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(U//FOUO) US Homegrown Violent Extremist Recidivism Likely

(U//FOUO) We assess that at least some of the more than 90 homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) incarcerated in the US who are due to be released in the next five years will probably reengage in terrorist activity,^a possibly including attack plotting, because they either remain radicalized or are susceptible to re-radicalization as has already been demonstrated overseas.¹² We have seen high rates of recidivism among those who were incarcerated for non-terrorism related criminal activity, suggesting the likelihood of violent extremist recidivism is also high. As of late 2016, 300 terrorism offenders were in prison, including 80 who were arrested in the past two years.

- (U//FOUO/LES) Shannon Conley (USPER)—who was arrested for attempting to join ISIL and is scheduled for release in April 2017—repelled repeated radicalization “off-ramping”^b attempts from Federal, State, and local authorities, as well as from her family and community, according to law enforcement officials with firsthand access to the investigation.³⁴ As of May 2016, John Walker Lindh (USPER)—who is scheduled to be released in May 2019 after being convicted of supporting the Taliban—continued to advocate for global jihad and to write and translate violent extremist texts.⁵⁶ In March 2016, he told a television news producer that he would continue to spread violent extremist Islam upon his release, according to the Bureau of Prisons.⁷
- (U//FOUO) From 2005 to 2010, 56 percent of all released US prisoners were rearrested within one year of release, 68 percent were rearrested within three years, and 77 percent were rearrested within five years, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ study of 400,000 prisoners in 30 states.⁸ For violent offenders, 39 percent were rearrested within one year, 62 percent within three years, and 71 percent within five years, according to the National Institute for Justice.⁹
- (U//FOUO) Two of the four January 2016 Jakarta attackers had been sentenced to prison for terrorism-related offenses, according to a US-based think tank and open-source reporting.¹⁰ As of January 2016, 47 out of 300 terrorists released from Indonesian prison reengaged in terrorism within the first two years of release, according to the same US-based think tank and open-source reporting.¹¹

(U//FOUO) Nontraditional CT partners, such as probation and parole officers, corrections personnel, and local law enforcement, will probably be in a position to anticipate threats and radicalization from

^a (U) NCTC defines an HVE as an individual inspired by a foreign terrorist organization of any citizenship who lives or operates primarily in the US, was radicalized primarily in the US, and who incites, conducts, or facilitates ideologically influenced terrorist activities while acting independently of any direction from a foreign terrorist organization.

^b (U) The term “off-ramping” refers to methods of diversion to steer an individual toward recanting violent extremist ideology that encourages violent action, or deterring their efforts to conduct violent action.

recidivists, in addition to prison officials and personnel at FBI field offices who perform assessments of terrorist inmates released into their areas of responsibility.¹²¹³ Equipping these partners with specialized countering violent extremism (CVE) and CT capabilities, including training to identify violent extremist radicalization and mobilization to violence indicators, will enhance partner ability to monitor violent extremists for recidivism. Procedural improvements, including better defining lessons learned, processes, and tools to craft release conditions, and identifying and sharing new leads and threat reporting with FBI and the IC will assist officers with HVE releases.¹⁴

- (U//FOUO) Released offenders are provided with supervision conditions to follow to remain out of prison by US Probation and Pretrial Services, according to probation officials.¹⁵ We assess that court-imposed conditions tailored with CVE and CT subject-matter expertise could reduce the risk of a subject reoffending, while also enhancing opportunities to identify best practices in probation sentencing and release conditions as a more common and viable off-ramping strategy in the future.¹⁶
- (U//FOUO) Using lessons learned from successful criminal population monitoring models, such as the Megan's Law sex offender registry, and monitoring may better equip CVE stakeholders to register, track, and monitor violent extremist offender activities and movements, according to studies focused on existing sex offender monitoring and recidivism.¹⁷¹⁸
- (U//FOUO) Ensuring that probation, parole, and corrections personnel are involved with State and local CT liaison officer programs and are cleared to work on Joint Terrorism Task Forces would build a more comprehensive framework that provides access to offenders' full criminal histories to prepare all agencies that would potentially engage with violent extremist recidivists.¹⁹

(U//FOUO) Recidivism Concern Beyond Those Traditionally Convicted

(U//FOUO) HVEs who receive probation or are charged with nonterrorism offenses that have shorter sentences could miss out on rehabilitation services offered in prison.²⁰ It will be important to alert probation and parole officers to terrorism or radicalization backgrounds and evaluate the recidivism of these types of HVEs when considering future prosecutions or CVE "off-ramping," given that these are relatively untested efforts.

- (U//FOUO) In early October 2016, Kansas-based violent extremist Alexander Blair (USPER) was sentenced to 15 months in prison and two years of supervised probation by US Probation and Pretrial Services for financial support to a fellow violent extremist who built an IED in a 2015 plot to attack Fort Riley, according to open-source reporting. A federal judge rejected a five-year prison sentence and a five-year probation sentence, deeming both too harsh.²¹
- (U//FOUO) In 2010, Elton Simpson, one of the now-deceased 2015 Garland, Texas, attackers, was sentenced to three years' probation for making material false statements to the FBI about his desire to travel for violent jihad and support of violent extremist Islam.²²

(U) Sources

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- ⁷ BOP Intelligence Summary | Number 14-005 | 2 April 2014 | (U//FOUO/LES)]
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- ¹⁸ [Open Source | Bureau of Justice Assistance| Managing sex offenders: Citizens supporting law enforcement | June 2004 | (U)]
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