



Federal Bureau
of Investigation



Homeland
Security

JOINT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

(U//FOUO) Recent Events in Afghanistan Could Incite Homegrown Violent Extremists in the United States

14 March 2012

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This Joint Intelligence Bulletin is intended to increase awareness and provide understanding of the nature of potentially emergent threats in response to the alleged killing of civilians by a US soldier in Afghanistan and the burning of Korans and other religious documents on a military base. This information is provided to support the activities of FBI and DHS and to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial counterterrorism and law enforcement officials and the private sector to prevent or respond to terrorist attacks against the United States.

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(U//FOUO) Civilian Killings in Afghanistan Could Lead to Retaliatory Attacks by Homegrown Violent Extremists In the United States

(U//FOUO) On 11 March 2012, a US service member stationed in Afghanistan allegedly went on a shooting spree, killing 16 civilians, including nine children, according to US press reporting. The FBI and DHS are concerned that this event could contribute to the radicalization or mobilization of homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) in the Homeland, particularly against US-based military targets, which HVEs have historically considered legitimate targets for retaliation in response to past alleged US military actions against civilians overseas.*†

- (U//FOUO) The soldier who allegedly perpetrated the attacks reportedly trained at Joint Base Lewis-McChord near Tacoma, Washington. This base was also the training site of four soldiers convicted in 2011 of killing Afghan citizens, according to US press reporting. Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif^{U//FOUO}, currently awaiting trial for plotting an attack, initially wanted to target Lewis-McChord in retaliation for the actions of soldiers who had been stationed there. Ultimately, Abdul-Latif changed his alleged target to a Military Entrance Processing Station in Seattle, Washington, in part because he believed it was a softer target.
- (U//FOUO) Carlos Bledsoe^{U//FOUO} pleaded guilty to shooting two soldiers at a military recruiting station in 2009. Bledsoe claimed he wanted “to fight those who wage war on Islam and Muslims,” according to US press reporting.

(U//FOUO) Perceived US Military Anti-Islamic Events in Afghanistan Could Compound Homegrown Violent Extremist Grievances

(U//FOUO) We assess that the alleged killing of civilians by a US soldier could trigger acts of violence by HVEs, as this was a motivation that drove plotting against Joint Base Lewis-McChord. While recent high profile perceived offenses against Islam historically have led to calls for retaliation by violent extremists, they have not yet incited HVEs to attack in the United States. Nevertheless, the series of perceived anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic events in Afghanistan since January 2012—which include graphic images of dead civilians—could cumulatively lead an HVE to mobilize to violence.

- (U//FOUO) Some users of Web sites hosting violent extremist content circulated graphic images of the 11 March 2012 shooting victims, including women and children, and called for revenge against the US military. Some users stated their belief that the attack was intentionally planned by the US military and that there were more killings than reported by the media.

* (U//FOUO) The FBI defines radicalization as the process by which individuals come to believe that their engagement in or facilitation of non-state violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified.

† (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define a homegrown violent extremist as a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. Homegrown violent extremists are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence from a foreign actor.

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- (U//FOUO) As widely reported in the US press, in February 2012, US soldiers burned a number of Korans and other religious texts that had been thrown in a trash burn pile at Bagram Air Field. This incident led to protests and attacks that killed at least 30 people in Afghanistan, including six US troops. There has been no violent response to this incident among HVEs in the United States.
- (U//FOUO) In January 2012, a video depicting US Marines desecrating what appear to be dead Taliban fighters resulted in a generally negative, but relatively limited, response across Web sites with violent extremist content. There has been no retaliatory response from HVEs in the United States.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) There is currently no specific, credible threat information related to HVE responses to the recent events in Afghanistan. While past events involving the alleged defamation of Islam have resulted in threats or overt acts of violence overseas, we have not seen the same type of reactions in the United States. It is unlikely that any one of these events alone will mobilize HVEs to violence; however, they will likely be incorporated into violent extremist propaganda and could contribute to an individual's radicalization to violence. We encourage law enforcement and security officials to be vigilant for signs of mobilization to violence, particularly against US military targets in the Homeland.

(U) Reporting Notice

(U) FBI and DHS encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force and the State and Major Urban Area Fusion Center. The FBI's 24/7 Strategic Information and Operations Center can be reached by telephone number 202-323-3300 or by e-mail at SIOC@ic.fbi.gov. The DHS National Operations Center (NOC) can be reached by telephone at 202-282-9685 or by e-mail at NOC.Fusion@dhs.gov. FBI regional phone numbers can be found online at <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm> and State and Major Urban Area Fusion Center information may be obtained at <http://www.dhs.gov/contact-fusion-centers>. For information affecting the private sector and critical infrastructure, contact the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC), a sub-element of the NOC. The NICC can be reached by telephone at 202-282-9201 or by e-mail at NICC@dhs.gov. When available, each report submitted should include the date, time, location, type of activity, number of people and type of equipment used for the activity, the name of the submitting company or organization, and a designated point of contact.

(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

(U//FOUO) Information contained in this intelligence bulletin is for official use only. No portion of this bulletin should be released to the media, the general public, or over nonsecure Internet servers. Release of this material could adversely affect or jeopardize investigative activities.

(U) For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact the I&A Production Branch staff at IA.PM@hq.dhs.gov or the FBI Counterterrorism Analysis Section at 202 324-3000 or FBI_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.8.7

(U) For information concerning past activities observed in cases of violent extremist mobilization, please consult the 17 January 2012 Joint FBI/DHS Roll Call Release "(U) Mobilization of Violent Extremists in the United States."