

# START Bulletin

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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

*START Highlights showcase recent accomplishments of START researchers and students.*

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*one*



START Investigator Martha Crenshaw was awarded \$500,000 by the National Science Foundation as part of the Department of Defense's Minerva Initiative to identify patterns and comparisons in the evolution of terrorist organizations. Crenshaw, a professor at Stanford University, plans to use the award to analyze the development of threats to the United States.

*two*



2008-2009 START Pre-Doctoral Fellow Roberta Belli was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship of \$25,000 from the National Institute of Justice. This support will assist Belli in her research on financial crimes conducted by extremists in the United States. Belli is a doctoral candidate at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she works with START investigator Joshua D. Freilich.

*three*



The National Science Foundation awarded additional funding to START for the project "Agents of Change: The Ecology of Terrorist Organizations" led by Jonathan Wilkenfeld, Edward M. Crenshaw, Gary LaFree, V. S. Subrahmanian, and Victor Asal. This project is part of NSF's Human Social Dynamics Program, and the supplemental funding provides additional support to involve undergraduate students in the ongoing research.

*four*



START Undergraduate Research Program (URP) participant, Celinet Duran, was awarded an Undergraduate Student Minority Scholarship/Mentor Research Grant from the American Society of Criminology. She is mentored by START Investigator Joshua D. Freilich at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and her award will assist her with completing research comparing extremist groups inside and outside U.S. prisons.

*five*



For the past year START Director Gary LaFree has served on a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Panel investigating the relationship between threatening communication and actual behavior for the U.S. Secret Service. In September the NAS Panel hosted a two-day workshop with the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center in Washington, D.C.



Data files for START's Global Terrorism Database are now available to the public through the GTD website, accessible at [www.start.umd.edu/gtd/](http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/).



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**START**  
**The Year in Numbers**  
**(Fall 2008-Fall 2009)**

In its fourth year, START looks back on the products that its research has produced in the last 12 months:

**87**

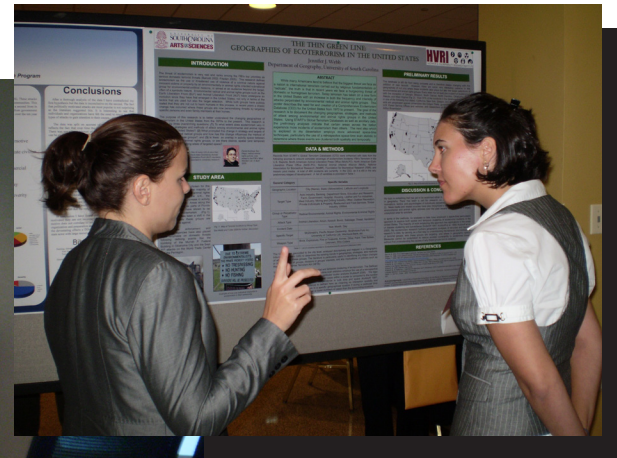
journal articles and book chapters by START investigators and students

**8**

Brown Bag seminars by START investigators at DHS Science & Technology

**\$8,847,126**  
in new grants/contracts

More than **2 million** hits to START web pages per month



**189**

students engaged in START research

**650+**

attendees at public presentations of START research

## START Consortium 2009 Annual Meeting



more than 150 attendees, this was the largest START Annual Meeting to date.

Thursday began with updates from START headquarters and the University of Maryland Division of Research. Throughout the morning and afternoon, researchers presented on their most current research findings from their START projects. The afternoon also included updates on START's educational programs and breakout sessions to assess the significant themes in terrorism scholarship and explore research gaps between them.

Friday included more research presentations, updates on START's communication strategies, and breakout sessions on integrating research efforts. For the first time, the meeting also included an end-user panel in order to reach out to those who currently use or could benefit from START research. During the panel, representatives of federal agencies discussed how social science research can best contribute to U.S. national and homeland security efforts.

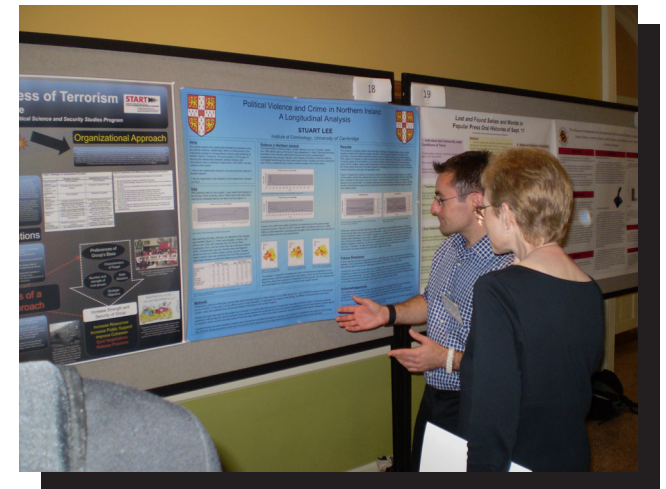


*START Investigator, John Horgan*

### Student Poster Competition

Thursday evening featured a student poster competition that gave students the opportunity to present their research both visually and orally to START Investigators. All posters were judged, and top poster prizes were awarded to:

**Stuart Lee** (2008-2009 START Fellow)  
Outstanding Graduate Poster Award  
*"Political Violence and Crime in Northern Ireland: A Longitudinal Analysis"*  
University of Cambridge, Department of Criminology  
Faculty Mentor: Richard Legault



*Stuart Lee and START Investigator, Fran Norris*

**James Jiries** (2008-2009 START URP)  
Outstanding Undergraduate Poster Award  
*"Another Look at Palestine"*  
San Diego State University, Department of Public Administration  
Faculty Mentor: Shawn T. Flanigan

## START Research Review 2009 Released

START has released its *Research Review 2009*. In this publication, START presents nine of its policy relevant projects in the review, as well as summaries of 23 other finished projects and a look into ongoing research within the Consortium.

The review aims to present the results of START's research, both written and visually, in a manner that lends itself to the needs of a broad audience. The projects featured in the *Research Review 2009* demonstrate the wide range of topics covered by START researchers.

The featured research reports in the *Research Review 2009* include:

- "Hearts and Minds: Surveys in Muslim-majority Countries Explore Opinions About Anti-U.S. Terrorism" - Steven Kull, Stephen Weber and Clark McCauley
- "Underlying Motivations: The Roles of Uncertainty, Failure and Collectivism in Support for Violent Extremism" - Arie Kruglanski

- "Mosaic of Minority Violence: Ethno-political Mobilization in the Middle East" - Jonathan Wilkenfeld, Amy Pate and Victor Asal
- "Criminal Violence and Terrorism: Developing a Portrait of U.S. Far-Right Extremists' Involvement in Homicides" - Joshua D. Freilich and Steven Chermak
- "A Magnet for Terrorism: Analyzing Terrorists' Decisions to Attack the United States" - Martha Crenshaw
- "Toxic Connections: Terrorist Organizational Factors and the Pursuit of Unconventional Weapons" - Gary Ackerman, Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer
- "Deterrence or Backlash?: The Impact of British Counterterrorism Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland" - Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan and Raven Korte
- "Public Preparedness for Terrorism: Findings from the National Survey of Disaster Experiences and Preparedness" - Linda Bourque, Dennis Mileti, Megumi Kano and Michele Wood
- "Community Resilience: The Community Assessment of Resilience Tool (CART)" - Betty Pfefferbaum, Rose Pfefferbaum and Fran Norris

The visual representations of the project provide a descriptive overview of the relevant findings. An example is the tile mosaic of ethnic groups that supplements Wilkenfeld, Pate and Asal's *Minority at Risk* project. The mosaic clearly organizes ethnic organizations on a protest-violence continuum,



and color-codes each to the broader ethnic group represented by the organization. This visualization helps audiences gain an understanding of the extent to which different organizations resort to violence, as well as factors that can be used to help predict the use of violence by an organization. Each of the nine featured projects listed above benefit from such visualizations.

START hopes that this presentation of its research findings will benefit both policy makers and the general public in understanding the insights the Consortium has generated and is willing to offer into relevant and important policy issues. The *Research Review 2009* may be obtained by requesting a printed copy from [infostart@start.umd.edu](mailto:infostart@start.umd.edu) or is available in low-resolution form online [here](http://www.start.umd.edu/morb).

## Event: Global Conflict & Terrorism Trends

In September, START partnered with University of Maryland's [Center for International Development and Conflict Management \(CIDCM\)](#) for a presentation and discussion on Global Conflict and Terrorism Trends.

This event, held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., featured presentations from:

- Dr. J. Joseph Hewitt (CIDCM) on risks of political instability around the world;
- Dr. Gary LaFree (START) on the frequency, nature, and concentrations of terrorist activity; and
- Dr. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (CIDCM & START) on the use of terrorist tactics by ethnopolitical organizations in the Middle East.

In addition, Dr. Tjip Walker from the Warnings and Analysis Division of the Conflict Mitigation and Management unit within the U.S. Agency for International Development provided commentary on the research provided by the presenters.

Findings from this presentation were drawn from several major projects:

- [The Global Terrorism Database](#)
- [Minorities at Risk/Organizational Behavior](#)
- [CIDCM's Peace and Conflict 2010](#)

Key findings from the research include:

- Over the past two years, the risks of instability and conflict have increased significantly in the regions of the world where those dangers were already very high.
- The recurrence of armed hostilities in conflicts that have recently come to an end is one of the most serious and real threats to international stability.
- Terrorism is one form of political violence associated with instability, and the frequency of terrorist attacks worldwide continues to increase.
- Levels of terrorist activity are increasing especially dramatically in the Middle East and in Asia.
- However, foreign terrorist groups that have been designated as a threat to the United States are far more likely to launch terrorist attacks in their home countries than to target the U.S. homeland.
- Countries emerging as "terrorist hotspots" are not necessarily the same countries that are at risk of instability. That is, some politically stable countries are likely to experience high levels of terrorism, notably Bangladesh and Thailand.



- While levels of terrorism in the Middle East are increasing, the percentage of ethnopolitical organizations in the Middle East that use terrorism to pursue political goals has decreased since the 1980s and mid-1990s.
- Ethnic organizations that espouse separatism, use rhetoric justifying violence, have extensive foreign support, and are subject to state repression are significantly more likely than others to engage in terrorism, here defined as attacks against civilian targets.

This event also marked the release of two research publications: *Peace and Conflict 2010* from CIDCM and the *START Research Review 2009*. Each of these publications provides detailed information on emerging trends related to civil conflict, terrorism, post-conflict efforts, and community resilience to violence. The *START Research Review* is available at [http://www.start.umd.edu/start/announcements/2009\\_START\\_Research\\_Review\\_Online.pdf](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/announcements/2009_START_Research_Review_Online.pdf) and *Peace and Conflict* is available at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/>.

The presentations from this event are [available for download here](#).

The audio recording for this event is also [available for download here](#).

# Advanced Education on the Causes, Dynamics and Impacts of Terrorism



START is dedicated to training and mentoring a new generation of scholars and analysts committed to examining questions related to the behavior of terrorists and terrorist groups and to the issue of how societies can best prepare for dealing with a terrorist threat or responding to a terrorist attack.

START's new, fully online Graduate Certificate in Terrorism Analysis provides participants with advanced education on the causes, dynamics and impacts of international and domestic terrorism. Participants also develop the methodological skills necessary to pursue advanced research on and analysis of terrorism.

The program is appropriate for:

- ▶ Individuals interested in (and/or currently) working in fields related to intelligence analysis, homeland security analysis, or analysis of other relevant topic areas; and
- ▶ Individuals interested in (and/or currently) conducting scholarly research on terrorism and responses to terrorism.

The program consists of four required courses. Each course is offered once per calendar year, in an online, synchronous learning environment. The program

can be completed in 12 months.

### **Terrorist Motivations and Behaviors**

*(Term 1: March 1, 2010 - May 21, 2010)*

Focuses on theories explaining the formation of terrorist groups and the motivations behind terrorist behavior.

### **Societal Impact of and Responses to Terrorism**

*(Term 2: June 1, 2010 - Aug. 21, 2010)*

Examines ways in which different actors respond to both terrorist incidents and to the threat of terrorism.

### **Development of Counterterrorism Policy and Programs**

*(Term 3: Sept. 1, 2010 - Nov. 21, 2010)*

Explores counterterrorism policies and policy making processes and actors since 2001.

### **Research Methods in Terrorism and Counterterrorism**

*(Term 4: Dec. 1, 2010 - Feb. 21, 2011)*

Provides students with a basic understanding of the methods of quantitative research available to social scientists studying terrorism and counterterrorism.

### **Deadlines**

Students may enter the program at three points throughout the year:

### **Term 1 - apply by Jan. 15, 2010**

*(Nov. 15 for international students)*

### **Term 2 - apply by April 15, 2010**

*(Feb. 15 for international students)*

### **Term 3 - apply by July 15, 2010**

*(May 15 for international students)*

### **Requirements**

Eligible applicants must have:

- (1) A 4-year baccalaureate degree
- (2) Attended a regionally accredited university or an equivalent foreign university
- (3) A 3.0 GPA or equivalent experience

### **How to Apply**

Complete the online application at:

<http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/admission.html>

### **Contact**

Phone: 301.405.6600

E-mail: [education@start.umd.edu](mailto:education@start.umd.edu)

\* To receive automatic updates as more information becomes available, email your request to [education@start.umd.edu](mailto:education@start.umd.edu).

## Research Spotlight: Deadliest Terror Organizations



START Investigator  
Victor Asal



START Investigator  
R. Karl Rethemeyer

How likely are organizations to kill? To what degree? The START project “Social Network Analysis for Combating Terrorist Networks,” led by Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer of the University at Albany, SUNY, identifies some answers to those questions.

### Methodology

The project relied on an array of different methodologies and datasets, utilizing both semantic and network data to develop a new dataset, Big, Allied and Dangerous I (BAAD I). BAAD I captured organizational and relational characteristics of 400 different terrorist organizations from 1998 through 2005. The data was then analyzed to yield the degree of lethality for terrorist organizations over time.

### Conclusions

A number of characteristics were defined that make terrorist organizations more likely to be lethal and more likely to be prolifically lethal:

- ▶ Organizations that are religious or combine

religious ideology with ethno-nationalist ideology are more likely to kill and to kill more people over time while organizations that have an environmental, animal rights, leftist or anarchist ideology are less likely to kill.

- ▶ Organizations that have a large number of members are more likely to kill and kill many people, while state sponsorship makes organizations more likely to kill but not more likely to kill a large number of people. Organizations that are small and young as well as those that have not carried out many attacks are less likely to kill.
- ▶ Organizations that are more networked--that is, having more alliances to other terrorist organizations--are much more likely to kill a great number of people.

Factors were also identified that make it more or less likely that an organization will target or attack U.S. interests:

- ▶ Islamist ideology is important for targeting (desire to attack U.S. interests) but not for actually attacking U.S. interests.
- ▶ U.S. troop presence in the country in which the terrorist organization is based out of encourages threats, but when it comes to probability of attacks, U.S. troop presence only has an impact in non-democratic countries.
- ▶ Organizations that are highly networked are much more likely to attack U.S. interests.

### Publications

Asal, Victor, R. Karl Rethemeyer, Ian Anderson, Jeff Rizzo, Matthew M. Rozea, and Allyson Stein. 2009. “The Softest of Targets: A Study on Terrorist Target Selection.” *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 4 (3): 258-278 .

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# Recent START Publications

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

## Articles & Book Reviews

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Wheatley, Joseph and Clark McCauley. 2009. "Losing Your Audience: Desistance from Terrorism in Egypt after Luxor." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 1(3): 250-268.

## Book Chapters

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Chenoweth, Erica and Jessica C. Teets. 2009. "To Bribe or to Bomb: Do Corruption and Terrorism Go Together?" In *Corruption, Global Security, and World Order*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Houston, J. Brian and Gil Reyes, Betty Pfefferbaum, Karen F. Wyche. 2010. "Provider Perspectives on Serving the Needs of Displaced Disaster Survivors Following Hurricane Katrina." In *Crisis and Disaster Counseling: Lessons Learned From Hurricane Katrina and Other Disasters*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

McCauley, Clark. 2009. "War Versus Criminal Justice in Responding to Terrorism: The Losing Logic of Torture." In *Terrorism and Torture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. New York: Cambridge.