

START Bulletin

S u m m e r 2 0 0 8

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods, and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics, and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information on START, please visit <http://www.start.umd.edu/>.

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START Highlights

S u m m e r 2 0 0 8

one



Betty Pfefferbaum, Monica Schoch-Spana, Susan Cutter, Kathy Sherrieb, and Mark Tompkins presented findings from their ongoing START projects to representatives from a variety of Federal agencies at a *Department of Homeland Security Workshop on Community Resilience* organized by the Science and Technology Directorate of DHS.

two



START Assistant Director for Research and Communication Gary A. Ackerman testified before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee in April as an expert witness on the topic of nuclear terrorism and the threat it poses to the United States.

three



Jon Wilkenfeld is the Principal Investigator on a newly awarded project on "The Ecology of Terrorist Organizations," funded by the National Science Foundation through its Human Social Dynamics program. The project also involves START researchers Gary LaFree, Gary Ackerman, Laura Dugan, Victor Asal, Karl Rethemyer, and Amy Pate.

four



START is partnering with the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) of DHS to assist with DNDO efforts to integrate social and behavioral considerations into assessments of the likely use of nuclear technology in a terrorist incident.

five



START developed and provided a 10-week "Introduction to Terrorism" training program for the Transportation Security Administration, with a series of START researchers each delivering sessions on topics related to the history of terrorism, terrorist motivations, and terrorist tactics.



Data files for START's Global Terrorism Database are now available to the public through the Terrorism and Preparedness Data Resource Center, accessible at www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd.

Maryland's START Center Earns 3-Year Renewal from DHS

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) has been renewed for an additional three years of support from the Office of University Programs in the Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Through this renewal, START will receive \$5.2 million in the coming year and an anticipated \$11.7 million through 2011.

Based at the University of Maryland, START was launched in 2005 as part of the DHS-supported Center of Excellence program and has a mission of advancing science-based knowledge about the human causes and consequences of terrorism as a resource for homeland security policymakers and practitioners. To achieve this mission, START launched a robust research and education effort involving faculty and students at the University of Maryland and at more than 30 partner institutions around the world, focused on advancing scholarship about the behaviors and beliefs of terrorists, the communities that support terrorists, and the communities that are victims of ter-

rorist activity.

During the next three years, START will enhance and extend its ongoing research and education programs, focusing its investigations on three core areas:

- the radicalization process,
- the evolution of terrorist groups, and
- community resilience relative to the terrorist threat.

START will sponsor a total of 32 projects related to these core research areas between 2008 and 2011, with support from the Office of University Programs, as well as from the Human Factors Division and International Programs office of the S&T Division of DHS. These projects will involve more than 50 faculty researchers (more than half of which are new to the START consortium) and will employ theories and methods from a broad array of academic disciplines, including anthropology, communications, criminology, geography, international relations, political science, psychology, public health, and sociology.

START Director and University of Maryland professor of criminology Gary LaFree notes that, "pulling together this great pool of research talent across a broad variety of academic specializations provides a unique opportunity to make major advances in the social science understanding of terrorism and its effects."

START projects will generate findings that are relevant and accessible to the homeland security community, but will also make fundamental contributions

to academic scholarship on terrorism. In addition, START will support a range of programs for undergraduates and graduate students, including research assistantships, scholarships, curriculum and coursework, and professional development opportunities, as well as an interdisciplinary Undergraduate Minor in Terrorism Studies at the University of Maryland.



Additional information on START, its current projects and programs, and its plans for the next three years is available at www.start.umd.edu. Information on the DHS Center of Excellence program is available at <http://www.hsuniversityprograms.org/COE/index.cfm>.

START in the News

For more START in the News pieces, see
http://www.start.umd.edu/media/start_in_the_news

UPI Reports on START Social Network Project (United Press International)

July 31, 2008

START's Director, Gary LaFree, and START's Executive Director, Kathleen Smarick, comment on the new study by Paul Harwood of the University of North Florida.

For more information on Harwood's study, *Homegrown Radicalization and the Role of Social Networks and Social Inclusiveness in the United States*, see the complete project description [here](#).

[DHS Funds Study of U.S. Social Networks full text.](#)

GTD Data Used in Special Report (The Economist)

July 25, 2008

A special report in the Economist on Al-Qaeda and global terrorism uses data from START's Global Terrorism Database.

"Winning or losing?" full text.

http://www.economist.com/specialreports/display-story.cfm?story_id=11701218



Dr. Gary LaFree. Photo by Paul Wedig.

START Director Interviewed on Human Security Report (Congressional Quarterly)

June 14, 2008

Congressional Quarterly Reporter, Matt Korade, interviewed START Director, Dr. Gary LaFree, on the recent [Human Security Brief](#) and its mention of discrepancies between its own findings and those of START's Global Terrorism Database.

LaFree outlined the different ways terrorist events are reported as well as discussing recent trends in terrorism. [Full text available here.](#)

START Educational Programs Highlighted (Maryland Daily Record)

May 29, 2008

Danielle Ulman's piece in the Maryland Daily Record, [State Institutions Pumping Up CSI For Real Offerings](#), highlights START's educational programs.

The article reported on criminal justice and homeland security programs in close proximity to Washington, DC. Among the other programs mentioned is another DHS Center of Excellence - the Center for the Study of Preparedness and Catastrophic Event Response (PAC-ER) based out of Johns Hopkins University.

Zakaria Discusses GTD and Challenges of Tracking Terrorism (Newsweek, Washington Post)

May 24, 2008

Newsweek columnist Fareed Zakaria discussed START and its Global Terrorism Database project in his piece "[The Only Thing We Have To Fear](#)".

Zakaria's column reports on findings from a study conducted at Simon Fraser University that concludes that fatalities from terrorism are actually on the decline globally if incidents in Iraq are excluded from calculations.

As noted by START Director Gary LaFree in a [response to this report](#), it is true that removing Iraq from analyses dramatically impacts findings on global terrorism trends. But, LaFree argues in an interview with the [Canadian Broadcasting Company](#), it is problematic to conclude that none of the violence occurring in Iraq at present qualifies as terrorism.

START Seminar: Disengagement and Deradicalization from Terrorism

Disengagement and Deradicalization from Terrorism. Are they possible? Are they the same?

Dr. John Horgan, Director of the International Center for the Study of Terrorism at Penn State University, examined these questions in the context of their processes for a crowd of 80 at the University of Maryland on April 15, 2008.

Horgan's presentation, "Disengagement and Deradicalization," was the most recent event in the START Seminar Series, a START initiative to bring leading experts in the field of homeland security to speak at the University of Maryland Campus.

In the Crist Boardroom of the Riggs Alumni Center, Horgan led with a large group session. He emphasized the importance of terminology in the study of disengagement and deradicalization, noting strong differences between the two terms. Horgan prefers the term "disengagement" because it does not necessarily imply leaving the terrorist movement. 'Disengagement,' he argues, captures the complexity of the process for the individual terrorist and recognizes that

individuals within terrorist movements constantly migrate between different roles and functions.

In fact, Horgan has found that disengagement rarely results from a total break from the movement. The nature of both the pathways and possibilities of leaving varies greatly by the individual's role within the movement and the experience of disengaging can be either voluntary or involuntary. In addition, Horgan has found that an individual's experience of disengagement can often be as gradual as their experiences of initially becoming involved in the movement in the first place.

Horgan's conclusions are based on years of fieldwork and study of terrorist movements. For his latest research project, he has so far personally interviewed 28 former terrorists from 13 different movements.

In these interviews, he has discovered striking parallels between the IRA and terrorist groups more active today. They have similarities across all three levels that Horgan studies; how individuals became involved in the movement, how they stayed involved, and how they disengaged. Most notably, in almost every group he has noticed a mismatch in the perceptions of former terrorists between the reasons they became involved in the movement and the reality of what their involvement subsequently entailed.

In conclusion of the main session, Horgan stressed that we need a more sophisticated idea of what disengagement involves, as well as a more realistic sense of what is possible

with current attempts to promote deradicalization. Horgan left the audience with a question: if we can successfully promote and facilitate disengagement from terrorist activity, does deradicalization really matter?

Student Session

Following the large group session, Horgan led a more informal session with a small group of Maryland students, the majority of which are enrolled in the START Terrorism Studies Minor Program (http://www.start.umd.edu/education/undergraduate_minor/). In this group, the students were able to ask him more detailed questions on the process of his fieldwork. With many of them intending to study terrorism and homeland security, they gained valuable advice on the process of fieldwork, which some plan to utilize in their future careers.



Student Session with Dr. Horgan.

START Summer Research Program

Twenty-two students from the University of Maryland (UMD) and twelve other universities are participating in summer internships at START. Most students are completing research as part of two long-term projects, the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the Terrorism and Ethnic Political Violence: Minorities at Risk for Organizational Behavior (MAROB) project. Interns for both projects have the opportunity to be part of a large, multi-year social science research project. With their work on the project, they have the opportunity to be part of research teams, including both graduate and undergraduate researchers, as well as faculty members.

GTD interns research terrorist attacks to verify existing data on terrorist incidents dating back to 1970, and gather new information to supplement the existing data. This summer, students are also working to improve the geo-coding of the locations of terrorist events to facilitate geo-spatial analysis. Dr. Gary LaFree and Dr. Laura Dugan, faculty members in the UMD Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, lead the project. GTD interns include:

Yesenia Balay – University of Puerto Rico at Ponce
Jason Belcher – University of Maryland
Rocky Cole – University of Georgia
Allison Gowallis – University of Maryland
Samantha Holcombe - University of Maryland
Claudio Perez – University of Miami
Amalia Paladino – John Jay College

MAROB interns research and analyze politically active ethnic minority groups throughout the world and explore the methods these groups use to try to bring about political change--methods ranging from inclusion in electoral politics to peaceful protest to support for or engagement in terrorism. The project is led by Dr. Jonathan Wilkenfeld, principal investigator and faculty member in the UMD Department of Government and Politics, and Dr. Amy Pate, MAROB Research Director. MAROB interns include:

Ashley Anderson – Stanford University
Drew Burton – University of Maryland
Samantha DiFilippa – University of Maryland
Elizabeth Gass – North Carolina State University
Verleen Holds – University of Montana
Balquees Janahi – Lake Forest College
Mariana Macedo – University of Maryland
Jose Monge – John Jay College
Peter Vining – Pennsylvania State University
Matt Wagner – University of Maryland

“I am excited about the opportunity to learn more about ethnic groups in Southeast Asia through the MAROB project, and also to see firsthand the kind of research that informs policy decisions at a Federal level. I’m also enjoying the chance to explore the D.C. area and spend time on the beautiful UMD campus.”

– Elizabeth Gass

A handful of other students are working on independent project with support from START:

~ Islamic Radicalization in Europe and North America: Parallels and Divergence

Erik Iverson - Tufts University – mentored by Dr. Gary Ackerman

~ Support for Terrorism as a Function of Individualistic Versus Collectivist Goals

Jo Sasota – Ohio State University - mentored by Dr. Arie Kruglanski

~ Terrorism and Homeland Security Curricula and Education

Amber Stoesser – University of Maryland – mentored by Dr. Katherine Worboys

~ Terrorism and State Fragility/Hijackings

Scott Wilson – University of Maryland – mentored by Susan Fahey

~ Community Field Studies and Analysis of Preparedness Networks

Edgar Villarreal - University of Colorado – mentored by Dr. Kathleen Tierney

“I’m very excited to be working at START this summer-- I’ve always been very impressed with both the people and the projects that the Consortium brings together. I look forward to making a contribution to the radicalization research that is being conducted here and am eager to begin to understand the methodologies and techniques that START uses to produce the high-quality research that it generates.”

– Erik Iverson

The START summer research program is one element of START’s strong educational program helping to prepare students for careers in the homeland security arena. According to START Assistant Director for Education, Dr. Katherine Worboys, “We consider the summer research program to be an integral part of START’s education programs. We structure the summer so that our visiting students are able to receive



one-on-one mentoring from faculty members renowned for their work on terrorism and responses to terrorism, as well as intensive training in both social and behavioral science research methods and professional development skills. We also work to maintain contact with all summer researchers so that they remain integrated into START's network of nearly 400 students."

Summer interns come together at START from five different programs. These include the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Scholars and Fellows Program, the DHS Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Leadership Program, the UMD Senior Summer Scholars Program, the UMD College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) Summer Research Initiative (SRI), and START For-Credit Internships. All five programs select top participants through competitive application processes.

START Recent Publications

More START Publications available at:
<http://www.start.umd.edu/publications/>

Journal Articles

Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security* 33(1):7-44.

Hairgrove, F. and D. McLeod 2008. "Circles drawing toward high risk activism: The use of usroh and halaqa in Islamist radical movements." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31: 399-411.

McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2008. "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:415-433.

Tucker, Phebe and Betty Pfefferbaum, Qaiser Khan, Jan Young, C. Aston, J. Holmes, K. Cook, Jamie Thompson. 2008. "Katrina survivors relocated to Oklahoma: A tale of two cities." *Psychiatric Annals* 38(2):125-133.

START 2008-2009 Pre-Doctoral Fellows

This program is available to graduate students and those who have completed graduate school within the last five years. Those selected to be Fellows are provided with \$5,000 to dedicate towards research expenses and professional development experiences to support their work in the area of terrorism studies.

Each Fellow works closely with individual mentors from the START research consortium. Mentors involve Fellows in their own START-related research, supervise Fellows' research, and help develop plans for using the Fellowship award to advance the Fellow's educational and research goals.

Roberta Belli - Criminology

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Project: Where Terrorists, Far-Right Extremists, and Greedy Criminals Meet: A Comparative Study of Financial Crimes in the United States

Mentor: [Joshua D. Feilich](#)

Heather Epkins - Communication

University of Maryland

Project: Drawing Red Lines: The Role of Outside Media Organizations, Routine and Organizational Structure on Perceptions of National Security Media

Mentor: [Steven M. Chermak](#)

Jeff Gruenewald - Criminology

Michigan State University

Project: Extremist Homicide in the United States: A Comparative Analysis of Far-Right, Bias, and Non-Ideological Homicide

Mentor: [Steven M. Chermak](#)

Shanaka Jayasekara - Security Studies

Macquarie University

Project: Weapons Procurement Operations of Secular (Nationalist) Armed Groups and Assessment of the Involvement with Islamist Groups

Mentor: [Gary Ackerman](#)

Kevin Keenan - Geography

Clark University

Project: Awareness of Vulnerability to Terrorism in Urban Areas: Social Network and Mobility Effects in Boston, MA

Mentor: [Susan L. Cutter](#)

Peter Krause - Political Science

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Project: Coercion by Any Other Name Should Smell as Sweet: The Political Effectiveness of Terrorism

Mentor: [Martha Crenshaw](#)

Stuart Lee - Criminology

University of Cambridge

Project: An Examination of the Relationship Between Conventional Crime Rates and Political Violence in Northern Ireland

Mentor: [Richard L. Legault](#)

Christine Muller - American Studies

University of Maryland

Project: Cultural Implications of September 11 Through the Lens of Life Writing

Mentor: [Monica Schoch Spana](#)

Edward Orehek - Psychology

University of Maryland

Project: Consequences of Collectivism for Terrorism

Mentor: [Arie Kruglanski](#)

For more information on START Pre-doctoral and Post-doctoral fellowships, please visit: <http://www.start.umd.edu/education/fellowships/>

2008-09 Undergraduate Research Program Participants

START selects five students each year to participate in the Undergraduate Research Program (URP). All students conduct original research related to START's research agenda, resulting in a significant research paper and a presentation of research findings at the START Annual Meeting.

In return, START provides these undergraduate researchers with a stipend of \$3,000, to be used as salary for their contributions on START projects and to cover the costs of professional development opportunities.

Jason Belcher - Psychology

University of Maryland

Mentor: [Arie Kruglanski](#)

Kristin Gherzi - Psychology

Michigan State University

Mentor: [Steven M. Chermak](#)

Trista Hahn - Political Science

University at Albany, State University of New York

Mentor: [Victor Asal](#)

James Jiries - Public Administration

San Diego State University

Mentor: [Shawn Flanigan](#)

Benjamin Spear - Political Science

University at Albany, State University of New York

Mentor: [Victor Asal](#)

For more information on the START Undergraduate Research Program, please visit http://www.start.umd.edu/education/undergraduate_research_program/