

Identifying Three Faces of Domestic Terrorism

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The shooters at San Bernardino's Inland Regional Center do not fit the standard terrorist profile. Syed Rizwan Farook was of Pakistani descent, but he was born in Illinois and grew up in Southern California. He had a degree in environmental engineering from San Bernardino State University and worked as a health inspector in that city.

Has the FBI Failed Us in Tracking Potential Terrorists?

Farook's wife Tashfeen Malik was also Pakistani with a degree in pharmacology, and she initially entered the U. S. on a fiancé visa. After passing a background check, she was issued a conditional green card in July 2015. We now know that there was evidence of her radicalization that was missed in this investigation.

Farook was a devout Muslim who attended the local mosque on a regular basis. His brother-in-law Farhan Khan said that Farook was a "normal person who kept halal [Muslim dietary laws] just like any other Muslim." On a dating website Farook wrote that he enjoyed "working on vintage and modern cars, reading religious books, and doing target practice with his younger sister and friends."

The only troubling sign in Farook's upbringing was the presence of an abusive alcoholic father, whom the mother finally divorced in 2008. In an interview the father said that he was a "liberal" and that he disagreed with his son's conservative views. (He later retracted a statement made to an Italian newspaper that he knew about his son's interest in ISIS.) His other son Syed Raheel Farook was in the Navy for four years and he received five medals for distinguished service. About 5,000 Muslims are serving in the U. S. armed services.

A neighbor (a recent convert to Islam) legally bought two assault rifles that he gave to Farook and his wife. (This man's claim that he and Farook were planning an earlier attack is still under investigation.) A federal assault rifle ban was in place from 1994 to 2004, but attempts to bring it back after the Sandy Hook massacre have been blocked by the NRA and its allies. Incredibly enough, the same coalition blocked a very reasonable attempt in the Senate to prohibit those on the no-fly list from buying weapons.

The FBI was tracking at least two of the 9/11 terrorists before that attack, and it neglected to act appropriately. The FBI, after reading the Bernardino's couple's email and internet postings, have now discovered that they were radicalized as early as 2012. They also have acknowledged that Farook had contacted six people in Orange County, who had been under FBI surveillance. We have to ask this question: Has the FBI and other security agencies once again failed us in discovering potential terrorists?

The day before the attack Farook's wife posted a declaration of support for ISIS on Facebook. The post was taken down one day later, but some security experts and civil

libertarians believe that the internet should not be censored in any way. If she had posted earlier, and if Facebook had been required to report posts of this sort, law enforcement may be able to prevent this and future attacks. (One ISIS site was taken down 365 times and it reappeared every time thereafter.) If we take down ISIS sites, will we not also be compelled to take down white supremacist and anti-abortion sites that are responsible for five times more in-country violence than Islamic militants?

A recent survey of ISIS recruitment from 86 countries found that in 2014 between 27,000 and 31,000 people joined the jihadist organization. That represents a 100 percent increase over the previous year. About 5,000 came from Europe (1,700 in France alone), but only 150 Americans traveled to Syria and Iraq in 2014. The explanation for this small number and the fact that it has not increased is due to a well-integrated moderate Muslim community and a very few radical imams. A moderate French imam has called for the closing of radicalized mosques in his country, a move unnecessary in the U. S.

Dallas Mayor: Domestic Terrorists More of a Threat than Jihadists

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, speaking about his decision to open his city to Syrian refugees, said that he was more afraid of domestic attacks rather than those inspired by Islamic militants. A mass shooting data base (limited to a minimum of four deaths) gathered by the journal *Mother Jones* supports Rawlings' position. In 73 mass shootings since 1982, Islamic militants were involved in only three.

Professors Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer have published a broader study that identified Islamic terrorists as responsible for 50 deaths since 9/11. In stark contrast they found that "right-wing extremists averaged 337 attacks per year in the decade after 9/11, causing a total of 254 fatalities." Americans are five times more likely to be killed by a right-wing terrorist than a jihadist.

Kurzman and Schanzer contacted 382 law enforcement agencies and found that "74 percent reported anti-government extremism as one of the top three terrorist threats in their jurisdiction," while only "39 percent listed extremism connected with Al Qaeda or like-minded terrorist organizations."

The federal government defines domestic terrorism as acts "intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping." Please note the significant "or" in this definition.

The First Face: Anti-Abortion Extremists

Anti-abortion extremists definitely come under this definition, and since 1977 they have been responsible for 11 murders, 17 attempted murders, 42 bombings, and 182 arsons. The three killed in Colorado Springs by Robert Lewis Dear have been added to this list, because his anti-abortion views have now be verified. This was evident from his cry "no more baby parts" as

he entered the Planned Parenthood office, and the fact that he had previously vandalized a similar facility in South Carolina. At his first court appearance Dear's ramblings were all directed at the evils of abortion and Planned Parenthood.

I believe that the people who surreptitiously videotaped Planned Parenthood officers, and convinced far too many people that the organization sells fetal tissue (it does not), should be held responsible for these murders. Our elected representatives and GOP presidential candidates who continue to libel Planned Parenthood are also culpable.

Fact-Free GOP Indirectly Responsible for Anti-Abortion Attacks

Based on initial reports that Dear was registered to vote as a woman, Sen. Ted Cruz misidentified Dear as a "transgendered leftist activist." Cruz was also very happy to receive the endorsement of Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue, which advocates violence against abortion providers. Cheryl Sullenger, Operation Rescue's senior advisor, served a two-year prison term for attempting to bomb an abortion clinic in 1987. Newman is also an officer in the phony Center for Medical Progress (CMP), which filmed the discredited videos.

In a September GOP debate Carly Fiorina claimed that the CMP videos showed "a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, its legs kicking, while someone says, 'We have to keep it alive to harvest its brain.'" The videos contain no such footage, but Fiorina refuses to back down. Even Gov. Chris Christie got into the act by stating that Planned Parenthood is responsible for the "systematic murder of children in the womb to preserve their body parts." Sadly, most of the GOP presidential candidates operate in a fact-free zone.

To those who say that doctors who perform abortions are the real terrorists, I simply remind them that abortions until fetal viability are legal in the U. S. I would also point out that our moral, legal, and religious traditions have not considered that fetus a person at conception. In fact, Roe v. Wade is in line with English Common Law at the time of our nation's founding. For more see www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/abortion.htm.

The Second Face: Attacks on Muslims and Their Mosques

Since 9/11 there have been almost weekly attacks on American Muslims and their mosques. These assaults can be categorized as acts of domestic terrorism "to intimidate or coerce a civilian population." Hundreds of mosques have been either vandalized or burned down. Copies of the Qur'an have been either burned or shot through with bullets.

Pigs' heads have been thrown into mosques or onto Muslim property. South Fork Industries in Dalton Gardens, Idaho is now producing ammunition laced with pork fat. The program is called "Peace through Pork" and the bullets will serve as a "defensive deterrent to those who violently act in the name of Islam." South Fork is doing a thriving business, one of its customers suggested that the U. S. military use this ammunition exclusively.

Because most Americans don't realize that turbans are common among Hindus, Coptic Christians, and Sikhs, Sikhs have often been misidentified as Muslims, who rarely wear turbans in the U. S. Within a month after 9/11 there were over 300 cases of violence and discrimination against Sikhs. Between 2001 and 2012, 11 Sikhs were shot and killed, including six at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. The terrorist was Wade Michael Page, an army veteran with ties to neo-Nazi organizations.

It is incredible to learn of Americans who want to kill Muslims. Nevada state representative Michele Fiore declared: "I'm about to fly to Paris and shoot 'em in the head myself. I am not OK with Syrian refugees. I'm OK with putting them down, blacking them out, just put a piece of brass in their ocular cavity and end their miserable life." The internet is filled with similar horrific threats on Muslims.

Rick Santorum: Muslims Do Not Have Constitutional Protections

GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum recently argued that Muslims are not protected by the Constitution in the same way that Christians are. He maintained that "Islam is different from Christianity. The prophet Mohammad established Sharia law to govern his kingdom on earth, while Jesus Christ proclaimed that his kingdom was not on earth." This may have been true of Jesus himself, but it does not apply to post-millennial Christian fundamentalists who believe in establishing a theocracy on earth until Christ comes. They, too, according to Santorum's reasoning, would lose constitutional protection.

The Third Face: Racially Motivated Hatred

The third face of domestic terrorism in America is seen in race-based attacks. On October 22, 2015, St. Louis police reported arson at seven African-American churches, presumably as retaliation for protests about the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson. The Council on American Islamic Relations immediately responded with a statement: "Whenever a house of worship is targeted in this manner, Americans of all faiths should feel the spiritual injury and stand with those under attack."

The largest Christian terror organization in U. S. history is the Klu Klux Klan. Using data from Tuskegee University's Records and Research Division, it has been determined that 3,446 African Americans were lynched over 86 years. The most recent racially motivated mass shooting occurred on June 17, 2015 at a black church in Charleston, South Carolina. After sitting with participants in a prayer meeting, Dylan Roof opened fire and killed nine. His website contained typical white supremacist propaganda and a picture showed Roof wrapped in the Confederate flag.

Nation of Islam and Honor Killings

The website ReligionOfPeace.com contains a long list of American Muslims killing Americans that goes back to 1973. At least 23 of these sometimes brutal murders (including one Muslim victim) happened in the San Francisco Bay area, and four members of the Nation of

Islam were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. The motivation was primarily anti-white hatred and had nothing to do with the religion of Islam.

The list also includes nine honor killings by American Muslim husbands or relatives. These murders are beyond the pale of human decency, but they do not conform to the definition of terrorism nor are they limited to Muslim societies. (This heinous punishment is not found in the Qur'an.) They are called "crimes of passion" in Latin American and prosecution there is either lenient or absent. In Hindu India, according to the United Nations Children's Fund, "more than 5,000 brides die annually [usually by burning] because their dowries are considered insufficient."

Reverting to the horrors of Germany's dark past, Donald Trump is calling for the registration of all American Muslims and the closing of their mosques. Given the violence actions against Muslims and Planned Parenthood, the same perverted logic could be used to shut down churches that preach hate against Muslims, gays, and lesbians. Let's all follow the maxim found in all major religious traditions: Do unto others as you would do to yourselves.

Nick Gier of Moscow taught religion and philosophy at the University of Idaho for 31 years. His most recent book is *The Origins of Religious Violence: An Asian Perspective* (Lexington Books, 2014). Read all of his articles on Islam at www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/IslamPage.htm.