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The U. S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence, Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate Center of Excellence through the Borders, Trade, and Immigration Institute, held a Homeland Security Symposium titled: **“Violent Extremism in the United States and Worldwide Patterns of Terrorism.”**

The collection of open source data on violent extremism and terrorism has revolutionized our understanding of the characteristics and complexities of violent political action. For the past 16 years, Dr. LaFree has been closely connected with two of the largest efforts to collect and analyze open source data on terrorism: the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the Profiles of Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) data. The GTD begins with a universe of over 1.6 million articles published daily worldwide in order to identify the relatively small subset of articles that describe terrorist attacks. Dr. LaFree’s team of researchers convert this pipeline into an unclassified matrix which describes the characteristics of worldwide attacks from 1970 to the present. The PIRUS data are instead limited to terrorist attacks against the United States and include individual level data on about 1,800 individuals who have been associated with acts of illegal political extremism. Dr. LaFree’s presentation will focus on what these two unclassified data bases can tell us about the nature of the terrorist threat to the United States and the world.

Instructor’s Biography

Dr. Gary LaFree – University of Maryland

Gary LaFree is professor of criminology and criminal justice and director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. Dr. LaFree has served as president of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) and was named a fellow of the ASC in 2006. He is a member of the US Attorney General’s Science Advisory Board and the National Academy of Science’s Crime, Law and Justice Committee. Dr. LaFree’s recent books include *Countering Terrorism* with Martha Crenshaw (Brookings Press) and *Putting Terrorism in Context* (with Laura Dugan and Erin Miller). He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Indiana University and for many years was the Chair of the Sociology Department at the University of New Mexico.

Topics Covered

1. Introduction to the research
2. Black Swans and Burstiness
3. Predicting Violent Political Extremism

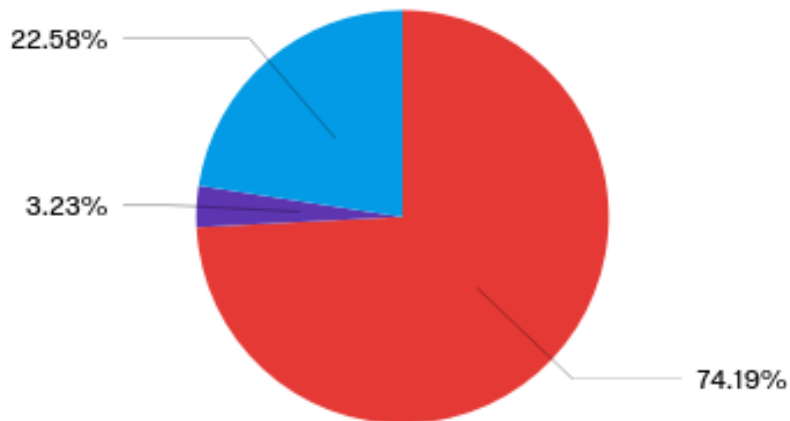
Analysis of Symposium Feedback

The symposium was well-attended with a total of:

- **87 Confirmed RSVPs**
- 66 Attendees (Approximately **76%** of RSVP total)

A total of 16 government agencies organization was represented by the symposium attendees. Attendees from El Paso, TX, attended this event. The following table displays each of the agencies/organizations with the total number of representatives in attendance.

Federal Agencies		State Agencies	
ICE Enforcement & Removal Operations	6	Probation Office-District of El Paso	6
Homeland Security Investigations	2		
CBP - Office of Border Patrol	13		
CBP – Office of Field Operations	6		
CBP- National Targeting Center	1		
Transportation Security Administration	4	Total	6
DHS I & A	3	Local Agencies	
DHS Other	4	El Paso Police Department	12
FBI	1	El Paso County Sheriff’s Department	2
El Paso Intelligence Center	2		
Department of State	2		
Department of the Army	2		
Total	46	Total	14

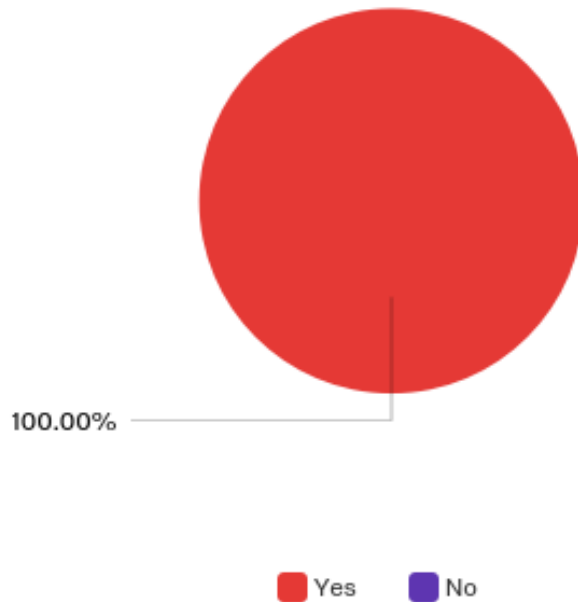


■ Federal Agency
 ■ State Agency
 ■ Local Agency
 ■ Tribal Government

Every attendee was asked to fill out a symposium evaluation. A total of 62 surveys (**94% of total attendees**) were submitted. Overall, the assessment feedback was overwhelmingly positive (listed percentages are the sum of both the “agree” and “strongly agree” percentages):

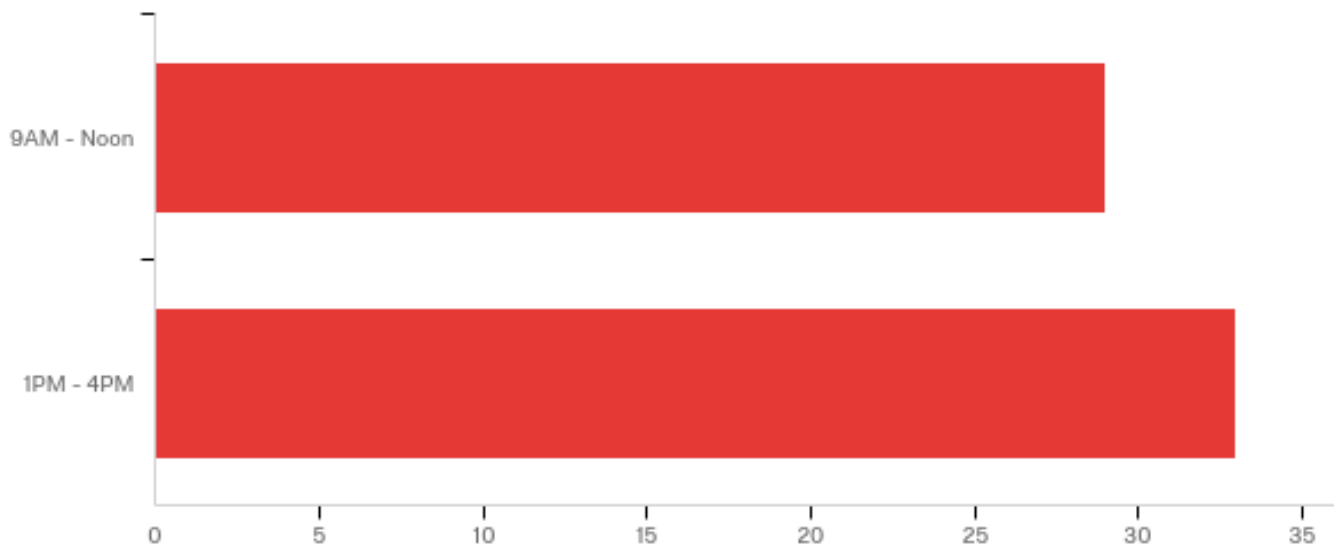
The seminar met my expectations	93.5%
The overall topics covered in this seminar were relevant and useful to my current assignment	83.8%
The seminar description accurately described the seminar content	93.4%
The seminar increased my knowledge of the subject matter	96.7%
The seminar increased my interest of the subject matter	96.7%
The overall quality of this seminar was excellent	95.2%
The instructors’ presentation style was effective	95.1%

The exit survey also contained the following question (Q3): Would you attend a second more in-depth symposium on this topic? The survey revealed that 100% of the symposium participants would attend a second more in-depth symposium.



Open-ended responses indicated a common satisfaction with the course with particularly positive comments regarding the competence of the instructor and the content’s utility and pertinence to their field of work. The following questions were asked in the exit survey and no edits have been made to the comments with the exception of spelling.

Q4. What is your preference for the next symposium?



Q5. What other topic/subject matter would you like to see presented in similar seminars, tabletop exercises or practicums?

- *Table top exercise on multi agency response to critical incident (active shooter, hazardous chemical spill).*
- *Symposium on basics of terrorism.*
- *Correlations between organized crime and the border. Correlations between the vises of violence as more restrictions are placed on law enforcement.*
- *Food terrorism, chemical terrorism, robots replacing humans, gang involved in terrorism, and cartels linked to terrorism.*
- *The effects of racism on extremism.*
- *Narco-terrorism*
- *Drug interdiction*
- *Coordination of all federal partners in the event of a mass terrorist attack. How does it all tie together and who assumes operational command of the scene?*
- *Active shooter*
- *Would like to see topic of sex offenders. Supervision, computer forensics. Dr. Jim Tanner from Colorado is excellent. Can always be found at the Crimes Against Children Conference in Dallas.*
- *Gangs, cartels, active shooter and sex offenders.*
- *I would prefer a presentation on Mexican gangs/ DTO's in Juarez and how they interact with US gangs.*
- *How terrorism can be linked to action shooter events.*
- *Money laundering.*
- *Anything on CT-tips, types of explosives used in attacks, group hierarchy, history.*
- *Transnational criminal organizations. Cocaine transiting through Southwest border.*
- *Counter terrorism*
- *Specific Mexican cartel related presentations- dealing with all levels of cartel operations.*
- *The direct or indirect use of media forums (social, blog, news) by criminal elements to influence a community or society. Information operations. With the advancements in technology, criminal organizations have begun evoking to help evade or conceal their operations.*
- *Middle-Eastern cultures.*
- *Vehicle bombings.*
- *Women involvement in terrorism.*
- *Gang/Terrorism affiliations.*
- *Border violence, drug cartels.*

- *Drugs along the US southwest borders, but based on data (not open source)*
- *Border violence.*
- *Drug cartels, drug trafficking organizations, explore recent Juarez homicides Oct 2016- Current*
- *Gangs*

Q6. If there are any additional comments you have about the seminar topics covered please provide them below.

- Have next symposium in a larger area to allow more attendees. Several individuals that wanted to attend were placed on a "stand-by" list. Have a longer, more in-depth symposium in violent extremism in the US.
- The use of first responders, to help provide information on field contacts.
- Why are reporters being murdered in Mexico?
- Excellent!
- Excellent speaker, I would like to see the results of the predictive analysis from individuals that are arrested and follow them while in jail or released to see how correct the hypothesis was.
- Good presentation, very knowledgeable and good presenter.
- Great symposium and look forward to the next series of topics.
- Great topic and very educating.
- Please have symposium in an area where you can park and walk to event. Location and parking required to be physically fit and required for you to have walking/hiking shoes. Have a room that the climate works (too hot). From the back row I was unable to see the screen.
- Speaker handled questions well.
- Good Job
- Hard to hear and see the material

Webcast Analytics

This symposium was the seventh effort to add a webcast feature as part of the value added deliverable of this program. All eight symposiums have been filmed and can be viewed by the public on our website and YouTube account to enhance future viewings of the symposium series. The PI will continue with simultaneous webcast broadcasting of the symposium series with efforts to increase viewership through this medium.

Total views: 57

Symposium Series Visibility

In an effort to promote the symposium series and the work of the Borders and Trade Institute (BTI) we have actively engaged on Twitter and local news media outlets.

- There were thirty-two (32) tweets that were sent prior, during, and just after the symposium event. The tweets received a total of **3,898** impressions.

Learning

Every attendee was asked to take a six (6) question Pretest Questionnaire in order to gauge the level of understanding of the topic. In addition, the participants were asked to take the same six (6) question Posttest Questionnaire at the conclusion of the symposium. The first question asked of the participant was to self-measure their level of knowledge on the topic on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 as *No Knowledgeable* and 10 as *Very Knowledgeable*. A total of 58 pretests/posttests (**88% of total attendees**) were returned by the participants.

Analysis: Self-evaluation by the participants indicated a **17% increase** in learning. The average Pretest Questionnaire score was **49%** and the average Posttest Questionnaire score was **83%**. The results of the Pretest and Posttest Questionnaires revealed a **34% increase** in learning.

Lessons Learned

As part of the program's self-evaluation process the following areas will be addressed:

- Continue to emphasis to symposium participants the importance of the Exit Surveys and Pretest and Posttest Questionnaires.

Acknowledgements

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Victor M. Manjarrez, Jr.

June 19, 2017

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Date