & CIA. It was decided to put a "national security clamp" on the Tabatabai assassination. The FBI blocking an active Nahidian surveillance, being conducted by Washington D. C. Metropolitan P. D. Intelligence Division was part of a top-down Carter administration scheme to use every available channel to have the 53 American hostages in Tehran freed before the Democratic presidential nominating convention, scheduled to begin Aug. 11. 1980.
11. As a sign of the Carter administration's "good faith", Nahidian had, effectively, received a license to kill on U.S. soil and carry out other terrorist attacks. Tabatabai was the first but not the last victim of this policy. The hastily held "national security clamp" constructed in A.G. Benjamin Civiletti's office on that morning, marked the beginning of a cover-up that is still ongoing to the present day. Currently, Ali Khamenei, the former Revolutionary Council member, who issued the Tabatabai fatwa, is Iran's Supreme's Leader and have been since 1989, when his predecessor, Ayatollah Rodullah Khomeini passed away. At stake is the potential public disclosure of the complicity of the Carter White House, the NSC, top USDJ, FBI and CIA officials in the Iranian-sponsored Tabatabai political assassination in 1980. It

serves as an indictment of the country's entire criminal justice system at the time, and a threat to its democracy.

12. Today, Dawud Salahuddin knows all this and more and he could attest to it with first-hand knowledge, because, as the actual assassin, he was directly involved. In the eyes of some still powerful people, Dawud Salahuddin's knowledge of this murder-conspiracy, makes him even more dangerous than ever. It is this former FBI Agent's personal and professional opinion, that is the primary reason why this long-time FBI fugitive remains at-large.
13. In a scathing 10-page report, written by the late Carl Shoffler, he recounted this corruption and obstruction of justice, as major cover-up, which he personally witnessed as Chief Detective on the IGA/ Belfield/Salahuddin investigation. The report, entitled Investigative Leads starts off:

Det. Carl Shoffler's Intelligence Report

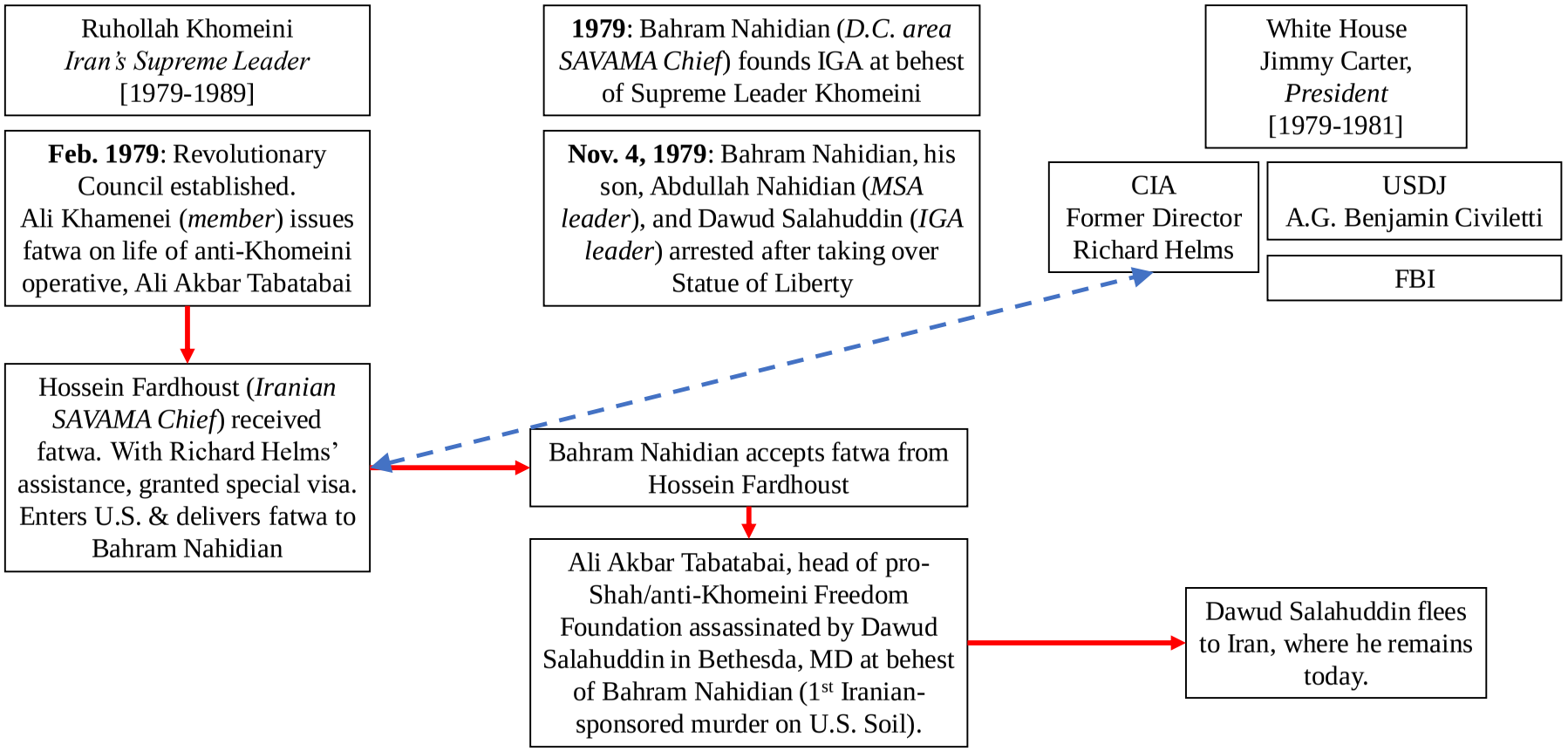
"There is far more than meets the eye in the Justice Department's September announcement of their investigation of the Washington, D. C. police for "police brutality" at the July 27 Iranian demonstration. *Investigative Leads* is issuing the special report because what is behind this action represents a serious threat to the domestic security of our nation."

It continues: "*Investigative Leads* has now directly learned that the investigation has been initiated through the Justice Department at the behest of the Iranian government. This action has been taken to appease Iran in order to consolidate a political deal between the Carter Administration and Iran, a deal which would include releasing the U. S. hostages in Iran prior to the November election in order to bolster President Carter's re-

election chances. Shoffler's shocking report ends the following declaration: "The assassination of Ali Akbar Tabatabai is just one of the results and the blame for this rests on the shoulders of Attorney General Civiletti as surely as if he himself pulled the trigger."

Following is a diagram connecting the dots to the Tabatabai assassination:

Tabatabai Political Assassination
Participants & Timeline
July 22, 1980



Chapter 5

(While nothing is easier than to denounce the evil doer,

Nothing is more difficult than to understand him.)

–Dostoevsky

Introduction

Islamic terrorism is a recognized serious national security threat to the homeland. The findings generated from this study could aid authorities in developing adequate procedures to mitigate threats from terrorism and safeguard the American public.

In this auotoethnographic study, using the narrative approach, the researcher/participant recognized that, although there is "no single catalyst" (Combs, 2013) for someone to become an Islamic extremist and no single path to radicalization, there are multiple contributing factors, with some having greater significance than others in the process.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the social determinants, including but not limited to, the economic, political, educational, religious, psychological, and ideological components that create mindsets of potential Islamic terrorists?

Research Question 2

What lead members of the IGA, during the period of the Iranian Revolution, to fight, kill innocents, and risk almost certain death, in the name of Islam, their newfound religion. In other words, what explains the foreign fighter phenomenon?

Research Question 3

How do terrorist activities, like those engaged in by the IGA four decades ago, pose threats to the national security of the United States, today?

Demographic Data

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S., the threat of militant Islamic terrorism has taken center stage. While these extremely violent religious extremists represent a minority view, the threat posed by converts to Islam, involved in homegrown jihadism and the foreign fighter phenomenon, are overrepresented in these activities and the U.S. has more than its share of such converts. Research on the estimated number of converts to Islam, in several Western countries, among its Muslim population, that engaged in homegrown jihadism, has shown that they do not reach a figure higher than 5.1%, with one exception. That exception is the United States, which reports 23% (Schuurman, 2016). This should be of concern to both U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies and further demonstrates the need for such a study.

This study sought to increase knowledge and understanding of the terrorist mindset. A theory of what motivates individuals to join terrorist movements emerged through four themes presented in the Themes, Subthemes and Codes Table (Chapter 3, pages 47-49).

Interpretation

The conclusions of this study, may lead to better understanding of the progression of radicalization and furthermore, support early intervention strategies (deradicalization). Additionally, understanding the root causes of radicalization helps society to better combat the effects of that process, namely terrorism. This study was guided by the three

research questions answered in Chapter 4,. The themes identified in this study suggest that the radicalization process is extremely complex with "multiple drivers" or casual factors that attribute to the process and there is no single catalyst responsible for radicalization.

Researchers and practitioners seek "pathways" as an alternative to "profiles" when looking to understand the radicalization (Horgan, 2008) and more about recruitment. Religion plays a key role in the pathway to radicalization. Individual and group behavior have long been influenced by religion and the Islamic state exploits religion doctrines to justify their jihad idealizing religious narratives as a means of recruiting. Schuurman (2016) suggests that those who convert to Islam are more vulnerable and susceptible to the pathway of radicalization for the reason that they "lack knowledge of Islam" according to (Spechard 2017). Converts are particularly susceptible to recruitment due to their limited knowledge of Islam and they attempt to establish their loyalty to Islam through extreme violence. Another emerging theme is grievance collection and the late Osama Bin Laden is a classic example of a grievance collector.

Among the personal motive codes that emerged were self-worth, self-esteem, personal fulfillment, while the attraction to the radical movement has more to do with yearning to fit in with the group and the need for social acceptance and fulfillment (Deparice-Okomba, 2019). According to that theory "belonging to the group's" becomes vital to learning and integrating the ideology, selflessness and taking part in a shared adventure to radicalization process and jihadist recruitment strategies (Horgan, 2008).

Recruiters target those individuals who appear the most vulnerable to radicalization by providing those victims with a sense of purpose, fulfillment, belonging and most importantly, revenge. According to (Trip, 2009) "an angry person will be

vulnerable and easily influenced by extremist propaganda (p. 5) thus making that individual easily susceptible to radicalization. Feelings of deprivation account for realistic deprivation.

Context

Social science researchers have studied terrorism for at least the past 50 years but are still not approaching the definite theory of its causes, as there seems to be no universal "key" factor(s) that directly leads to radicalization of Islamic converts. Most debate on domestic terrorism has focused on policies related to prevention. There was a wide-spread view that poverty was a feature that creates terrorism and that view dominated much of the discourse (Kahn & Weiner, 2002) and ran concurrent with theoretical and empirical studies that addressed the economics associated with conflict. Some researchers suggest that aggressive national anti-terrorism policies were attributable to the increase of domestic terror.

In the case the IGA, its founders believed that African Americans generally live in underserved communities, are an oppressed marginalized minority and the victims of radical prejudice. Literature review and research findings also focused on countries where ethnic and or religious minorities occupy a lower status in society. Such groups are more likely to experience and engage in terrorism. Imam Bahram Nahidian preached that the United States is a systemically racist country, one in which African Americans are treated as second class citizens. This tends to happen when the disenfranchised groups also experience significant economic deprivation and/or are excluded from political power and are unable to promote change in society.

Exclusion and discrimination lead to collective grievances by these groups against the government and makes them more likely to challenge the majority population and the status quo. In these scenarios, the lack of social integration routinely hinders government. “Attempts to elicit cooperation from members of minority groups and lack of cooperation and cohesion promotes the alienation of these groups and leads them to identify with domestic terrorist groups thus generating the worst possible outcomes” (Claude, 2007).

Flower (2006) concluded that available data does generally support the hypothesis of convert over-representative in Islam extremism especially in the case of foreign fighters. As a result, a significant numbers of converts become involved in extremism, due to distinct personal characteristics and background including mental health issues and a history of traumatic life experiences. He further concluded by viewing radicalized converts as stereotypically damaged persons or as individuals seeking meaning, who were preyed on by recruiters. Available insights point at heterogeneous picture of the process that can lead to involvement in Islamic militancy. Flowers called for future research to be more specifically robust but also analytically diverse enough to study the range of factors that the individual, group and structural levels of analysis as well as the process of conversion, itself.

Regarding prison conversion and radicalization, there is a plethora of literatures available on radicalization within penal institutions. A 2010 study, in the FBI Bulletin, examines prisoners converting to Islam, while incarcerated, and those who then develop radical beliefs. According to the FBI, the combination of disaffected youth, lack of religious knowledge and confinement with radical individuals, is a perfect situation for recruiters seeking to convert ordinary prisoners into religious extremist causes. Prisons

literally provide a captive audience of disaffected young men easily influenced by charismatic extremist leaders like Bahram Nahidian, Said Ramadan and Dawud Salahuddin.

These inmates, mostly minorities, feel that the United States has discriminated against them or against other Muslim minorities, overseas. This perceived oppression combined with the limited knowledge of Islam makes this population vulnerable to extremists looking to radicalize and recruit them. Recruitment among converts to Islam reflects a selection bias on the part of recruiters seeking targets of opportunity among aggrieved individuals with low levels of religious knowledge.

This study also explored the phenomenon of American Jihadism, as it sought to understand the minds and motives of these individuals in a non-judgmental manner. The study analyzed the strategic outreach and tactics employed by terrorist groups in order to attract and reach susceptible, alienated, marginalized and disaffected African Americans.

Furthermore, the study examined a number of identifiable social determinants that created the mindsets of two such American Jihadists, this study's participants, both of whom actually picked up guns, killed many people in the process and risked almost certain death in the name of the new-found religion.

Ideology is the simplest explanation for terrorist recruitment and the closest to the professed motives of terrorists themselves. There is a naive theory of economic grievance among politicians and policy makers with figures such as George Bush, Al Gore, Tony Blair, and Bill Clinton using the terrorism-poverty connection to call for increased aid to the developing world organization (Roberts & Horgan, 2010). According to those two scholars, violent extremist offenders demonstrate different risk indicators compared to ordinary violent offenders. Their general assessment is based on the nature of the extremist ideology; the

justification for the use of violence to achieve desired goals; intentions to engage such violence; and the capacity of the individual(s) to plan and act at a given time.

In addition, information on five background areas should be gathered. For (Borum, et al., 1999) these include (1) information that brought the subject to attention of authorities; (2) current and background information on the subject; (3) information about the attack related behaviors; (4) the motive(s) for the attack and (5) the target selection (Borum, et al., 1999); (Fein & Vosselkuil, 1998).

Prison System

Violent extremists comprise a difficult research population. By definition, they are isolated from society; may not be accessible to researchers and if they are, may not be allowed or willing to be interviewed. That leaves a number of issues underexplored and require further research. (Veldhuis, 2017). Bahram Nahidian and his card-carrying Muslim chaplain turned assassin, Dawud Salahuddin, recruited most of the domestic terrorist group IGA's members from local prisons and the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at the Howard University campus. In fact, it was at a lecture delivered by Nahidian to the MSA, that Salahuddin first met the Imam.

Brandon's Conclusion and Recommendations

Prison officials, security services and those involved in countering Islamic terrorism, should be aware of the dangers posed by the heavy recruitment of future jihadists, that goes on behind the prison gates. Brandon (2009) urges prison authorities that, whatever form of some de-radicalization utilized in the prison system, that careful selection of Imams and other partners, involved in such programs, is crucial and greater care is needed, based on the knowledge derived from the report. (Brandon, 2009)

Overall Threat by Muslim Americans–Opposing View

Brooks,(2011) contends that on both analytical and empirical grounds, and for a variety of reasons presented, there is not a significant basis for anticipating that Muslim Americans are increasingly motivated or capable of successfully engaging in lethal attacks in the United States.

Brook's Conclusion and Recommendations

Because of her findings, the author believes many analysts and public officials risk overstating the threat posed and mischaracterizing the threat, in turn, is potentially costly and counterproductive for the security of the U.S. and its citizens, for several reasons. (Brooks, 2011).

Risk Assessment

The result of the (Pressman, 2009) research was a new SPJ protocol, *Violent Extremist Risk Assessment or* VERA, which is designed to be used with persons having a history of extremist violence or having been convicted of such offenses. VERA is a conceptual "research" tool, intended to generate debate and discussion.

Pressman's Conclusion and Recommendation

The author addressed, what she demonstrated, was the need to develop an appropriate protocol to criminal actors, motivated by political, religious, or other extremism, by developing tool referred to as VERA. It is a research consultative protocol, which may be considered as a supplemental guide, in addition to other established and validated tools, to address the specific feature of violent extremism. (Pressman, 2009-02)

The researcher offered identified five ways in which the Muslim-American communities may have minimized radicalization: 1) Public and Private denunciation of

Violence; 2) Self-policing; 3) Community Building; 4) Political Engagement and 5) Identity Politics.

Foreign Fighter & Lone Wolf Threats

Leduc(2016) emphasized that decision-makers must adapt new policies to deal not only with departing foreign fighters but also with the ones returning. Some of these returning foreign fighters are represented in the "sleeper cells" Iran claims to have in the U.S. Isa Abdullah Ali is a classic example. On one occasion, this researcher inquired of Ali as to his future plans. This 65 year old man, who still walks with a distinct limp from an injury he received in combat in 1986, responded that he is "On standby for God to call on (him) to return to the battlefield to fight on behalf of his fellow oppressed Muslims.

Leduc (2016) while studying the concept of foreign fighters as these individuals began returning from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, emphasized that decision-makers must now adapt policies to deal not only with the departing foreign fighters but also with the ones who are returning. Most counter-foreign fighter policies seek to keep these individuals from returning through deterrence, criminalization, removal of travel documents and even removal of their travel documents.

The research indicated that Muslim-Americans do not support terrorism directed at the United States or innocent civilians. At the same time, some of the interviewees were less quick to condemn other acts of violence outside the United States in instances where they considered the targets to be part of a genuine armed conflict. (Kurzman et al., 2011)

This study was conducted to find common characteristics of assassins and school attackers that may also characterize lone-wolf terrorists. It was that determined that at

least three of the individual-level mechanisms of radicalization were present in case histories of lone-wolf terrorists, as well as in those assassins and school attackers: 1) they plan and perpetrate violence; 2) the great majority act alone and 3) the great majority act out of some perceived grievance, rather than for material crisis ("unfreezing") and weapons experience. (Kurzman et al., 2011)

These findings might serve as a useful guide for channeling resources to minimize the threat of future violence from these types of perpetrators. For instance, school psychologist and Veteran Administration ((VA) psychological service may be a first line of defense in identifying "loners" with the above-detailed characteristics, so they can be offered help with counselling, pharmacological treatment, or family assistance (McCauley et al., 2013).

Flower (2016) concluded that available data does generally support the hypothesis of convert overrepresentation in Islamic extremism, especially in the case of foreign fighters. A significant number of converts become involved in extremism due to distinct personal characteristics and background, including mental health issues and a history of traumatic life experiences.

HUMINT

The recruitment and management of informants–essential to many law enforcement investigations–may, however, pose an obstacle to successful community engagement efforts. Some Muslim communities' activists fear that law enforcement coerces immigrants into becoming informants, especially those with legal problems or those applying for green cards. Others fear that informants target and potentially entice impressionable youth into fictitious terrorist plots. There has also been public discussion

of the trustworthiness of informants with criminal backgrounds. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of open source reports indicates that confidential informants or undercover operatives were used in at least 40 of the post-9/11 homegrown jihadist terrorism cases. In some of these cases, the informants had criminal histories. In considering the tradeoff between security and liberty, policy makers face a judgment in those cases where an investigative tactic might inflame members of a particular community: Is the impact of that tactic counterproductive in the long run, or is it necessary, short-term collateral damage?

Researcher's Opposing Viewpoint

As a former FBI Informant Coordinator and SWAT Team Hostage Negotiator, this researcher challenges CRS's logic of shuttering at the thought that "in some cases, the informants had criminal histories" and, therefore, questionable "trustworthiness". While it would be far easier, less costly and much safer to recruit presumably trustworthy Eagle Boy Scouts as informants, having no criminal records, there is a reason why scout leaders do not award merit badges for warning of the next planned terrorist attack on their campgrounds.

Counter terrorism (CT) units should develop effective community-policing models that emphasizes good relations with Muslim communities, while incorporating their agencies' priorities (Law Enforcement Intelligence, 2004). Proactive targeted law enforcement responses have proven to be the best response to capturing and de-legitimizing terrorism (German, 2007). Trying to understand the mindset of HVE's, which is the primary aim of this study, involves "behavioral profiling, which is a more ethical and effective alternative to racial/religious profiling, both of which are immoral

and ineffective" (German, 2005).The intelligence failures of the United States to fully utilize HUMINT would continue with the 1979 Iranian revolution. The intelligence failure here can be attributed to the U.S. failure to perceive Iranian discontent with the Shah (Lowenthal, 1984). This could have only been detected by HUMINT, thus making it a failure in HUMINT collection. The failure to see what was coming was caused by limits placed on collection by policy makers. "Basically, intelligence officers were not allowed to have contact with those in the souks (markets and bazaars) who were opposed to the shah, because the shah's regime would be offended. Instead U.S. intelligence had to rely on the shah's police, SAVAK, which had an institutional interest in denying that any opposition existed (Lowenthal, 1994).

Those individuals who should be targeted for recruitment by CT units, not unlike FTO's use social determinants to assess and recruit HVE's, include American jihadists, members of radical MSA chapters at universities, and returning foreign fighters. "The threats posed by foreign fighters, including those recruited in the U.S are very dynamic and we will continue to identify individuals who joined the ranks of foreign fighters traveling to support ISIS. Furthermore, those foreign fighters who attempt to return to the U. S. and homegrown violent extremists may aspire to attack the United States within, will be investigated and deterred." (FBI Wray, 2018).

One of the areas in which lack of HUMINT is a recurring problem is that involving Hezbollah's American sleeper cells which, according to (Levitt, 2019) are just waiting for Iran's signal to strike the United States. As noted early in his personal narrative, Isa Abdullah Ali was a Hezbollah captain in Iran's Middle East proxy wars. In

addition, there exists in the U. S. a secretive group referred to as "9/10", also known as the Black Ops of Hezbollah, an Iranian-controlled "sleeper cell" (Levitt, 2019).

Ali Kourani, a New York City resident, convicted of spying for Hezbollah, was tasked to carry out pre-operational surveillances of potential targets in the U. S. Admittedly part of a "sleeper cell", Kurani, during an FBI interview, reported that, in the event the U. S and Iran went to war, U. S. sleeper cells, like his, would be called upon to act, as they would be "triggered into action." (Levitt, 2019).

Researcher's Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

–Author and Philosopher George Santayana

This would not be the first-time hostages were left behind in Iran. Several Americans were abandoned in Iran by America in 2015 (including Robert Levinson, once again, taken captive in 2007) when the State Department and other U.S. officials agreed to the first Iran nuclear deal called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran's hostage-taking habit, began with Iranian Revolution in 1980, when Iranian students, with the backing of the Ayatollah and Bahram Nahidian, took over the U. S. Embassy in Tehran. The so-called Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, enacted in 2015 was supposed to prevent this from happening. Yet this proved not to be the case with Iran, as its history has shown that country's leadership simply cannot be trusted.

Furthermore, the title of the law itself, is an oxymoronic as the hostage, Robert Levinson, was not *Recovered*; there was no actual *Accountability* and therefore this legislative effort was nothing more than an *Act.*

Real accountability would call for Congress to hold hearings in an attempt to answer at least a few basic questions:

1. with the Intelligence communities' immense budget (U.S.G. spent $43.5 billion on intelligence in 2007), why was it necessary for the CIA to send a retired FBI agent, as a contractor, to Iran to recruit an American fugitive as an intelligence asset?.
2. from a strictly diplomatic standpoint, how is it that the State Department, with all its funding, four consecutive American Presidents (Bush, Obama, Biden and Trump) all failed to effect Robert Levinson's release from captivity in Iran or repatriate his remains?

Studying history is necessary to avoid repeating past mistakes. This country, not only failed to remember their past mistakes but, in the case of the U.S. hostage debacle of 1979-1981 (444 days), actively worked to and succeeded in covering-up those historical mistakes. Therefore, the U. S was doomed or "condemned to repeat it" and the Levinson family, unfortunately, is a testament to Santayana's aphorism.

The aim of this study was to assist policymakers and law enforcement officials, by providing an understanding of the nature of the threat the United States faces, domestically. It also sought to contribute to knowledge to the body of knowledge on the subject of Islamic terrorism and to aid Counter terrorism professionals, on how best to meet the emerging threat of homegrown violent extremists and returning foreign fighters, by better understanding what constitutes the recruitment and radicalization processes of Islamic terrorist organizations.

It is this researcher's sincere hope and prayer, that our country will benefit from such knowledge and that, in the process, innocent lives may be saved. May God bless America and keep its people safe from harm!

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