



Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA)

ISIS: Past, Present, and Possible Futures

SMA Special Panel

12 November, 2019

Panelists:

Dr. William Braniff, University of Maryland, START


Dr. Lawrence A. Kuznar, NSI, Inc.

Dr. Gina Ligon, University of Nebraska, Omaha

Dr. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Valens Global

UNCLASSIFIED

Agenda

- 
- Purpose: After Baghdadi, Then What? (Maybe Todd says a few words as an introduction?)
 - Agenda
 - Bill's historical perspective slides
 - Daveed
 - Larry – Caliphate concept
 - Gina – leadership and possible direction

 - Q&A

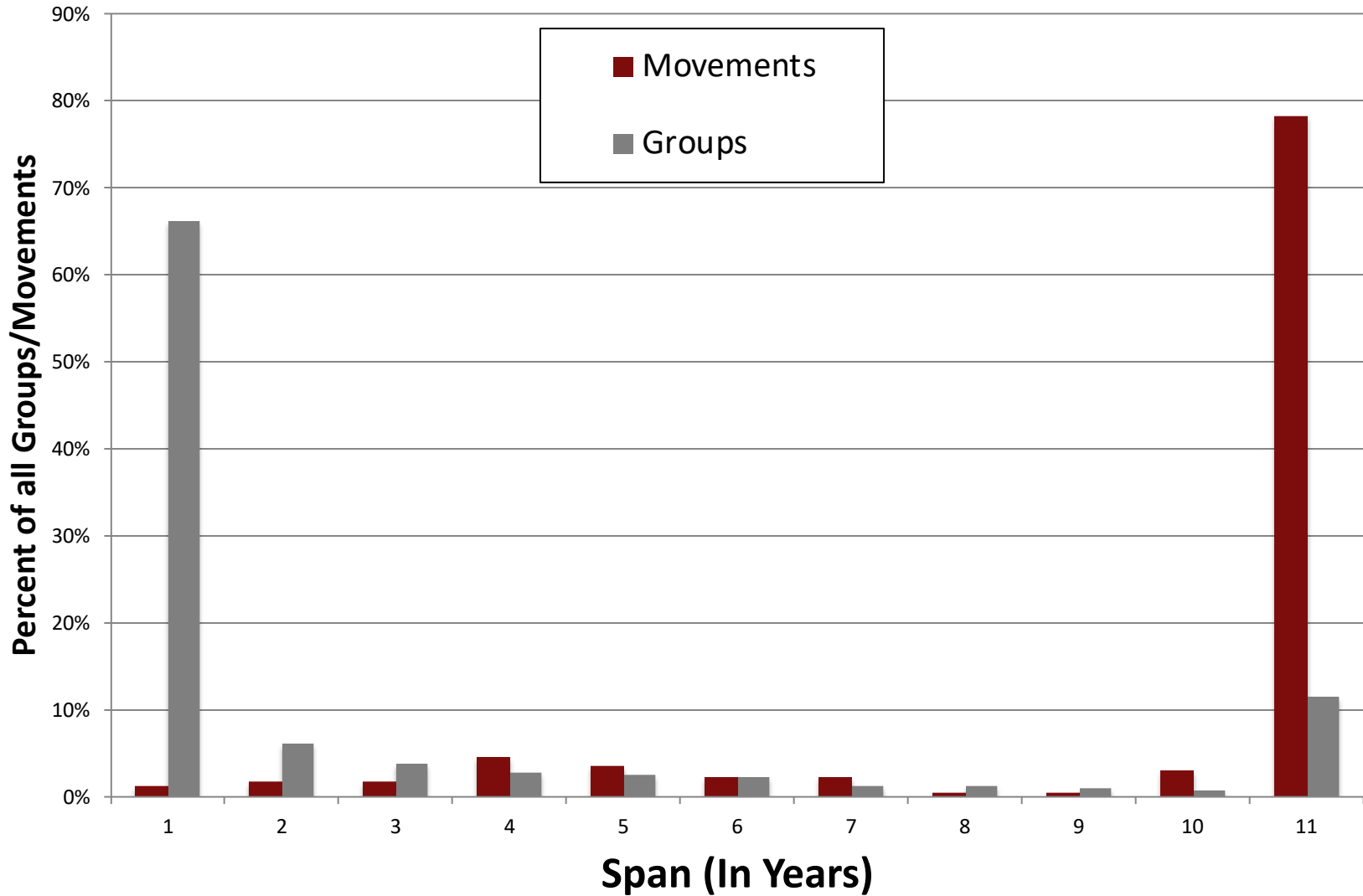


ISIS: Past, Present and Future

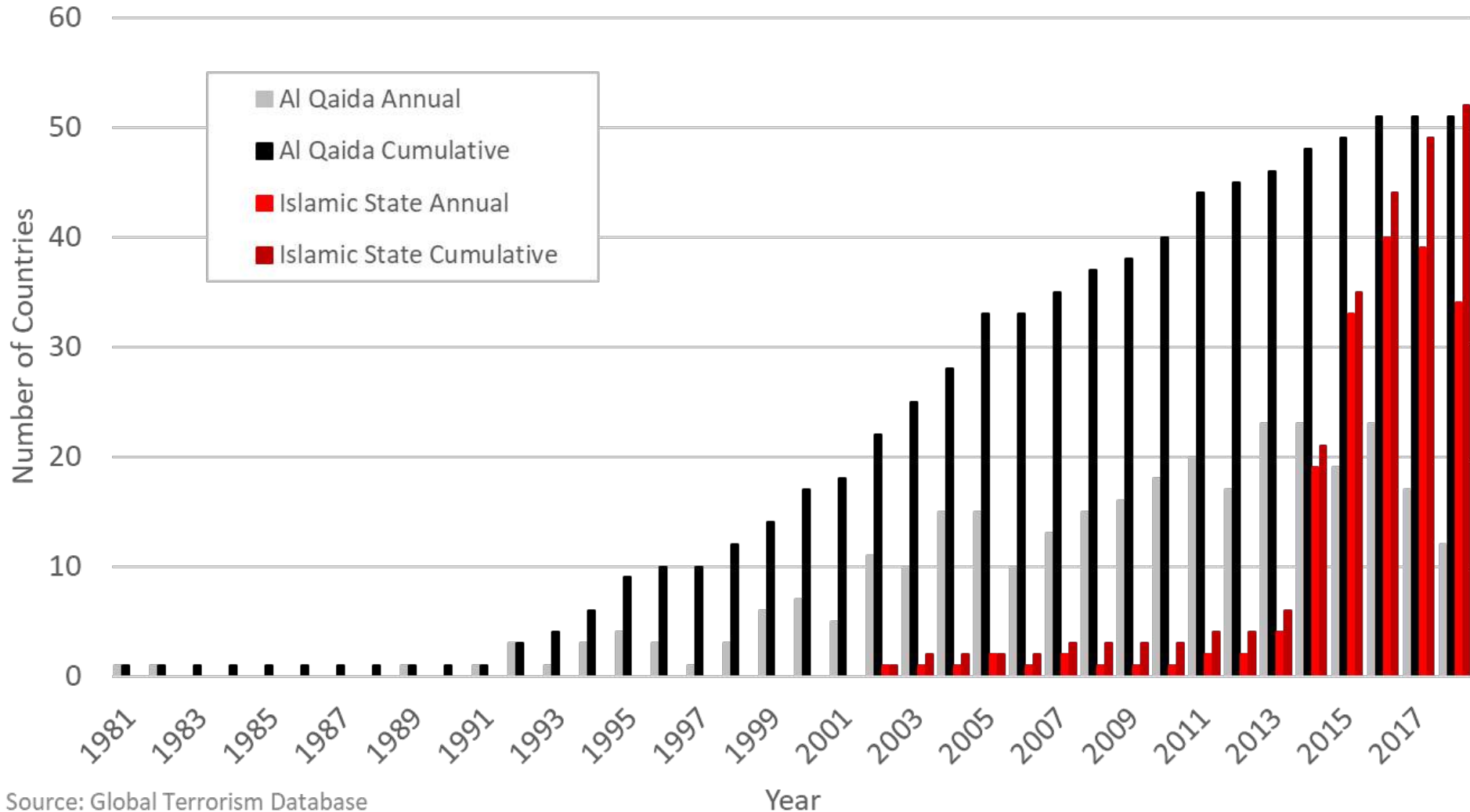
William Braniff
Director

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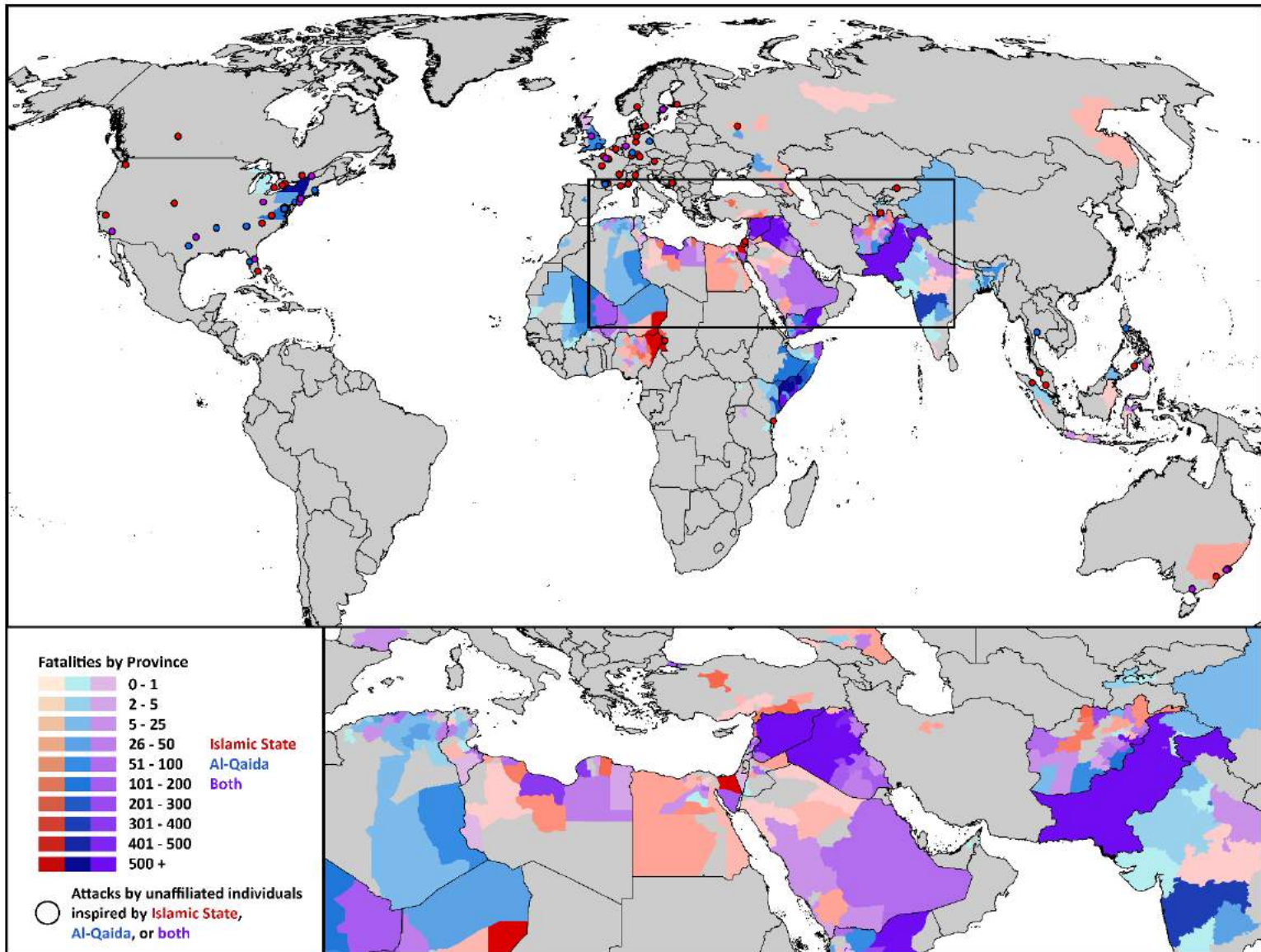
Life Span of Organizations vs. Movements



Geographic Dispersion of AQAM and ISAM, 1981-2018



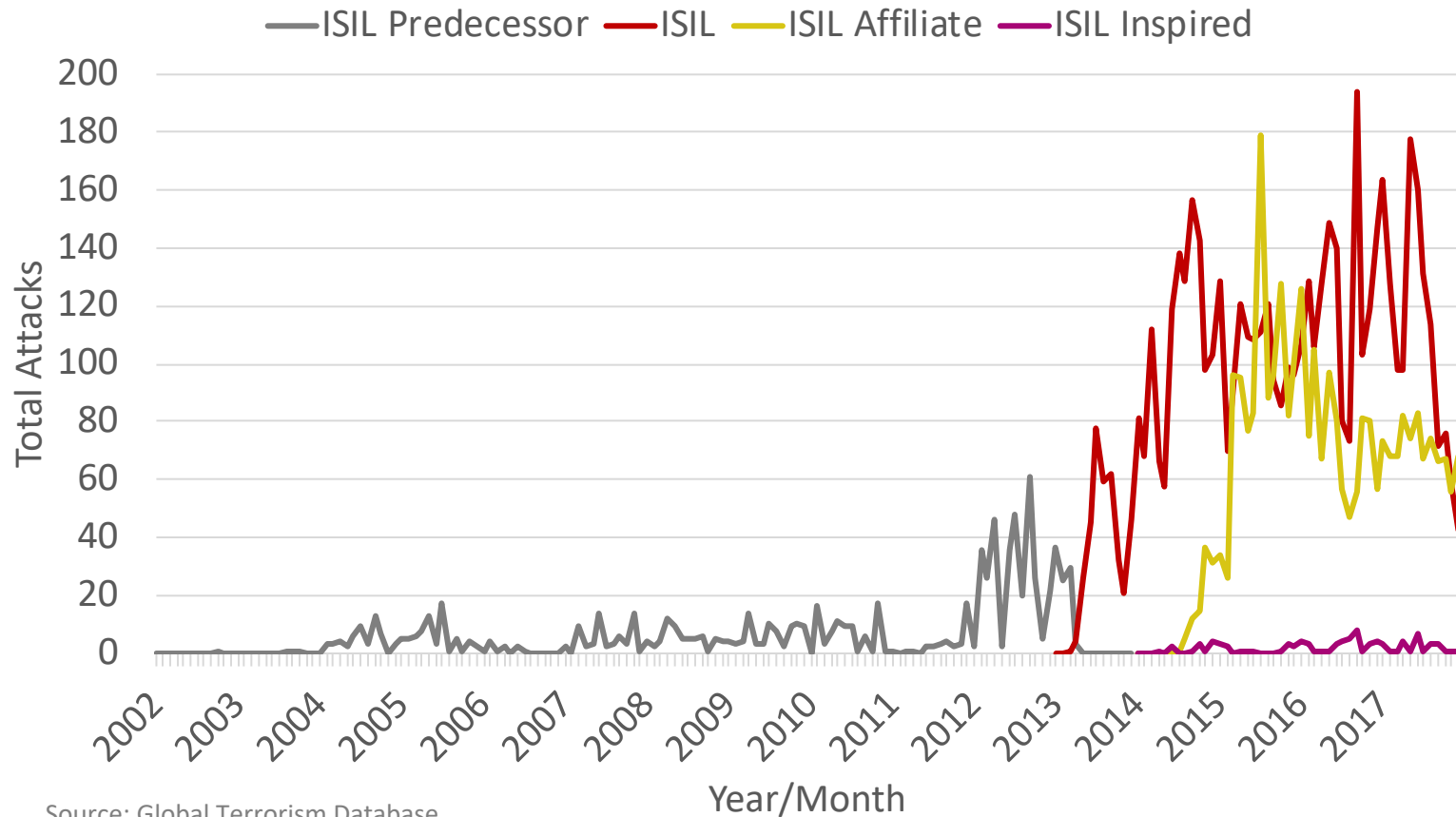
Islamic State- and Al-Qaida-Related Terrorism Worldwide, 1981-2017



Source: Global Terrorism Database

Al Qaida Predecessor	Al Qaida Affiliates	Islamic State Predecessors	Islamic State Affiliates
Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Al-Jihad)	Abdullah Azzam Brigades	Al-Qaida in Iraq	Adan-Abyan Province of the Islamic State
	Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)	Ahfad al-Sahaba-Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis
	Adan Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)	Mujahedeen Shura Council	Al Bayda Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Ittihaad al-Islami (AIAI)	Tawhid and Jihad	Algeria Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam Brigade (Those who Sign with Blood)		Al-Nusrah Front
	Al-Nusrah Front		Ansar Al-Khilafa (Philippines)
	Al-Qaida in Iraq		Ansar al-Sharia (Libya) (Ansar al-Sharia in Derna)
	Al-Qaida in Lebanon		Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia)
	Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia		Bahrain Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)		Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM)
	Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent		Barqa Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)		Boko Haram
	Al-Qaida in Yemen		Caucasus Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Qaida Kurdish Battalions (AQKB)		East Asia Division of the Islamic State
	Al-Qaida Network for Southwestern Khulna Division		Fezzan Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Qaida Organization for Jihad in Sweden		Hadramawt Province of the Islamic State
	Al-Shabaab		Hijaz Province of the Islamic State
	Ansar al-Dine (Mali)		Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
	Ansar al-Islam		Islamic State in Bangladesh
	Ansar al-Sharia (Libya)		Islamic State in Egypt
	Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia)		Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)
	Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind		Jabha East Africa
	Ansaru (Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan)		Jamaah Ansharut Daulah
	Ansarullah Bangla Team		Jund al-Khilafa
	Asbat al-Ansar		Jund al-Khilafah (Tunisia)
	Caucasus Emirate		Jundallah (Pakistan)
	Haqqani Network		Jundul Khilafah (Philippines)
	Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HuM)		Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State
	Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami		Lahij Province of the Islamic State
	Imam Shamil Battalion		Maute Group
	Islambouli Brigades of al-Qaida		Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT)
	Islamic Courts Union (ICU)		Najd Province of the Islamic State
	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)		Negara Islam Indonesia (NII)
	Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)		Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade
	Jadid Al-Qaida Bangladesh (JAQB)		Sanaa Province of the Islamic State
	Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)		Shabwah Province of the Islamic State
	Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)		Sheikh Omar Hadid Brigade
	Jemaah Islamiya (JI)		Sinai Province of the Islamic State
	Jund al-Aqsa		Supporters of the Islamic State in Jerusalem
	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi		Supporters of the Islamic State in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques
	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)		Tehrik-e-Khilafat
	Mujahedeen Shura Council		Tripoli Province of the Islamic State
	Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting (GSPC)		
	Sympathizers of Al-Qaida Organization		
	Tawhid and Jihad (Palestine)		
	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)		
	Turkestan Islamic Party and Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)		

ISAM Attacks Globally, 2002-2017



Source: Global Terrorism Database

Given Uncertainty due to Dispersion:

- X Factors:
 - Inter and intrastate conflicts
 - Emergent and Protracted
 - Zawahiri's death
 - Facilitate smoothing over of AQ-IS rivalries
 - End-to-End Encrypted Platforms
 - Gives movements organization-like capabilities
- Prioritize USG resources on
 - Conflict zones
 - Locations of geo-strategic value
 - Places with AQAM-ISAM co-location
 - Places with internecine fault-lines for IS to hijack
 - Includes white nationalist movements in “the West”

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The Islamic State Concept of Caliphate

Implications, Pitfalls, Possible Futures

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History: What the West Got Wrong

- Most Western decision makers, journalists, pundits, and scholars got ISIS wrong back in the day
- ISIS was a flash in the pan
 - An organization without the capacity to sustain itself
- ISIS was not Religious
 - Grahame Wood vs. Christoph Reuter
- Caliphate Fundamentals
 - Caliph means successor – the successor to the Prophet Mohammed!
 - The first schism in Islam (Shia vs Sunni) was over the Prophet's succession and it endures to this day
 - That schism was central to ISIS's core narrative and raison d'etre
 - A Caliphate must have:
 - A legitimate Caliph – Islamic scholar in Mohammed's tribe (Quraishi)/or bloodline
 - Overwhelming recognition from the Ummah
 - Territory



★ The Islamic State Caliphate: A Serious Concept with Serious Consequences

- Characterizing ISIS as not Religious was a Mistake
 - Religion is shared belief about the supernatural; don't confuse it with widespread acceptance or institutions
 - Just because rank and file don't demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of religious concepts does not make them irreligious
 - Branch Davidians
 - White Supremacist Christian Identity Movement
 - 1996 Shooting after a bible-quoting contest in AL
- ISIS End Times Narrative was Compelling to many Followers and Recruits
 - The Caliphate was NOT intended as a utopian end-state
 - It was a necessary step to bring about the Second Coming of Jesus (Isa) and
 - Apocalyptic battle between the Dajjal and Isa at Dabiq, Syria
 - ISIS predicted that their numbers would be dwindled to 7000 before the Apocalypse



The Significance of Recent Events

Already Daesh has decided to stick with the Caliphate narrative and have named a successor Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi

- **ISIS Caliphate Pros**
 - Retain a compelling message for recruitment and believers
- **ISIS Possible Futures**
 - Caliphate?
 - Direction away from Caliphate?
 - Gina????
- **ISIS Caliphate Cons & Liabilities**
 - Loss of Territory in al Sham requires rebranding
 - Other territories?
 - Virtual Caliphate?
 - Baghdadi was kind of Mahdi-like, so his death needs to be explained
 - Running out of Qurayshis could be a problem
 - Internal fractures could create alternative leadership and goals



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
THE CENTER FOR
COLLABORATION SCIENCE

ISIS: Organizational Psychology Perspective

Gina Scott Ligon, Ph.D.

The College of Business Administration
The University of Nebraska at Omaha
Strategic Multilayer Assessment Discussion

*LEADIR is currently supported by the Combatting Terrorism Technical Support Office (CTTSO) from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Program Manager: Jim Frank.

**The ISIS Organizational Futures Project is jointly funded by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Office of University Programs at the Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Media Exploitation Center (NMEC). Program Managers: Gia Harrigan (DHS) and Mike McRoberts (DIA).



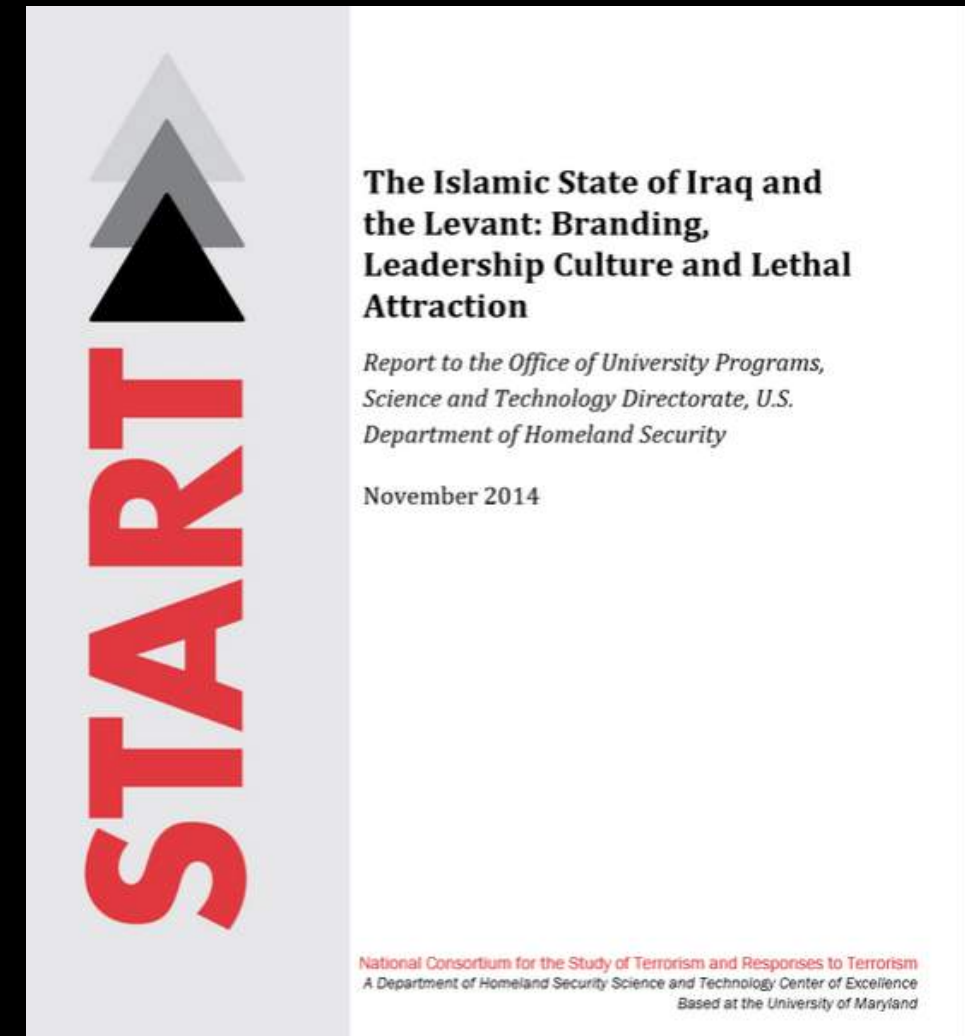
DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP & VIOLENT
ORGANIZATIONS:

L.E.A.D.I.R

LEADERSHIP OF THE EXTREME AND
DANGEROUS FOR INNOVATIVE RESULTS

ISIS developed Resources and Capabilities that differentitated it from other VEOs

ISIS Past: 2014 Report Organizational Sophistication



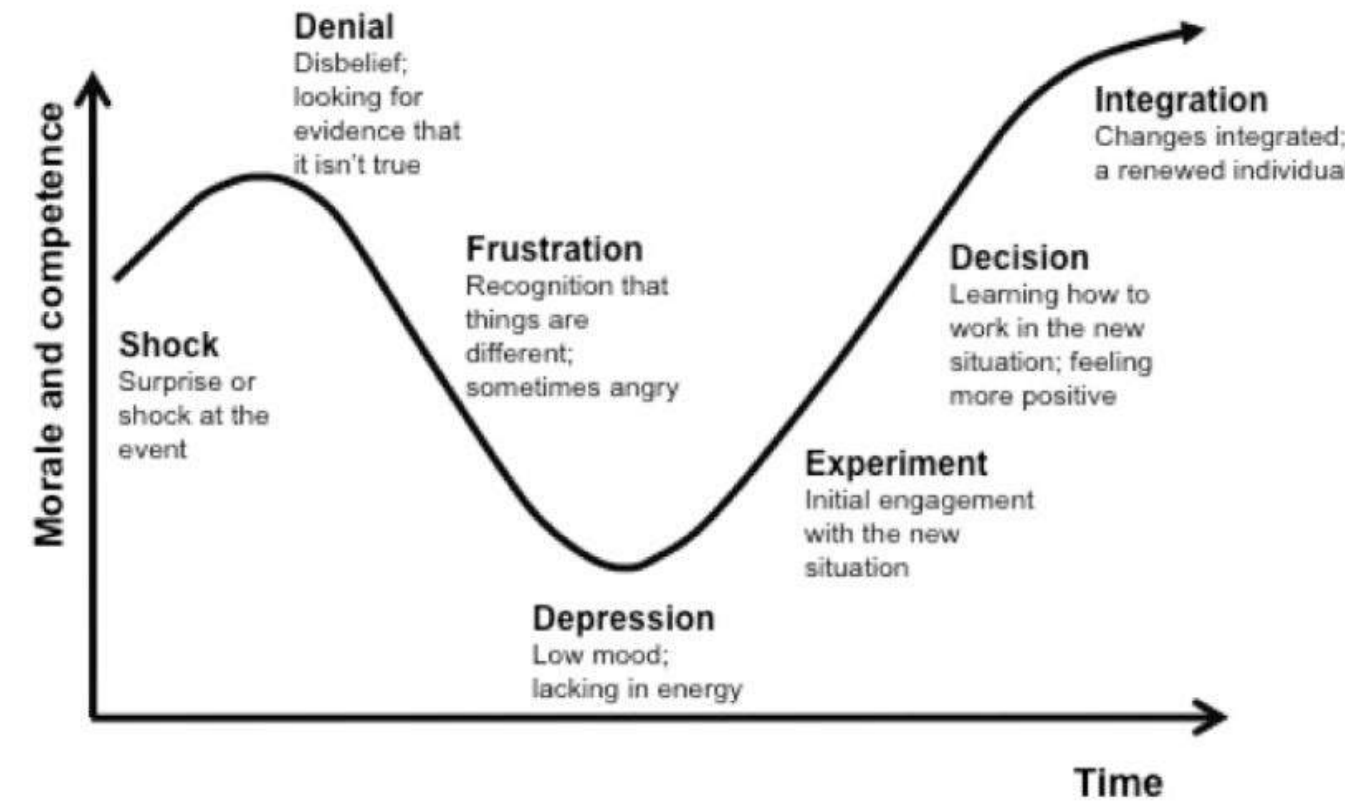
VRIO Strategic Differentiators of Ten Groups

Marketing and Branding	Human Capital and Recruitment	Fundraising	Tactical Innovation	Cyber Sophistication	Cyber Interactivity
Da'esh	Da'esh	Da'esh	Da'esh	Da'esh	Da'esh
AQAP	AQAP	AQAP	AQAP	AQAP	AQAP
AQIM	AQIM	AQIM	AQIM	AQIM	AQIM
ASG	ASG	ASG	ASG	ASG	ASG
Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab
Taliban	Taliban	Taliban	Taliban	Taliban	Taliban
LeT	LeT	LeT	LeT	LeT	LeT
Jabhat	Jabhat	Jabhat	Jabhat	Jabhat	Jabhat
TTP	TTP	TTP	TTP	TTP	TTP
Boko Haram	Boko Haram	Boko Haram	Boko Haram	Boko Haram	Boko Haram



ISIS Present: Organizational Loss of a Leader

The Kübler-Ross change curve



During Organizational Change, members cling to familiar rituals, historical figures, and traditions.






Jeff Pino Death: Organizational impact from loss of leaders on average 3-5 years (Becker & Hvide, 2013)

Disruption due to loss of "specialness" of a leader, not due to transition problems

ISIS Possible Futures: Leader Branding & Soft Target Attacks

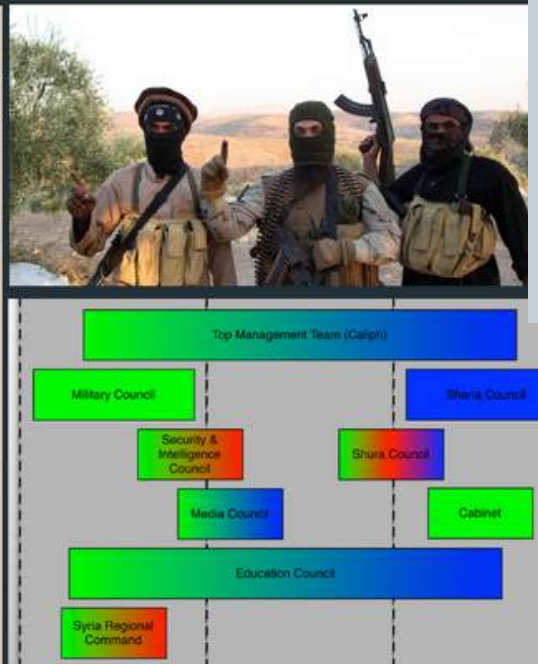
DA'ESH Leadership Structures and Behaviors 

TYPOLOGIES.
Pragmatics, Ideologues, and Violence Seekers.

We have profiled leaders of what is now the Da'esh organization for the past eight years. We have data about their decision making, backgrounds, and strengths and vulnerabilities. We have identified three main types of individuals occupying leader positions, and these each have markedly distinct ways they view problems.

ORGANIZATION.
Diverse Top Management Teams.

In the figure depicting the functions of the Da'esh Organization, the blue indicates high presence of leaders fitting the ideological leadership typology, the green represents high preponderance of pragmatic leadership typology, and the red indicates high presence of violence seekers. Our data details how these members make



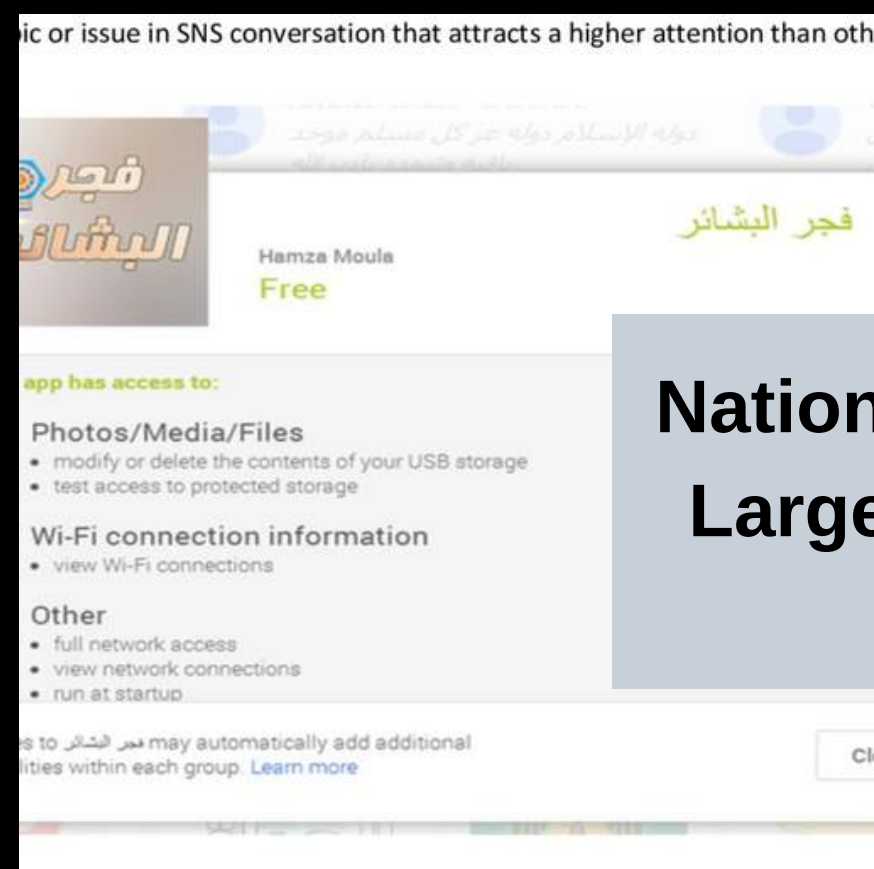
Middle Layer of Management Will Grow in Power; Period of Instability & Decreased Attack Sophistication



ISIS Possible Futures: Combining Organizational Psychology with Data Science



Organizational Futures Algorithms Project: What Digital Footprints are Associated with Org Roles?



National Media Exploitation Center (NMEC) Large Dataset Affords Insight into Future Operational Structures



**Thank
You!**

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