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## **WEEKLY MEDIA REPORT**

### **March 26, 2009**

#### **Missing Somali-American Men Found on Facebook**

Several profiles posted on Facebook appear to match missing Somali-American individuals believed to have travelled to Somalia from the Minneapolis area. According to testimony at a Senate hearing last week, a National Counterterrorism Center official advised that the Somali-American youth in question were apparently radicalized through personal and internet-based encounters while inside the U.S. Officials from Facebook and the FBI noted that investigative information, such as email addresses and last log in data, can be obtained from social networking sites using appropriate legal tools; neither organization provided details on the number of profiles located or the type of information, if any, that has been obtained.

Source: [FOX News](#)

#### **Saudi Academy in Virginia Revises Islamic History Books**

A northern Virginia Islamic school linked to the Saudi government has offered previews of its newly revised religious textbooks in an effort to dispel criticism that the academy fosters religious intolerance. According to a 2008 report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a number of textbooks used by the Islamic Saudi Academy contained troubling passages that justified murder and promoted anti-Semitism. Critics assert that while the new books no longer contain the controversial passages, the revisions reflect a change in tone but maintain Wahhabi ideology. While reviewers paid by the academy have praised the changes, the USCIRF has advised that an independent academic review is still needed.

Source: [Daily Press](#)

#### **LT Potentially a Greater Threat to U.S. than al-Qa'ida**

U.S. intelligence officials are suggesting that Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT) has emerged as a growing threat to the U.S. and could launch the next major attack inside the U.S. Intelligence agencies estimate that tens of thousands of Pakistanis have been trained in LT guerrilla camps in Pakistan and that a small number are active in the U.S. U.S. authorities have also noted that thousands of disaffected Westerners and Pakistanis in Britain and other 'visa waiver' countries travel frequently to Pakistan where an unknown number are believed to attend LT camps; these individuals can then enter the U.S. with virtually no background check. The chairman of the current Pakistan-Afghanistan strategy review team suggested that a 'global jihadist syndicate' of disaffected Pakistanis represents the most likely mechanism for launching an attack on U.S. soil.

**OPEN SOURCE**

According to interviews and court testimony, evidence confiscated from computer-savvy militants indicates LT interest in the Washington area, New York, California, and Georgia.

Source: [Electric News](#)

### **Jihadi Video & Auto-Radicalization**

A study exploring the feasibility of utilizing social network tools to investigate the possibilities of self-radicalization, not through jihadist sites but through the exploration of a global portal through which any user can access jihadist content, has been released. In order to create a manageable sample group, the focus was limited to those posting and commenting upon martyr-promoting material from Iraq. YouTube was the platform chosen for analysis due to:

1. the global appeal of the YouTube site in conjunction with the proliferation of easily accessible jihadi video content posted
2. the demographic data provided by posters
3. the extensive commentary from viewers on both videos and individual profiles
4. the potential for analysis of links to friends, group memberships, subscription to channels, and similar.

The selection of YouTube also allows for the tracking of the whole range of this data over time, which permits longitudinal analysis of content and dynamic networks. Preliminary findings showed that a majority of supporters and posters reside outside the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with the largest percentage of supporters located in the United States and are under the age of 35.

Source: [Dublin City University](#)

### **Churches of All Sizes Need Security Plans**

Shootings at churches in the past few years have highlighted places of worship as soft targets due to their open, accessible nature with little or no security. A recent Christian Security Network report showed that roughly one-third of 250 churches polled had experienced at least one security incident within the past twelve months; in 2009, 141 incidents - including bomb threats and burglaries - have been reported in 39 states. A 2008 survey of Christian churches in the U.S. found that 75 percent lacked security and/or emergency plans. This lack of emergency preparedness focus contrasts to the decades of security precautions and new communications networks developed by Jewish organizations and the guidelines published for mosques following the 2001 terrorist attacks.

Source: [AP](#)

### **Suspected Gang Members Indicted in Newport News**

A federal grand jury has issued indictments for 10 alleged members of a Newport News-based gang in a wide-ranging racketeering conspiracy including murders, attempted murders, and arson of a police substation. Calling itself the "Dump Squad," the "Bang Gang," and the "Slump Mobb," the sect grew from the national Bloods organization and controlled, through acts of violence and intimidation, the neighborhoods of Ridley Circle, Harbor Homes, and Dickerson Court for the past eight years. According to the indictment, members also set fire to a Newport News police substation in Harbor Homes

on May 20, 2008. The gang was investigated by the multi-agency Peninsula Safe Streets Task Force, consisting of local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities.

Source: [Virginia Pilot](#)

### **MS-13 Gang Blending Into Communities**

Members of one of the most brutal street gangs currently operating in the U.S., Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), members appear to be blending into the communities in which they operate. According to the FBI, MS-13 operates in at least 42 states, with Virginia and Washington D.C., having the largest concentrations outside of California and New York. According to an ATF agent who spent years infiltrating MS-13, many members have moved into rural communities due to the current economic situation. Law enforcement officials in California have reported that despite the body and facial tattoos associated with MS-13, members are now holding down regular jobs, mostly in construction or farming.

Source: [MSNBC](#)